

# **Blonde Ambition Study Guide**

## **Blonde Ambition by John Meaney**

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# Plot Summary

"Blonde Ambition: An A List Novel" is the third book in a series written by Zoey Dean that chronicles the life of teenager Anna Cabot Percy. The series of books begins with Anna moving to Beverly Hills, California from the Upper Eastside of New York City. Anna finds herself in the middle of culture shock as she tries to adjust to the demands of Hollywood life and her new peers. In Blonde Ambition, Anna becomes even more initiated into Hollywood culture when she is given an internship on the set of a new television series. She sees firsthand the demands of a career in Hollywood and decides that it is probably not for her. Along the way, she meets new friends and learns more about the peers at her high school and the mysterious man who lives in her guest house.

At the beginning of the book, Anna is happily in a relationship with Ben Birnbaum. She struggles with guilt over the relationship that she has just ended with Adam Flood but finds that she is falling in love with Ben. Anna is fired from her internship at a powerful talent agency because her sister showed up drunk at an industry party. Before Anna can leave the building, however, an important agent named Clark Sheppard stops her and rehires her as his own intern. Anna begins working on the set of a new television pilot called "Hermosa Beach" and is immediately accepted by the group of writers and behind-the-scenes workers. She is especially drawn to the co-executive producer of the show, Danny Bluestone. He is a young, attractive man who flirts with Anna incessantly.

As Anna begins spending more time at work and with her father's driver, Django, her boyfriend Ben becomes increasingly jealous. He puts off going back to college at Princeton, telling Anna that he has worked out a deal with the Dean. When Anna discovers that he is close to being expelled and that the only reason he is staying behind is to be with her, she ends the relationship. Ben accepts this decision and returns to school. On her way home from dropping Ben off at the airport, Anna meets up with Danny and they go to a race track where she drives his fast sports car and realizes that she is falling for him.

Cammie Sheppard is the daughter of Clark Sheppard and is very jealous of Anna. Not only has Anna stolen all of her friends' time, but now she is being praised by her father. Cammie begins dating Anna's ex-boyfriend Adam and trying to develop a plan to ruin Anna's seemingly perfect life. Cammie uses information that she finds in her father's office to frame Anna for the crime of leaking information to the press about a cast member of "Hermosa Beach." When it is discovered that Cammie has been lying, her father cancels all her credit cards and has her luxury car towed.

Once Anna's name has been cleared of leaking the information, she is asked to return to be the intern on the show. She declines the offer and realizes that Hollywood is not the industry for her. She does return to the set one more time, however, to see Danny Bluestone. The two go to the beach and Anna realizes that while she is not in the market for a boyfriend, she is open to having fun with Danny and any other suitors.



# Chapters 1 - 2

## Chapters 1 - 2 Summary

Chapter 1, Like a Sister: "Blonde Ambition" is the third novel in a series about Anna Cabot Percy. The books are set in Beverly Hills, California and Anna is an 18-year-old who has recently moved to the area after growing up on the Upper Eastside of New York City. "Blonde Ambition" follows Anna as she continues to adjust to the Hollywood way of life, making friends and enemies along the way.

When the story begins, Anna wakes up to the sound of her cell phone ringing times in her purse. She does not want to get out of bed to answer it because she is lying beside her new boyfriend, Ben Birnbaum. The two have just spent the night together and she does not want to leave the bed to return to reality. When Anna answers her phone, it is her father. He tells her that her older sister Susan has agreed to check herself into an alcohol rehabilitation program but that Susan first wants to say "good bye" to her sister. Anna agrees to meet the two of them at the Beverly Hills Hotel and she tells Ben where she is going.

Ben and Anna leave the hotel in their separate cars and head separate directions. Anna meets her sister for breakfast in the Polo Lounge at the hotel and tells her how proud she is that she is going to rehab. Ben shows up and makes himself comfortable at the breakfast table, which makes Anna feel uncomfortable and irritated. Susan is also clearly annoyed that Ben is there. Anna hugs her sister and father before they depart and then tells Ben that she is going home to take a nap.

In Chapter 2, Anna arrives at the Apex Talent Agency where she works as an intern. She is called into the office of Margaret Cunningham, a powerful agent with Apex who gave Anna her job. Margaret is also Jonathan Percy's girlfriend. Margaret tells Anna that the agency has decided to fire her based on an incident that occurred at an important client's party that involved Anna's sister, Susan. Instead of staying with her client as Anna had been directed, she left the party in order to take Susan home safely. Anna tells Margaret that she will always put her sister first and if that means she is fired, then so be it.

As Anna turns to leave Margaret's office, she is stopped by another powerful executive at Apex — Clark Shepphard. Clark is the father of Cammie Shepphard, a girl from Anna's school who is not especially fond of Anna. Clark tells Anna that she has "cojones" and that he would like to keep her on as an intern. This infuriates Margaret who feels that her authority is being questioned, but Clark overrules her. He takes Anna to his office and tells her that Margaret is "dead" to her now. He tells Anna that she will be working directly with him on a new television pilot called "Hermosa Beach."



## Chapters 1 - 2 Analysis

Anna Percy is different from the other people in Hollywood. She does not understand the hype surrounding the television and movie industries and prefers reading instead. Strangely, this makes her more attractive to entertainment industry insiders, like Clark Sheppard, who see her as unique and intelligent. Anna does not grovel in the face of Hollywood power players like Margaret Cunningham, but speaks her mind and stands by her own beliefs, even if it means being fired from an important internship.

It becomes clear immediately that Anna is given a lot of independence. Though she is still in high school, she has her own vehicle, stays out all night with her boyfriend and reports to work at a powerful Hollywood talent agency. She enjoys the financial success of her father but does not seem to have the same sense of entitlement that many of the other high school characters harbor. When her father decides to go out of town for several days with her older sister, Anna is trusted to be home alone and act responsibly, which she does. Readers are able to see the strength in Anna's personal ethics early in the book in the way that she handles her independence and also the way she stands up for her sister against Margaret Cunningham.



# Chapters 3 - 4

## Chapters 3 - 4 Summary

In Chapter 3, Samantha "Sam" Sharpe decides to take advantage of the fact that Anna recently broke up with Adam Flood. She invites him to Table 8, a trendy new restaurant that features only 8 appetizers and 8 main courses. She thinks about how only a few days earlier, she thought she had wanted to be with Anna. When Adam arrives, they order one of everything on the menu and Sam tells him that Anna is now with Ben Birnbaum. Adam is visibly upset because when Anna broke up with him, she told him that she wanted time to be alone. Sam decides it is not the time to try to woo Adam but instead invites him to a party on the set of "Hermosa Beach" that weekend.

Cammie Sheppard sits at a bar and endures being hit on by every guy there. Dee Young shows up and Cammie asks where Sam is at. The three came together but keep getting split up in the loud bar. Cammie thinks about the way that everything in her life has changed over the past few weeks - ever since the arrival of Anna Percy at Beverly Hills High School. Samantha had changed and was not nearly as fun, and Anna was now dating Cammie's ex-boyfriend Adam Flood. Cammie tells the other girls that she saw Anna getting fired at Apex earlier that day and Dee points out that it is Cammie's fault because she is the one who got Susan Percy drunk at the Apex party. Cammie is annoyed and decides that the only thing that will cheer her up is a major shopping spree.

In Chapter 4, Cammie arrives home late from the bar to find her stepmother Patrice Koose waiting for her in the living room. Patrice tells Cammie that her daughter Mia will be moving in. Cammie is shocked because it is the first time she has heard of Patrice having a daughter. Cammie groans when she learns that Mia is from Valley Village - a neighborhood that Cammie considers low brow.

Anna is working on her calculus homework and cannot stop thinking about Adam Flood and the fact that she really needs to tell him about her relationship with Ben. She has tried to get hold of him for several days without luck. She decides to try again and this time Adam picks up. He tells Anna that he already knows everything because Sam told him. Anna invites him to lunch the next day and he accepts reluctantly.

Anna hears classical music coming from downstairs and rushes down to find her father's driver Django playing the piano. He explains that her father allows him to come play the piano when he is out of town and asks Anna if she would like to join him for Ethiopian food. She accepts and he leaves to go get it. The doorbell rings and it is Ben. Django comes to the door almost immediately after and Ben becomes suspicious of Django's motives with Anna. Ben tells Anna to get dressed because he is there to take her out for awhile.



## Chapters 3 - 4 Analysis

The transient nature of dating among the students at Beverly Hills High School becomes more evident in this section of the book. Samantha Sharpe decides to move in on Adam Flood since she knows that Anna has moved on to Ben Birnbaum. Adam is surprised to hear that Anna is now dating Ben, especially since she so recently broke up with him. When Anna broke up with Adam, she told him it was because she wanted to spend some time alone but this is obviously hard to Adam to believe since she is already being linked to Ben. Anna is also already showing interest in Django and showing annoyance when Ben shows up and interrupts the dinner she was planning to spend with Django. It seems that attraction changes and fades as quickly as the fashion trends in Beverly Hills.

Cammie Sheppard is introduced and established as the antagonist. She is used to being the "queen bee" among her friends and does not appreciate the way her role has changed since Anna Percy arrived in Beverly Hills. She is not being catered to by her friends like Sam and Dee and is especially bitter about Ben Birnbaum, her ex-boyfriend, dating Anna. It seems that Cammie does not get a long with many people, however, especially other powerful women. This becomes clear during the conversation that she has with her stepmother Patrice Koose. There can only be one "lady of the house" and Cammie wants Patrice to know that though she is younger, she is in charge.



# Chapters 5 - 6

## Chapters 5 - 6 Summary

In Chapter 5, Anna goes over to Sam's house before school in order to screen a film they made together for class. Sam apologizes for the way that she told Adam about Ben and Anna is not upset with her. They watch the short film in the mini-theater in Sam's house and Anna is pleased with the way Sam edited it. The plot is a love triangle that ends with the spurned man confessing his undying love for the woman. Sam then shows Anna another film: one from the weekend prior when Ben had burst into the sauna at a popular spa and Dee had claimed to be pregnant with his baby. Anna is on the film looking embarrassed and mortified. When Sam is done showing it to Anna, she takes it out of the player and smashes it in front of her friend. Sam says that she showed Anna the film, and then destroyed it, to prove how strongly she believes in their friendship.

Anna meets Adam for lunch and tries to explain that she did not plan to fall for Ben. Adam does not believe her and tells her that he is a "big boy." She tells him that she wants to be friends but Adam says he is not sure that is possible. He gets his food to go, pays the tab for lunch and tells Anna that he will see her at school.

In Chapter 6, Patrice's daughter Mia comes to live at the Shepphard mansion and Cammie dislikes her from the start. Mia is not shy about coming into Cammie's room and wanting to try on her clothing. Cammie discovers that Mia took a script from her father's office and is furious, telling Mia to never go in there. Mia is hurt and asks Cammie why she is being so mean to her. Cammie decides to go visit her father Clark Shepphard at work and tell him about Mia's antics. To her embarrassment, Clark does not care that Mia went into his office and tells Cammie to "grow up." Cammie sees Anna in his office and wonders if she is being fired.

Later that night, Anna sits at home and leafs through the script for "Hermosa Beach," trying to get a handle on her new role as intern for Clark Shepphard. Django shows up with Ethiopian food and Anna sits down to eat with him. She puts in a tape from the set of "Hermosa Beach" and she and Django agree that the show is not very good. At seven o'clock the doorbell rings and Ben arrives to pick up Anna for the night. She gives him a big hug and kiss in front of Django to try to nip Ben's jealousy in the bud.

## Chapters 5 - 6 Analysis

The bizarre friendship dynamics among the students at Beverly Hills High is highlighted in the scene when Anna goes to Sam's house before school to screen a short film they developed for class. Sam has already caused tension between Anna and Adam for telling Adam the truth about Ben, but does not seem to feel particularly bad about that fact. Though Anna has every right to be angry at the way that Sam has betrayed her,





she does not seem to mind very much. After showing the final cut of the film for class, Sam shows Anna an embarrassing video that she has of an altercation between Anna, Ben and Anna's sister in a sauna. At first, Anna is hurt but then Sam promptly destroys the tape in a show of friendship.

Cammie's insecurities are further revealed when Mia arrives at the Sheppard mansion. Cammie does not like the idea of sharing her things, her space or her father with another person. Instead of making the best of the situation, Cammie acts immature and tries to get Mia in trouble. When Cammie's plans are thwarted and she is told to "grow up" she only becomes more resentful of Mia's presence.



# Chapters 7 - 8

## Chapters 7 - 8 Summary

In Chapter 7, Ben takes Anna to his father's luxury yacht, the Nip-n-Tuck III. It is the second time that Anna has been on board the ship. The first time was on New Year's Eve when Ben ditched Anna at 3 a.m. and she had to call Django to come pick her up. Anna tries to push the unpleasant thought from her mind and make the best of the evening. When they are inside the cabin, Anna asks Ben when he plans to return to Princeton. The semester has already started but he seems to have no plans to return. He says that he will be going back soon and seems very uncomfortable when Anna keeps asking questions.

On the drive home from the yacht, Ben warns Anna to stay away from Cammie Shepphard. He tells Anna that Cammie is "capable of anything." Anna returns to the subject of Princeton and Ben is even more adamant about changing the subject. He tells Anna that he is not sure he can trust her with Django living so nearby. Anna insists that they are just friends and Ben quickly apologizes and tells her that he just cares about her too much. He drops Anna off at home and she notices that the lights in Django's guesthouse are still illuminated.

In Chapter 8, word travels quickly around Beverly Hills High that Anna is working on "Hermosa Beach" with Clark Shepphard. Everyone wants to talk to Anna about the show, especially the editor of the school newspaper, Juliet Dinkins. Anna refuses to talk about the show and Juliet threatens that she will run a fake, damaging article about Anna instead. Sam sits down to eat lunch with Anna and tells her that she is on a new diet called Power Eating. A delivery man brings Sam her healthy meal and she complains to Anna about how terrible it tastes.

That afternoon, the film that Sam and Anna made is shown to the class and receives a warm reception. Sam announces after the film that she and Anna are working on an actual feature film that will be titled "Three-Way." This is the first that Anna has heard of it, but she goes along with Sam's declaration. After school, Cammie and Dee run into Dee's new boyfriend, an up and coming rock star named Stevie Novellino. Dee leaves with him and then Cammie runs into Sam and Adam Flood, who say that they are heading over to the Beverly Hills Hotel to hang out. Sam invites Cammie but Cammie says that she already has plans. When Sam leaves, Cammie fumes about the fact that Dee and Sam have made plans without her and that it must be related to Anna's influence on them. Cammie calls Mia and tells her to be waiting because she is coming to pick her up to go shopping.



## Chapters 7 - 8 Analysis

The relationship between Ben and Anna is progressing very quickly — almost too quickly for Anna. She is already beginning to feel smothered by Ben's attention and demands for her time. Though everything has been going well between Ben and Anna, she is haunted by the memories of the last time she and Ben were on the boat. She tries to express her feelings but Ben does not want to dwell on the past and tries to distract Anna.

Ben warns Anna about how dangerous Cammie Sheppard actually is and Anna just takes it in stride. Ben wants to protect Anna from Cammie, and he is well aware of how manipulative she can be. Anna is a little bit naive to brush off Ben's fears so quickly, but she feels like Ben has been overreacting in other aspects of their relationship so she just writes off his warnings about Cammie too.



# Chapters 9 - 10

## Chapters 9 - 10 Summary

In Chapter 9, Anna goes with Clark Shepphard to the set of "Hermosa Beach" and sits in on a writers' meeting. She meets Danny Bluestone, the co-executive producer, and finds him attractive though it makes her feel guilty because of Ben. Danny invites Anna into his office and asks her for an honest opinion about the show. She points out flaws that she sees in the characterization and Danny is impressed with her honesty and comprehension. He invites her to go with the writers to the Dublin, an Irish restaurant and bar, after they wrap up for the night.

Cammie and Mia return home from shopping and try on their new clothes. Mia is envious of a jacket that Cammie bought and tries it on when Cammie is in the shower. Cammie is furious and tries to take it off of Mia and the sleeve rips. Her father arrives home and tells Cammie how nice it was for her to take Mia shopping. Cammie fights back tears in her room, especially since it is only a few days before her 18th birthday and no one has mentioned planning a party for her yet. Cammie decides she will just start planning her own party and that it will be an amazing event that will make Anna Percy jealous.

In Chapter 10, Anna goes to Dublin's with other members of the "Hermosa Beach" crew and Danny offers her some ale. Anna sits next to Danny and the two discuss the show and Danny teases Anna that she is Clark's "spy." Danny tells Anna that he is working on writing a screenplay but does not have confidence that it will turn out well. Anna encourages him to write it anyway.

Pegasus Patton, the lead actress from the show, corners Anna at the bar and tells her that she does not appreciate her character being messed with. Pegasus is angry at the changes being made to what she will wear and how she will act based on Anna's suggestions. Anna stands her ground and says something offensive in French that Pegasus believes to be a compliment. Danny asks her to dance the jitterbug and Anna accepts. As she dances she thinks about how all she wants is to just live in the moment, even if that means not thinking about Ben.

## Chapters 9 - 10 Analysis

Anna enters a whole new world when she becomes the intern on the set of "Hermosa Beach." She has become accustomed to the immature and petty ways of the other students at Beverly Hills High School but the writers of the television series are different. They remind Anna of the people in New York and she feels like more of an insider at her job than she does around the kids her own age.

Anna's indifference towards playing the Hollywood game becomes apparent when she begins her job as intern for "Hermosa Beach." She is focused on her role as intern and

immediately ticks off one of the main stars of the show. Anna is not apologetic, however. She insults the star in French and is even more determined to do her job correctly. Anna is not trying to make friends in the industry and that makes many Hollywood insiders feel uncomfortable because it is not something that they are used to seeing.



# Chapters 11 - 12

## Chapters 11 - 12 Summary

In Chapter 11, several of the students from Beverly Hills High School attend a basketball game at Van Nuys High School in the valley. Sam and Cammie watch Adam Flood play. Though most of the students from Beverly Hills would rather not go to the valley for any reason, the ticket stub from the game is what they need to be admitted to the annual party of Kyle Bauersachs. Adam hits the game winning shot and waves to Sam, which annoys Cammie because her friend has not mentioned anything about liking Adam.

Cammie becomes quickly bored at the after-party. She wanders out to the beach and sees Adam Flood alone by the water. She approaches him and they begin to talk about the game and Cammie brings up the way that Anna broke up with him. Adam does not want to talk about it, so they start talking about the Lakers and music instead. Just before they get back to the beach house, Cammie kisses Adam and is fully aware that Sam can see her doing it. Even though Cammie first decided to kiss Adam in order to prove that she was superior to Sam, Cammie feels a flood of attraction toward Adam as he is walking away.

In Chapter 12, Anna returns home late from going out with Danny Bluestone and the writers from "Hermosa Beach" and has several messages from Ben. She feels guilty about having so much fun without Ben and wonders if she really is ready for the relationship. Ben calls and Anna picks up and tells him that she has been busy working all night. He tells her that he wants to pick her up the next morning so they can spend the whole day together.

The next morning, Ben arrives bright and early and the two go to breakfast at Two Hussies. Anna asks him again about when he plans to return to Princeton and Ben becomes defensive, telling her to "lighten up" about it. Ben says that he is waiting a bit because he is still worried about his father, who is recovering from gambling addiction. They leave breakfast to enjoy the beautiful outdoor weather. They join a pickup volleyball game, kayak, ride bicycles and go on a boat ride. Late in the afternoon, Clark Sheppard calls Anna and tells her that he needs her to pick up the dailies, or video tapes from the show production at the office.

Anna and Ben ride their bicycles to the set of "Hermosa Beach" to pick them up. They go into Danny's office to pick them up. Danny mentions how much fun they had at the Dublin the night before and Ben becomes irritated. When Anna and Ben leave the set, Ben demands to know what is going on between Anna and Danny. Anna assures him that they only have a work relationship but Ben is still angry when he takes her home.



## Chapters 11 - 12 Analysis

The elite attitude that the students from Beverly Hills High School have is highlighted in this section of the book. They look down on the students from neighboring schools — especially schools in the Valley. The only reason that there is such a strong showing of Beverly Hills students at the basketball game against Van Nuys in the Valley is because they need a ticket stub to get into a party afterwards. Outside of their high-class atmosphere, the students are uncomfortable and in the case of Cammie, she is downright disgusted.

Ben's jealousy begins to rear its ugly head. He worries about Django's intentions and is furious when he finds out that Anna went out with the writers from "Hermosa Beach." Anna sees the new side of Ben and does not find it attractive. At the same time, however, Anna does feel that she is developing feelings for Danny and possibly even Django. She tries to make up for her feelings of guilt by hanging out with Ben even more and trying to ignore her attraction to the others.



# Chapters 13 - 15

## Chapters 13 - 15 Summary

In Chapter 13, Adam takes his mom's car to the Hollywood Bowl, an outdoor amphitheater, where he has tickets to see Beck perform. His seats are in the lawn, in the nosebleed section, and he wishes that he had brought binoculars. Cammie arrives alone at the show with two backstage passes and the intent of tracking down Adam. She walks through the lawn area and Adam calls out to her. She lies and says that one of the passes is supposed to be for her friend Dee but that she got backstage because of her boyfriend Stevie. Cammie pretends that she likes Beck and Adam seems impressed. Cammie and Adam watch the concert from up close and then attend the after party. Adam sees Beck and Willie Nelson playing guitar in a quiet area away from the party and he is invited to sit and listen for several hours.

In Chapter 14, Anna arrives at Ben's house because she has been invited to eat dinner with him and his parents. She and Ben have made up from their fight over Danny. She feels uncomfortable about meeting them so early into the relationship and is pleasantly surprised when his parents are not home. They are supposed to meet them at a restaurant. As Anna waits for Ben to finish getting ready, she overhears a message that his roommate leaves on his answering machine about how the Dean at Princeton is furious that Ben has not returned to school and is threatening to expell him. Anna confronts Ben and he admits that the main reason he has been putting off going back to school is because of his relationship with Anna. She tells him that he should not base his decision on her and that he will regret it later if he does not go back to school. Ben cancels dinner with his parents and he and Anna talk about life for hours. They decide to break up and have sex one last time.

In Chapter 15: Anna goes with Ben to the airport and they part on good terms. She gets stuck in traffic on the way home and Danny calls her. He tells her to come by the set. When she arrives, the two discuss parts of the script and Anna admits that she wants to write a novel. Danny tells her that he has something to show her and they drive to a private race track where Danny keeps a sports car. He gives Anna a helmet and she drives the sports car around the track, up to 120 miles per hour. Anna has so much fun that she begins to wonder if there could be something beyond friendship between she and Danny.

## Chapters 13 - 15 Analysis

Adam's guarded attitude towards Cammie begins to wane as he spends more time with her. Though Cammie is setting up situations in order to manipulate Adam's feelings for her, he is not aware of her scheming and finds it all to be lucky coincidences. When Cammie introduces Adam to his favorite singer, Beck, Adam's feelings of happiness blur



with his feelings towards Cammie. She is winning him over. What Cammie plans to do after she has Adam within her grasp remains to be seen.

Once Anna discovers the truth about Ben's absence from Princeton, she realizes that she can't keep up their relationship. It becomes clear that Ben already knows the truth about their relationship too and he almost seems relieved that he no longer needs to lie to Anna. All of Anna's feelings of uncertainty about being exclusively with Ben are confirmed when she learns that he is bypassing school to be with her. Anna is able to walk away from the relationship based on Ben going back to school — though she may have come to that conclusion in time anyway.



# Chapters 16 - 18

## Chapters 16 - 18 Summary

In Chapter 16, while at the race track, Anna and Danny are called back to the set of "Hermosa Beach." Anna is put in charge of consistency among the scenes and ensuring that the actors look exactly the same from one scene to the next. Anna discovers that the fingernails on the lead actress have changed and the scene is halted so that the nails can be redone. The actress is furious with Anna for calling her out but the rest of the production crew congratulates Anna on the "good catch."

After taping, there is a cast and crew party on the set. Hollywood Tonight is there to interview cast members and increase hype for the show. Clark Sheppard also comes, bringing Cammie and Mia. Cammie becomes even more jealous of Anna when she overhears her father praising Anna for the way she saved the scene earlier in the day.

In Chapter 17, Sam is also at the cast party where she sits on a couch and indulges in all of the gourmet food. She has decided that her current diet is not worth eating food that tastes like cardboard. An attractive young actor from the show approaches Sam and flirts with her. He gives her his phone number but then one of his drunk friends comes over and asks him if he has found "Jackson Sharpe's daughter" yet. Sam realizes that the actor is only trying to get closer to her father and she flees the party for the bathroom.

Anna sees Sam leave, looking upset, and she follows her into the bathroom. The two decide to take a walk on the beach, where Sam tells her the story about the actor. Anna tells Sam that she is just in the wrong city. Anywhere else, Sam would be considered the most beautiful woman in town. Anna and Sam discuss plans for their upcoming film and Anna says that she will get started with the writing.

In Chapter 18, irritated at Anna's success and the way that her father and Mia are getting along, Cammie invites Adam to the cast party. She goes to pick him up and on the ride over, Adam asks if he is "Mister January," implying that Cammie changes her taste in men often. Cammie tells him that she likes him — simple as that. Cammie and Adam dance together to the music of Mo Bad, an up-and-coming rapper. Adam sees Anna dancing with Danny and is momentarily upset by it. Cammie pulls him in closer and tries to make him forget. Anna sees Adam with Cammie and is worried because she considers Cammie to be a "scorpion." Danny invites Anna on a horse-drawn carriage ride outside the party and the two kiss on the ride.

## Chapters 16 - 18 Analysis

Anna continues to ruffle the feathers of the starlet of "Hermosa Beach" and shows no remorse. She points out a problem in filming consistency that is the fault of the star and it halts taping for awhile. Anna is simply doing her job and does not see why she should

have to "kiss up" to anyone, least of all the actress that is in the wrong. Anna is praised by Clark, Danny and the rest of the crew for her sharp eye and this only makes the star even more irate.

Sam's insecurities are emphasized in the scene at the cast and crew party. First, she has decided to quit her diet and is eating alone to hide all of the fatty food that she is consuming. Then when she is hit on by a hot actor, Sam discovers that the man is just trying to get close to her famous father. It is a scene she has been a part of before and Sam is angry that she has once again fallen into the trap. Anna tries to reassure Sam by telling her that she is simply in the "wrong city" and that by any other standards, Sam would be considered the most beautiful person around. Anna's words make Sam feel better but it is clear that Sam does not truly believe them.



# Chapters 19 - 20

## Chapters 19 - 20 Summary

In Chapter 19, Mo Bad tries to hit on Cammie with his thuggish drawl and Cammie calls him out, telling him that she knows that he is a fake. He lets down his guard and talks normally, inviting Cammie and Adam to a party somewhere else. Cammie and Adam go and spend time on the dance floor grinding to the hip-hop music. Dee arrives and says that she is there with Mia, though she cannot seem to find her. Cammie is worried and she and Adam start searching for Mia. They find her in an alleyway, drunk and high with a guy who looks to be in his early twenties. Cammie and Adam get Mia to the car and head out. Mia falls asleep almost immediately and Cammie confides in Adam that she feels protective towards Mia because she does not want her to make any of the mistakes that Cammie made after her mother died. Adam is moved by Cammie's show of emotion but then says that he needs time to get over Anna. Cammie is furious that after such a fun night, Adam is still even thinking about Anna. Cammie decides that she needs to do something about Anna's influence over everyone.

In Chapter 20, Anna wakes up the morning after the cast party to the sound of the piano being played downstairs. She finds Django playing and he has a breakfast of homemade strawberry waffles waiting for her. Anna asks Django about his mysterious past — like why he is not a concert pianist and how he came to know her father. Anna knows that Django once had a lot of money and she does not understand why he lives in the guest house and is reclusive from the rest of the world. Django keeps his mystery and answers all of her questions vaguely. He tells her that he does not want to talk about his past anymore.

Anna goes to an industry party with Danny. He tells Anna about all of the famous neighbors that live nearby but she responds in her typical, non-impressed way. They talk about the novel he is writing and Danny proclaims that it will be good enough to receive a few rejection letters. He gets a call from Clark Sheppard, summoning him to the set. Danny says that Clark sounds angry and that she should be happy he did not call her too.

## Chapters 19 - 20 Analysis

Cammie's tough exterior begins to fade as her protective feelings toward Mia come to the surface. On the car ride home from Mo Bad's party, Cammie opens up to Adam about mistakes that she has made in the past and how she wants to protect Mia from going the same route. Adam sees a sensitive side of Cammie and even though she still tries to cover it up, he is able to see that she is not as cold-hearted as she lets others believe.

The mystery of Django that was started in the earlier books comes to the surface in this section of the book. No answers are given, but the intrigue surrounding Django is heightened. It becomes clear that he is a character that will be revisited in later chapters or books. Anna is fascinated with Django's story but does not press him for too many details. Readers wonder where Django's secrets lie. When the book ends and there is no further information, it encourages readers to want to go on to the next book and find out more clues about Django's past.



# Chapters 21 - 22

## Chapters 21 - 22 Summary

In Chapter 21, Cammie and Mia meet Dee for breakfast at the Polo Lounge the next morning and Cammie is furious at Dee for taking Mia to the club the night before. Dee apologizes and gives Cammie a gift — a Kabbalah bracelet. When Mia is gone for several minutes, the girls go looking for her. They ask the hotel valet if he has seen her and he says that he saw her with a few other teenagers and points them in the right direction. Cammie and Dee find Mia smoking marijuana from a bong with several strangers. Cammie is furious and tells Mia that the car is leaving in five minutes and that she better be there.

Later that night, Clark Sheppard arrives unannounced at Anna's house. He tells her to turn on the television and Anna sees a report about one of the main cast members of "Hermosa Beach" being a white supremacist. According to the program, Hollywood Tonight, an insider from the show gave out the information. Clark tells Anna that he knows it was her who leaked the damaging information and that she is fired. She tries to tell him that she had nothing to do with it but he leaves angrily. Anna calls Danny's cell phone and he tells her that he cannot speak with her because he is afraid that he too will be fired.

In Chapter 22, at school the next day, Anna is the center of attention because of the "Hermosa Beach" scandal. Many of the kids seem to support her for what she supposedly did. Sam meets Anna outside for lunch and asks her about the details of the event. Anna says that she had nothing to do with it but that she just wants to forget about it and move on. Sam tells Anna that she will help her get to the bottom of it and find out who is behind it.

## Chapters 21 - 22 Analysis

It is becoming apparent that Mia may have a serious problem with drug and alcohol use. When Cammie found Mia drunk and possibly high at Mo Bad's party, she assumed that Mia had been exposed to a bad influence. The very next morning, however, Cammie catches Mia smoking marijuana with complete strangers. Cammie is justified in feeling protective of her younger stepsister and readers become aware of the fact that Cammie may be just the right person to keep Mia out of trouble by providing some guidance.

Anna feels the first sting of Hollywood when she is accused of leaking information about a cast member to a Hollywood gossip program. Clark Sheppard quickly turns on Anna without waiting for an explanation and declares that she will never eat another meal in town because of his influence. These words prove to have some merit, especially when Anna calls Danny and he refuses to talk to her. He throws all of his personal feelings for

Anna aside because he is scared of Clark and losing his job. Anna quickly goes from Golden Girl to an outcast in true Hollywood fashion.



# Chapters 23 - 24

## Chapters 23 - 24 Summary

In Chapter 23, since none of her friends remember, Cammie throws herself an 18th birthday party. It is a lavish affair with catered food and champagne. Adam arrives and tells Cammie that he is sorry about bringing up Anna the other night. She tells him that she does not want to hear about Anna at her party. Sam approaches Cammie and tells her that she thinks Anna was framed in the "Hermosa Beach" scandal. Cammie scoffs and disagrees, but her thoughts reveal that it was actually Cammie who called in the tip under the guise of being Anna.

At the end of the party, the party planner tells Cammie that her credit card was declined. Cammie tries several more cards and none go through. She insists that the credit card machine is malfunctioning and asks Dee to use hers. Dee's goes through without a problem and Cammie says that she will pay Dee back. Confused, Cammie walks out to take Adam home and her BMW is being towed. Dee drives both Cammie and Adam home. Clark, Patrice and Mia are waiting in the living room for Cammie when she arrives home from the party. She tells them about her horrible night and her father says that he cancelled her credit cards and had her car towed because he found out it was Cammie who called Hollywood Tonight with the white supremacist information. Mia overheard Cammie on the phone and heard her lie about being Anna and she told Clark the real truth. Clark tells Cammie never to mess with his business affairs again.

In Chapter 24, Cammie sits in her room the next day feeling sorry for herself and the state of her life. Adam Flood shows up unexpectedly and gives Cammie a gift to cheer her up — a copy of the children's book "Charlotte's Web" that is autographed by the author. Cammie is moved that Adam remembered her saying it was a favorite book of she and her mother. They decide to get out of the house and go to a nearby playground to sit on the swings. Cammie realizes that she is falling for Adam.

Anna receives a call from Clark Sheppard the next day telling her that she can have her job back. She declines it and he says that if she is going to be so touchy, she can forget about a career in Hollywood. Anna replies that is her plan. After school, Anna drives out to the set of "Hermosa Beach" and goes into Danny's office. He apologizes for the way he treated her and she says that she understands. He leaves the set to go to the beach with her and they kiss. Anna realizes that she likes Danny, but is open to any possibilities for love that may come up.

## Chapters 23 - 24 Analysis

Cammie's entire world crumbles when she loses access to her money. Stripped of the power that she finds in her money, Cammie does not know how to function. It seems that no one else is sure how exactly to proceed around her either, except for Adam. He





is down to earth and does not seem to be very bothered that Cammie has lost all her funds. He finds her vulnerability to be attractive and her attempts at trying to hide her embarrassment to be adorable. When Cammie discovers that her father is the one behind her misery, she is more hurt than angry. She accuses him of not caring about her and he shows his loyalty to his work by warning Cammie that she should never mess with his work — ever. Readers can sympathize with Cammie, despite her horrible actions because she is so upset and at a loss.

Once Anna's name is cleared of the information leaking scandal, she makes two important decisions. The first is to decline the offer to return as an intern on the show, despite Clark Sheppard's disapproval. The second is to go see Danny even though he refused to speak to her during the scandal. Since Anna has decided that she simply wants to have fun in her relationships, it is easy for Anna to forgive him for what she views as a business decision. She knows that by holding a grudge, she is only hurting herself. The book ends with a sort of a beginning as readers are left to wonder what will happen between Danny and Anna.



# Characters

## Anna Cabot Percy

Anna is the 18-year-old protagonist of the book. She has recently moved to the Los Angeles area where she lives with her father and attends Beverly Hills High School. Before the move, Anna lived in New York City with her mother and she jokingly refers to herself as an "upper Eastside princess." This book is the third in the series that follows Anna's adjustment to life in Beverly Hills. She is fired from her job as an intern at a famous talent agency, but is soon rehired by Clark Sheppard, who is one of the most powerful men in Hollywood. The fact that Anna is a Hollywood newcomer makes her even more attractive and her opinion worth more to other people in the television and movie industries. It seems that the more disinterested that Anna is in Hollywood, the more interested the industry becomes in her.

Anna is described as being very pretty and compared to Gwyneth Paltrow at one point in the book. The combination of her good looks and intelligence makes her attractive to just about every male mentioned in the story. Though she has very strong feelings for Ben Birnbaum, Anna is mature enough to walk away from the relationship when she feels that it is clouding his judgment about going back to college. She takes the advances of men like Django and Danny Bluestone in stride and even attempts to smooth things over with her ex-boyfriend, Adam Flood. Anna discovers that every flirtation does not have to turn into a serious relationship and that she should just enjoy being in the moment.

## Samantha Sharpe

Samantha "Sam" Sharpe is the daughter of Jackson Sharpe, one of the most famous movie stars in the world. She is pretty by most standards, but feels like she is fat and ugly compared to the other women of Beverly Hills and is constantly on a diet. Sam goes to high school with Anna and the two work on a film for class together that is a big hit among the other students. Sam asks Anna to help her create a real film, with Sam as director and Anna as writer. Sam tries to swoop in on Adam Flood after he and Anna break up and accidentally tells him that Anna is already with Ben Birnbaum. She feels bad about airing Anna's dirty laundry, however, and apologizes to Adam and Anna.

Sam and Anna become closer friends as the book progresses. When Anna is framed for leaking secrets about one of the stars of "Hermosa Beach," Sam helps Anna find the real culprit and exact revenge. Anna tries to cheer Sam up when a hot guy from a cast party hits on her in order to get in good with her father. Sam shows talent as a film director, demonstrating her creativity on a class project and then coming up with an idea for a future film that she wants to make with Anna.



## **Cammie Sheppard**

Cammie Sheppard is a girl who attends Beverly Hills High School with Anna. Cammie despises Anna and the way that her life has changed since Anna moved to town. Cammie is gorgeous, described as an "eleven" on a scale of one to ten with strawberry blonde curly hair. She uses her looks and wealth to her advantage, manipulating those around her as much as possible. Though she starts out dating Adam Flood to spite Anna and Sam, Cammie winds up developing deep feelings for Adam. At the same time, she begins to feel protective of her younger stepsister Mia, despite hating the fact that Mia has moved into the Sheppard home. As the book progresses, Cammie shows momentary emotions that convey the fact that she is really much more sensitive than her outer exterior shows.

## **Ben Birnbaum**

Ben Birnbaum is Anna Percy's boyfriend for most of the book. The two mutually break up when Anna can see that the relationship is interfering with Ben's college studies. Ben attends Princeton but is a California boy at heart. He enjoys outdoor activities and takes Anna on several excursions, including kayaking, bicycling and a romantic evening on his yacht. Ben is insecure about leaving for the East Coast when Anna is so sought after by other men and he expresses jealousy at several points in the book. He is also hesitant about leaving home because his father is recovering from a debilitating gambling addiction. Before he gets on an airplane to go back to Princeton, Ben flashes Anna one of his trademark smiles, assuring her that he is okay with their decision to break up.

## **Django Simms**

Django Sims is the young, cute driver for Anna's father Jonathan. He lives in a guesthouse on the Percy property and is not shy about flirting with Anna. He is a talented musician and often plays the grand piano in the Percy home when Jonathan is away. Django comes off as having a deep, dark secret because he will not explain to Anna how or why he works as a driver when at one time, he had money. The relationship between Anna and Django is based purely on friendship throughout the book, though there are indications that there could be deeper feelings lurking beneath the surface.

## **Clark Sheppard**

Clark Sheppard is a high-powered talent agent and works as a Hollywood producer. He hires Anna Percy as his intern after another person at his agency tries to fire her. Clark puts Anna in charge of several responsibilities on the set of the hyped upcoming television series "Hermosa Beach." Clark is tough and does not mince words. Those who work for him fear him and know that he has the power to make or break any



Hollywood career with a simple phone call. Clark is also the father of Cammie Sheppard — the beautiful teenager who hates Anna Percy. Clark does not seem to have a soft spot in his ruthless personality for his daughter and when she angers him, he cancels her credit cards and has her BMW towed.

## Danny Bluestone

Danny Bluestone is the co-executive producer for "Hermosa Beach." He is only 23, good-looking and always wears a baseball cap. Anna is attracted to him and feels guilty since she is in a relationship with Ben. Danny is clearly taken with Anna and invites her out with the writers for a drink after filming. When Clark Sheppard fires Anna following a controversy with the show, Danny refuses to see Anna, saying that he could lose his job if he talks to her. Despite this, Anna decides to give Danny a second chance after the truth comes out about the controversy, clearing Anna of any wrongdoing.

## Adam Flood

Adam Flood is a laid-back guy who goes to Beverly Hills High School and dated Anna Percy for a short time. He is originally from Michigan and, like Anna, does not buy into all of the Hollywood hype. He is on the basketball team and rides his bicycle to get places rather than drive an expensive car. The combination of his good looks and non-superficial attitude make him popular with the women of Beverly Hills High. Adam is hung up on Anna, however, and is honest with any girl who makes advances about the fact that he still needs to get over Anna.

## Mia

Mia is the fourteen-year-old stepsister of Cammie Sheppard and the stepdaughter of Clark Sheppard. She comes to live in their Beverly Hills mansion in the book and is originally from the Valley. Cammie is disgusted with how unrefined Mia is and how she acts so classless. Mia smokes marijuana twice in the book and ends up drunk at a party. Cammie finds Mia with an older man in an alley and comes to her rescue and later admits to Adam Flood that even though Mia annoys her, she feels protective of her.

## Patrice Koose

Patrice is Cammie Sheppard's stepmother and Cammie describes her as the "stepmother from Hell." Patrice is an actress who is a household name around the world. Cammie is surprised to learn that Patrice has a fourteen-year-old daughter named Mia who comes to live with the family. Patrice and Cammie butt heads on every issue and fight over the title of "lady of the house."



## Stevie Novellino

Stevie Novellino is a guitar player for a band called "Border Cross" from Brooklyn, New York that is in Los Angeles opening for Beck. He is tall and lanky, with chin-length black hair and all-black clothing. He strikes up a fling with Dee Young while he is in town but stops calling her after the concert.

## Margaret Cunningham

Margaret Cunningham is an agent at a powerful talent agency and also the girlfriend of Anna's father, Jonathan. She is described as being

## Susan Cabot Percy

Susan Cabot Percy is the older sister of Anna. She struggles with addiction, particularly to alcohol, and agrees to go to a rehabilitation program at the beginning of the book. Susan has a sarcastic sense of humor and is much more snarky than Anna. Susan is fairly open with her affection towards Anna but is guarded towards her father and outsiders like Ben Birnbaum.

## Jonathan Percy

Jonathan Percy is Anna Percy's father. He is described as being tall, lean and tan with "movie-star" blue eyes. Jonathan is an investment banker that has done very well for himself in California. He is dating Margaret Cunningham, a woman who is around his age. The narrator describes this as being unusual in a town where most successful, handsome men in their 40s to date women in their 20s. Jonathan appears in the first chapter of the book and then leaves to take Anna's sister Susan to an alcohol rehabilitation center.

## Juliet Dinkins

Juliet Dinkins is the editor of the Beverly Hill High School newspaper "The Well." She approaches Anna for an interview about the show "Hermosa Beach" and threatens to run a libelous article if Anna does not agree to it.

## Margaret Cunningham

Margaret Cunningham is the girlfriend of Jonathan Percy and also a powerful agent at the Apex Talent Agency. She is in her 40s, with short, blonde hair and understated style. She originally hires Anna for an internship but tries to fire her after Susan makes a scene at an important client's party. Margaret is overruled by Clark Sheppard,



however, who decides to keep Anna on as his personal intern. Margaret is described as having short blonde hair and having a vintage type of style.

## **Dee Young**

Dee Young is a friend of Samantha and Cammie who is described as being diminutive and lacking IQ points. Dee dates a rock star named Stevie during the book who ultimately dumps her after he is done with his stint in Los Angeles.

## **Cynthia Baltres**

Cynthia Baltres is Anna's best friend from New York. She does not make an appearance in the book, but Anna thinks about her and what Cynthia would do in situations that involve the men in Anna's life. Cynthia is more confident than Anna in matters of the heart and insistent on simply having fun with life.

## **Mo Bad**

Mo Bad is an up-and-coming rapper that puts on a fake, tough guy image. Even though he looks and sounds like a thug, Mo Bad is actually from Santa Monica and went to one of the most prestigious private high schools in California. When he tries to use his "thug act" on Cammie, she tells him that she knows that truth about him and cuts him down to size.



# Objects/Places

## Beverly Hills, California

The main setting for the book is the posh, super-rich community of Beverly Hills, California. The high school students in the book attend Beverly Hills High School and regularly eat at places like the Beverly Hills Hotel.

## Beverly Hills High School

Most of the students in the book attend Beverly Hills High School and several scenes in the book take place on the school grounds. It seems that every student at Beverly Hills High has some sort of connection to Hollywood, whether it is through a parent or an acting or modeling career of their own.

## Hermosa Beach

Hermosa Beach is an area outside of Los Angeles that is the setting for the television pilot for which Anna is asked to intern. She drives there several times for filming and then again at the end of the book to spend time with Danny.

## Polo Lounge

The Polo Lounge is a popular Hollywood spot that is inside the Beverly Hill Hotel. The characters often refer to the Polo Lounge and go there for meals. Cammie takes her stepsister Mia there to meet Dee Young for Sunday breakfast.

## Dublin

Dublin is a raucous Irish bar in the town of Hermosa Beach. Danny Bluestone invites Anna to go there after her first day on the set as an intern for the television show "Hermosa Beach." Danny insists that she try the ale because it is the best in town, but Anna finds the ale too bitter for her taste.

## Apex Talent Agency

Apex Talent Agency is where Anna works as an intern during the book. Though she is fired by Margaret Cunningham, another executive decides to keep her on the staff. She begins interning on the set of a new television show called "Hermosa Beach." Anna is fired again due to a misunderstanding and refuses to take the job back when it is offered.



## **Nip-n-Tuck III**

The Nip-n-Tuck III is the yacht where Ben takes Anna for a romantic evening that is owned by his father, a famous plastic surgeon to the stars. They spend several hours on the boat but Anna keeps thinking back to the time before when Ben deserted her.

## **The Valley**

The valley is described as being "fifty square miles of boredom" that is always twenty degrees hotter than Los Angeles. The pollution is bad and the area is known for its pornography industry. The students from Beverly Hills High School travel there for a basketball game against Van Nuys High School.

## **Hollywood Bowl**

Adam attends a Beck concert at the Hollywood Bowl, a popular outdoor amphitheater. Cammie pretends to be there with other people so that she can run into him. Adam's seats are far away from the stage, in the "nosebleed" area out in the lawn and Cammie takes him backstage by using her father's connections to the band.

## **Little Bastard**

Little Bastard is the name of the Spyder sports car that Danny Bluestone owns. He keeps it in a garage at a private race track and lets Anna drive it. During the outing, Anna realizes that she is starting to have romantic feelings towards Danny.

## **Hollywood Tonight**

Hollywood Tonight is the television program that chronicles many of the Hollywood happenings that take place in the book. It attends a party with the cast and crew of the television show "Hermosa Beach" and is the show to break the news that one of the stars is a white supremacist.

## **Charlotte's Web**

Charlotte's Web is Cammie's favorite book because it reminds her of her now-deceased mother. Cammie has a half-completed collage of characters and drawings from the book that she was creating with her mom when she died. When Adam wants to cheer up Cammie, he buys her an autographed copy of the childhood classic.





# Themes

## Superficiality of Hollywood

The extreme superficiality of Hollywood is explored throughout the book, especially in the contrast of Anna and the other characters. Anna is not a Hollywood native and does not play by the established rules of Tinsel Town. In many cases, she does not know who the important power players of the town are or why she should "kiss up" to them — much to the astonishment of friends like Sam and Cammie. This seems to work in Anna's favor, however, in many instances because people like Clark Sheppard appreciate her honesty about things that she believes are unrealistic in the scripts that she reads. Anna does not try to praise important Hollywood executives or stars to meet her own agenda and that attitude is refreshing next to the fake personalities of most of the industry.

Perhaps the two most superficial characters are Cammie and Sam. Cammie could easily get by on her good looks alone but refuses to leave the house in anything less than the most expensive designer brands. She also spends over \$10,000 to throw herself an 18th birthday party that is lavish and expensive. When her credit card is declined and her BMW is towed, Cammie feels like she is stripped of her identity and must rely on her friends, and not her money or power, to get through the crisis. Sam is less cut-throat than Cammie, but much more self-conscious. Sam feels like she is overweight and unattractive by Hollywood standards so she tries to make up for it with expensive clothing, being seen with the right people and driving the right car. Unlike Cammie who feels complete in her superficiality, Sam still lacks confidence behind the veil of money and power. Perhaps these feelings of inadequacy are what draw Sam to Anna and make Sam want to be good friends with the outsider from New York.

## Jealousy

Jealousy is the driving motivator behind many of the actions of the characters in the book. The most prominent example of this is Cammie's jealousy towards Anna. Cammie is used to being the "queen bee" of her social circle, particularly when it comes to Sam and Dee. When Anna arrives in town, Cammie can feel the grip of her power start to wane and she is resentful that someone appears to have taken her place. It is interesting that Cammie becomes interested in dating Adam shortly after Anna breaks up with him. Cammie is clearly angry that Anna is now dating her own ex-boyfriend, Ben, and her relationship with Adam is based at least in part on wanting to even the score. This jealousy ultimately drives Cammie to frame Anna for leaking cast information to an insider Hollywood show but the plan backfires when Cammie is discovered as the culprit.

Jealousy is also present in the character of Ben. His jealousy is also triggered by Anna but in a romantically linked way. Ben tells Anna that he is not going back to Princeton



right away because of his family situation and that he has cleared it with the Dean. It soon becomes clear that the real reason that Ben is staying in California is because he thinks that another man will steal Anna away from him. He comments that he does not trust characters like Django and Danny and gets visibly angered when the men are flirtatious with Anna. In the end, Anna convinces Ben that jealousy is not a good reason to quit going to Princeton and the two end the relationship on mutual terms, but not before getting into several arguments stemming from Ben's jealousy.

## Teen Angst

The emotional rollercoaster of teenage life is highlighted in the book. Each character struggles with issues like fitting in, young love and what to do with their lives after high school. Anna is the protagonist so her thoughts on life are accented the most. Anna goes through several emotional journeys in the book and comes out with a new outlook on her life by the final pages. Through her internship with Apex, Anna learns that playing the Hollywood game is just not for her and turns down an offer to come back to the company after she is wrongfully fired. She does not care that she may be offending Clark Sheppard, one of the most powerful men in the city, and goes with her heart when declining a position with the talent agency. Anna also learns a lot about matters of the heart in the book. Though she believes that she loves Ben, she is willing to let the relationship end because it is the smart thing for both parties. She does not throw herself into a new relationship right away, but instead decides that she is just going to have fun for awhile with people like Danny and Django.

Adam Flood is another character who demonstrates anxiety. Though he has many girls who want to date him, Adam cannot stop thinking about Anna. He wonders what went wrong in the relationship and pines for her when he sees a picture that they took together on the beach. Adam chooses to work through the issues that are troubling him with music. He has no problem attending a Beck concert by himself simply because he wants to hear the music live. Adam is not self-conscious about his looks or how others perceive him, but his emotional side gets the best of him when it comes to the issue of Anna.

Cammie and Sam are also examples of characters who are still trying to learn how to rise above the emotional nature of being a teenager and find their true selves. Cammie believes herself to be a leader but her desire to manipulate and impress others with her money shows that she is just like much of the rest of the Beverly Hills scene. Sam is self-conscious about her looks and has trouble trusting men because she always believes that they are trying to get to her father, a famous movie star. Sam is able to overcome some of her anxiety when she is working on her passion — filmmaking. She relies on her instinct and produces work that her peers admire.



# Style

## Point of View

The book is written from a third-person narrative point of view, with the majority of the focus placed on Anna Percy. Anna is the protagonist and as a result, readers get insight into what she is thinking. Through the third-person narrative voice, readers learn about Anna's past and how the prior events of her life have shaped the current events. Readers can also deduce that Anna is pretty true to herself in her interactions with others. The way that she acts matches up with her internal monologue and she is what she seems. Anna is not hiding any agenda or desire to manipulate, but is simply trying to figure out her own life and identity.

Other characters are also the focus of the narrative throughout the book too. The heartbreak of Adam Flood is examined through his own thoughts and readers see that Adam and Anna actually have a lot in common. Adam is not over Anna yet and he does not pretend to be with other people. Cammie's thoughts are also highlighted, especially as they relate to her feelings of disdain towards Anna. The difference between Cammie's inner monologue and the other characters is that she seems to have a sensitive, caring side that she chooses to hide from the rest of the world. Cammie is not actually as cold-hearted as she would like others to believe but disguises her warm qualities well.

## Setting

The book is set in Beverly Hills, California. The protagonist, Anna Percy, is a senior at Beverly Hills High School and recently moved there from New York City. Anna finds the fast-paced, superficiality of the Beverly Hills community to be much different from her former life and much of the book deals with Anna adjusting to the new lifestyle. Real-life Beverly Hills locations are mentioned in the book, including the Beverly Hills Hotel and the Polo Lounge. The teenagers in the story are at home in the elite community and do not particularly like outsiders.

Places outside of Beverly Hills are also mentioned and provide the backdrop for the many of the scenes in the storyline. Hermosa Beach is especially prominent as it is the setting of the television pilot where Anna is working as an intern. It is also the location of the cast and crew party that brings together many of the characters and stirs up emotions. The Valley also plays a role in setting. It is where the Beverly Hills High School students go to attend a basketball game against Van Nuys High School and also where Cammie's stepsister Mia comes from. The students in Beverly Hills despise the Valley and anyone from the area.



## Language and Meaning

The book is written in a conversational style that is easy to follow. The narrative and dialogue is easy to understand and keeps the reader moving forward through the plot with ease. Since teenagers are the main focus of the book, the story is told using vocabulary that is common to contemporary youth. Anna and Cammie have the most complex thoughts and they are explored through the narrative. Readers know exactly what these characters are feeling at each moment in the book through the descriptive language that is present in the writing.

Even though the characters in the book belong to an elite society in Beverly Hills, the author wants all readers to be able to relate to the challenges and emotions of the characters. The point of this is to show that some feelings, especially those of teenagers, are universal. These feelings include wanting to belong, falling in love and trying to find an identity separate from parents and friends. The author shows that even with all of the right designer clothing and expensive cars, the teenagers of Beverly Hills High are not immune from heartbreak, betrayal and confusion about life. A reader from any walk of life can relate to the problems in the lives of characters like Cammie, Anna, Sam, and Adam and see some of their own life reflected in the emotions of the book.

## Structure

The book is written in 24 chapters of varying length that have individual titles. Each chapter encapsulates a scene and is generally written from the perspective of one character. Occasionally, a chapter will have more than one perspective represented and the break in the characterization is clearly outlined. Since the book is the third in a series, it begins without much exposition and ends without much finality. The idea is that the book is sort of a "chapter" in itself in the longer series of books. This book can be read alone but is better understood along with the other books in the series.

The main plot in the story is the internship that Anna has with Apex Talent and what happens in her personal life during the time frame. Anna takes on a larger role with the company by becoming the intern on the set of a new television pilot. In the process, she is introduced to Danny Bluestone — an attractive, young producer who makes her forget temporarily about her boyfriend Ben. Anna's decisions regarding her relationships and budding career make up the main plot of the story. The secondary plots is Cammie adjusting to her new stepsister Mia and Cammie framing Anna for leaking secrets from the show. Other plotlines include Anna's sister Susan going to rehabilitation for alcohol use, Adam Flood and Cammie starting a romantic relationship and Sam and Anna planning to make a feature film together.



## Quotes

"So, actually, Sam was responsible for their having met in the first place. The least she could do was take Adam out for a nice dinner and try and seduce him" (Chapter 3).

"Just because a girl suffered from Beverly Hills ennui didn't mean she should let herself go" (Chapter 3).

"The unspoken message was that in Los Angeles, Hermosa Beach passed as literature" (Chapter 6).

"It seems as if in this town, if you have no interest in show business, show business is all the more interested in you" (Chapter 6).

"For all her insight into 'bonding,' Anna knew little about intimacy" (Chapter 7).

"So often Anna - who'd traveled all over the world - felt like Los Angeles was an alien universe, where she needed a full-time cultural guide in order to understand the natives" (Chapter 8).

"Just remember, animosity turns loose free radicals. And this isn't a theory. It was in the Monday Health section of the Los Angeles Times. I think" (Chapter 8).

"Anna couldn't make sense out of the conversation, other than to decide that a TV-writers' room had to be the most profane place in the universe" (Chapter 9).

"Sometimes 'no' meant 'maybe,' and 'maybe' meant 'yes.' And sometimes 'no' definitely meant 'yes.' Like now" (Chapter 11).

"He wasn't pining for Anna, exactly. Nor was he in love with her. But he knew he'd been in the process of falling in love with her, deeply, truly, really in love" (Chapter 13).

"For once, Cammie didn't want to prove to a guy how hot she was. Instead she just wanted the guy" (Chapter 16).

"Out on the dance floor a girl with choppy dark hair lifted her Bebe T-shirt to expose a pair of perfect breasts. Yawn. Like having perfect tits in Los Angeles was something special" (Chapter 18).

"He was a great guy. She was a scorpion. Anna knew that it was only a matter of time before Adam got stung" (Chapter 18).



## Topics for Discussion

Who is Anna Percy? Explain how she is different from the other people who live in Beverly Hills. How did living on the East Coast shape Anna's personality? Why did Anna move to Beverly Hills? In your opinion, does Anna belong in Hollywood? Why or why not? What is Anna's outlook on love and relationships by the end of the book?

Who is Cammie Sheppard? In what ways is Cammie different from Anna Percy? What does the term "BAP" mean coming from Cammie? Give an example from the book that shows that Cammie is more sensitive than she lets other people believe. Describe the complicated relationship between Cammie and Mia. What is Cammie's favorite book and why? Why does Cammie frame Anna for leaking information about the cast of "Hermosa Beach?"

Anna believes that she is in love with Ben Birnbaum when the novel opens but how does this feeling change when she discovers that he has no plans to return to Princeton? What reason does Anna give for wanting to break up with Ben? Explain Anna's relationship with Django. How do you think Django feels towards Anna? How does her view on love change when Anna meets Danny Bluestone? Why does she forgive Danny at the end of the book? How are Anna's feelings about love influenced by her best friend from New York, Cynthia?

Describe Anna's attitude towards the hype surrounding Hollywood and the Beverly Hills lifestyle. How is Anna's view of the Hollywood scene different from friends like Sam and Cammie? What does Anna tell Danny that she wants to do with her life? Give an example of something that Anna seems to prefer in California over New York. What role does Anna play in the partnership with Sam for class? Despite her nonchalant attitude, why do Hollywood insiders seem to like Anna?

Describe the relationship between Django and Anna. How did Django meet Anna's father? What offer does Anna make to try to help Django's musical talent be discovered? What instrument does Django play? Based on clues in the text, why is Django living in the guest house on Anna's property? What type of food does Django insist that Anna try? What food does he make her for breakfast? Is Ben right to be jealous of Django?

What body image issues does Samantha Sharpe have? Why does Anna tell Sam that she is "in the wrong city?" What happens with the attractive young actor who hits on Samantha at the cast party? What is the name of the diet that Samantha is on in the book? What talent does Sam show in the Hollywood sector? How does her famous father influence her life for good or bad? Why do you think Sam and Anna seem to be forming such a close friendship?

Clothing and accessories play a big role in the lives of the characters — how do they add to the atmosphere of the book? Does the inclusion of designer names isolate readers or make the story more interesting? Name two characters that do not seem to



care about designer labels. Why is Cammie so obsessed with wearing the right name brands? How does Cammie react when Mia tries on her expensive clothing? Would the inclusion of expensive clothing, cars and other items make sense if the book was set anywhere other than Beverly Hills?