

INVASION OF THE BOY SNATCHERS

A CLIQUE NOVEL BY
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THE BLOCK ESTATE
MASSIE'S BEDROOM

Saturday, January 24th
7:00 P.M.

“Done, done, and done.” Massie Block stretched out her arms so she looked like the letter *T*, then collapsed face-first onto the fluffy purple duvet cover on her bed. Goose-down feathers puffed up around her like a taco shell when she landed, and she could feel her aching legs throbbing to the beat of her pounding heart. Who knew putting twenty-six Christmas presents away could be harder on the body than an eight-hour shopping spree on Fifth Avenue?

After a brief moment of peace, Massie’s amber eyes popped open and filled with panic.

“Ehmagod, Bean, what have I done?” She beckoned to her black pug. “Now my sheets are all messy.” Massie used her last bits of arm strength to push herself off the bed, and once she was standing on her white sheepskin rug, she smoothed her hand over the duvet and pulled each corner so it was taut and crease-free. She admired the gold lion charm as it dangled off her bracelet and dragged across the purple cotton. It was a Christmas gift from Claire. And Massie legitimately liked it.

“It has double meaning,” Claire had said as she’d handed Massie the square-shaped red metallic box on Christmas day. “It’s a Leo, ’cause that’s your birth sign. And

since it's a lion, like my last name, you'll always remember who gave it to you."

Massie remembered how her stomach had churned after Claire said that. It had reminded her that the Lyons were about to move to Chicago. And Claire's bright, innocent smile made it obvious that she still had no clue. Now that the holidays were over and school was about to start up again, Jay Lyons was finally going to break the news to his only daughter. Massie checked the stainless steel face of her new Coach watch with the dyed mahogany calf-hair strap. In one hour Claire would know everything.

Massie shook her head. She had worked too hard perfecting her bedroom and refused to let the Claire situation cloud the moment. There would be plenty of time for sadness later. So instead, she put her hands on her hips and admired her work.

"Bean, I don't know what gift I ah-dore more." Massie's puppy was curled up in her new doggie bunk bed, fighting to keep her tired eyes open. "My new Bean mannequin or my Glossip Girl collection? They are both so ah-mazing."

Every year for Christmas Massie got a new mannequin that had been custom made to her exact size. It was the perfect way for her to try on different outfits without having to get undressed and mess up her hair. Right now, her mannequin was wrapped in three different Dixons—the colored mesh tubes that she'd gotten as a special gift from the *Teen People* fashion editors. The gift had been their way of saying thank-you for modeling in their holiday issue. And Massie

couldn't have been happier. She had already thought of thirty-seven ways to wear a Dixon and knew that with a little time she'd think of more.

But Massie wasn't the only girl with her own mannequin. This year Santa had gotten one for Bean too.

The spongy foam dog was dressed in a maroon cable-knit wool sweater, tiny beige Ugg boots, and a cashmere scarf covered in different-colored pom-poms. It was tonight's après-dinner walk ensemble. Bean had picked it out herself.

To the right of the mannequins, beside Massie's closet door, was a long mirrored shelf lined with twenty-two different tubes of lip gloss. Now that she was a member of the Glossip Girl club, a fresh exotic flavor arrived at her doorstep every morning. Candy Apple was the latest addition. And it was delicious.

Her enormous walk-in closet was stuffed with colorful stacks of cashmere sweaters that she'd bought in Aspen and four new pairs of jeans. She'd even managed to add seven new rhinestone brooches to her current collection, which brought her total up to twenty-four and pretty much guaranteed her title of Girl with the Most Brooches at Octavian Country Day School.

In a moment of sheer creative brilliance, Massie had stuck them to a red corkboard above her desk so they would sparkle over her head while she did her homework, like constellations made of jewels.

Yes, Massie was ready for the new semester.

She sat down at her desk and switched on her new Power Mac G5 computer. It was time she shared her “In” and “Out” lists with the public by turning them into a blog. What better way to help losers keep track of the latest trends? It was all part of her New Year’s resolution to make the world a better place. Massie smiled to herself while the G5’s hard drive booted up. She was making a difference.

The instant Massie was online, a barrage of “welcome back” instant messages popped up on her screen. She clicked on Alicia Rivera’s first.

HOLAGURRL : HOW WZ ASPEN?

MASSIEKUR : GR8. AH-MAZING SNOW. HOW WZ SPAIN?

HOLAGURRL : LOCO.

Massie rolled her eyes. Every time Alicia came back from visiting her family in Spain she acted Spanish. She spoke with a Spanish accent and overused words like *loco* and *amigo*. Thankfully, by midweek she’d remember she was 100 percent American and return to normal.

HOLAGURRL : MY 13-YR-OLD COUSIN NINA CAME BACK WITH US. SHE’S GOING 2 SPEND THE SEMESTER @ OCD. WE R HAVING A WELCOME 2 WESTCHESTER FIESTA 4 HER 2MORROW NIGHT. EVERY 1 IS INVITED. BRIARWOOD BYZ 2!

Massie felt the bottoms of her feet tingle when she read, “Briarwood boys.” The Briarwood Academy was known for two things: its soccer team and ah-dorable boys. And her latest crush, Derrick Harrington—or Derrington, as she secretly liked to call him—happened to be a star in both categories. And if she remembered correctly, Alicia’s cousin Nina would not be a threat.

Massie had seen enough Nina pictures over the years to know that the girl was a full-fledged LBR—Loser Beyond Repair. Her clothes were totally Sears. And her hair was overprocessed and underconditioned. She looked like a “before” picture from *Extreme Makeover*.

Thankfully, Nina was one year older than Massie, so chances were their paths wouldn’t cross. There was nothing worse than being seen with a dorky foreign exchange student. It was popularity poison.

Ding.

An IM from Kristen Gregory.

SEXYSPOrtsBABE: HOWZ YOUR ASPEN J?

MASSIEKUR: HA HA!

SEXYSPOrtsBABE: SOOO BORING HERE W/O U.

MASSIEKUR: HOW R U?

SEXYSPOrtsBABE: BALD.

MASSIEKUR: ???

SEXYSPOrtsBABE: MOM MADE ME GO 2 SUPER-CUTS. THEY SCALPED ME. I’M WEARING MY GRANDFATHER’S FEDORA. GOT ANY COOL CAPS?

MASSIEKUR: NO WAY! CAPS ARE OUT.

SEXYSPORTSBABE: SO IS LOOKING LIKE RYAN SEACREST.

MASSIEKUR: SEACREST OUT!

SEXYSPORTSBABE: SO NOT FUNNY!

Next, Massie clicked on Dylan Marvil's IM.

BIGREDHEAD: I GAINED 3 LBS OVER BREAK. AM FATTER THAN SANTA.

MASSIEKUR: ????

BIGREDHEAD: THE FOOD IN TONGA SUCKED. THE ONLY THING TO EAT ON THE ISLAND WAS FRIES W/ TARTAR SAUCE. UNLESS OF COURSE YOU LIKE FISH WITH THE HEADS STILL ON THEM.

MASSIEKUR: EW!

BIGREDHEAD: THIS YEARZ GONNA SUCK. I THINK I CAUGHT A COLD ON THE PLANE. SICK PEOPLE SHOULD NOT B ALLOWED IN 1st CLASS.

MASSIEKUR: AGREED.

BIGREDHEAD: COULD B WORSE. I COULD B CLAIRE. HOW DID SHE TAKE THE NEWS ABOUT CHICAGO?

MASSIEKUR: SHHHHH! SHE DOESN'T KNOW YET.

Massie was interrupted by Kristen's IM response.

SEXYSPOrtsBABE: BTW, HOW DID CLAIRE TAKE THE NEWS?

She was interrupted again by Alicia's.

HOLAGURRL: DID CLAIRE MOVE TO CHICAGO YET?
MASSIEKUR: I'M CALLING YOU.

The three pea-sized silver bells that hung from Massie's cell phone antenna clanged together as she speed-dialed her best friends. This conversation was way too classified for IM.

"Are you insane?" Massie barked once all four girls were on the phone. "Claire could have been sitting right beside me." She looked to make sure her door was closed before continuing. "I told you never to talk about Claire and Chicago until the story goes public."

"Rorsy," Kristen whispered softly.

"*What?*" The rest of them said.

"That's a word jumble," Kristen said, as though it were obvious. "I was so bored over Christmas break I finished eleven word jumble books. I like them much better than crossword puzzles."

"Sorry!" Alicia shouted.

Massie flicked one of the bell charms with her thumb. "Huh?"

"*Rorsy* is word jumble for *sorry*," Alicia insisted.

Massie could practically hear her proud smile through the phone, her perfect white teeth gleaming and twinkling against her tanned skin.

“Wait, so does this mean Claire *still* doesn’t know she’s moving to Chicago?” Dylan asked.

Massie sighed. “Yup.”

“On yaw!” Kristen said.

“Yes way!” Massie replied as quickly as she could. Alicia wasn’t the only one who could speak jumble. “Mr. Lyons is breaking it to the families tonight at my dad’s country club.”

“How do you know all of this?” Dylan demanded.

“Claire’s younger brother, Todd, feeds me secret information. All I had to do was buy him the new Atari Anthology. Now he tells me everything he overhears.”

“No fair, I want a Todd,” Alicia whined.

“I’m your Todd,” Massie said.

“Gawd, how did you keep the secret the whole time you were in Aspen together?” Kristen asked. “You two are sooo close. I thought it would have slipped out eventually.”

“It wasn’t easy,” Massie explained, ignoring Kristen’s sarcasm. “But I didn’t want to ruin her trip.”

“Awww, how sweet of you,” Dylan cooed insincerely. Then her tone became stern and serious. “But maybe she’d be better off in Chicago. And then things could finally get back to normal around here.”

“Yeah,” Kristen said.

Massie ran her fingers through her dark glossy hair and

sighed. “What are you trying to say?” she asked, even though she knew the answer.

“Nothing,” Alicia said, trying to keep the peace. “They’re not saying anything.”

“Listen,” Massie said, “the Lyonses have been living in my guesthouse since September, and it’s pretty much sucked. No one knows that more than you guys. And now that Claire and I have finally decided to stop making each other miserable, you’re all upset. I don’t get it. I thought you’d be happy for me.”

“We’re glad you’re not making each other miserable, but did you have to become BFFs?” Dylan said, and then blew her nose.

It was obvious Kristen, Dylan, and Alicia were jealous. And Massie wasn’t in the mood to deal. She took a deep breath and, when she exhaled, let all of her friend-stress go. The last few months had been so full of fighting, and Massie desperately wanted the new year to be fun.

She heard a light tapping on her bedroom door. “Gotta go,” she whispered.

“Was it something we said?” Alicia sounded genuinely concerned.

“No. Claire’s here.”

“Shocker,” Dylan said under her breath.

“She’s always there,” Kristen said before hanging up.

Massie snapped her phone shut and quickly shut off her computer. “Come in.”

Claire pushed the door open but stayed in the hallway. She widened her big blue eyes and opened her mouth. She looked like a shocked emoticon. “I can’t believe my eyes.”

“Me either,” Massie said to Claire’s shoes. “Are you really wearing *those* to the High Hills Country Club tonight?”

“I thought you’d like my new camo high-tops.” Claire stuck out her right leg and pointed her toes like a ballerina. “They’re Converse, not Keds.”

“I know what they are.” Massie raised her eyes, scanning Claire’s faded high-waisted Gap jeans and then her flower-print button-down with pink pearl western buttons.

“I knew you’d like them.” Claire smiled. “I e-mailed a picture of them to Cam and he said he got the exact same pair over break. I swear sometimes I think we’re more like twins than boyfriend and girlfriend.”

“So, are you and Cam Fisher officially boyfriend and girlfriend now?” Massie asked casually. She didn’t want Claire to know how much that news shocked her. But how could it not? Claire actually had a real boyfriend before she did. That was not supposed to happen.

“Yeah, he just asked me.” Claire blushed. “It was so cute—he sent me an Evite inviting me to be his girlfriend.”

Massie pretended to be distracted by a piece of lint on the sleeve of her tweed blazer.

Claire giggled softly, then said, “I RSVP’d ‘yes.’”

Massie looked up. “That’s great.” She forced herself to

smile. “But that still doesn’t change the fact that you’re planning to wear camo sneakers to a country club.”

Claire rolled her eyes and smiled.

Massie was tempted to say she wouldn’t use those shoes to scoop up Bean’s poo. But she couldn’t be mean. Not tonight.

“Your room looks ah-mazing.” Claire changed the subject. Massie giggled when she heard Claire using one of her expressions. After all, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

“Thanks. Wanna see all my new clothes?” Massie waved her arms in the air like a game-show hostess.

“Uh, sure.” But she was staring at Massie’s Glossip Girl collection.

“Feel free to wear whatever you want to the club tonight.” Massie pushed her closet door and it popped open. She tugged on the purple feather boa that hung from the light switch in the middle of the ceiling and a warm orange light lit the inside, triggering a disco ball that automatically started spinning, sending white, swirling squares across the walls.

“It looks like Benetton in here.” Claire admired the colorful selection.

“More like Bergdorf’s. Here.” Massie yanked a caramel-colored cashmere cowl-neck sweater off a hanger and draped it over Claire’s shoulder. Then she grabbed her dark Juicy Couture jeans and a pair of two-inch teal round-toe Marc Jacobs boots. “Wear this. And cuff the jeans so the boots show.”

“Why are you letting me wear your new clothes?”

“The club has a dress code.”

Claire held the jeans in her arms and crinkled her eyebrows. “What is it?”

“Cool,” Massie said with a playful smile.

Claire giggled and shrugged.

Before she slid off her jeans, Claire emptied her pockets. “Want one?” She dangled a clear plastic bag in front of Massie’s face. Tangles of oily gummy worms were stuck together in a sweaty clump.

“Uh, okay,” Massie said, making every effort to be nice.

“Really?” Claire pulled the bag away. “But you hate sugar.”

“No, I don’t,” Massie said, reaching for it. “Remember all of those mints I stole from the front desk at the ski lodge?”

The girls started cracking up when they remembered how stuffed Massie’s pockets had been. She’d barely been able to walk.

“Yeah, but you didn’t eat those; we threw them off the chair lifts.” Claire laughed.

“I ate a few.” Massie dug her hand into the bag. It was humid inside. She wouldn’t have felt any more disgusted if the worms had been real.

“Oh, here.” Claire tossed her digital camera to Massie.

“What’s this camera for?”

“I thought we could download the pictures from our trip onto your new computer.” Claire fell backward onto Massie’s bed. She was struggling to fasten the jeans.

“Uh, can you . . . ?” Massie was about to ask Claire to get off her bed, but it was too late. The duvet was already dented.

“I thought we could e-mail the good ones to Cam.” Claire sounded like she had just been punched in the stomach, until she finally closed the jeans. “I want to show him what a good time we had in Aspen. We should send some to Derrington too.”

Massie’s stomach flip-flopped when she heard Derrington’s name. No matter how hard she tried, she hadn’t been able to stop thinking about Derrington over break, and she wondered if he missed her half as much. He’d popped into her head as she was opening presents on Christmas day and while she was skiing moguls in Aspen. Massie had no idea why she was crushing so hard on a guy who wore shorts in the winter and insisted on wiggling his bare butt in public at least three times a week. Yes, his shaggy blond hair and sparkly brown eyes made him cuter than the majority of the Briarwood boys, and yes, he was the most valued player on their soccer team, but it was more than that. It had something to do with the fact that he’d exchanged the Diesel jeans Massie had bought him for Christmas and gotten two pairs of cargo shorts instead. On one hand it was rude, but on the other it was kind of cool. Derrington was the only person Massie had ever met who wasn’t afraid of her. And that made Massie a little afraid of him, in a good way. “I’ll need time to Photoshop them. I’m not sending anything unless we look ah-mazing.”

“Fine with me,” Claire agreed as she pulled the cowl-neck sweater over her head.

Kendra Block’s pinched voice bleated over the white intercom on Massie’s bedside table.

“Girls, we’re leaving for the club in five minutes,” she said.

“Kay, Mom,” Massie yelled to the white box.

“I wonder what my dad’s big surprise is.” Claire smiled and bit her bottom lip. She leaned against Massie’s desk and slid on the teal boots. Her face looked like it was being swallowed by the wide cowl-neck as she looked down to zip them up. “I bet he wants to celebrate my first A ever in Spanish. Or maybe we’re finally trading in that Ford Taurus for a new car.”

Claire hobbled around Massie’s room, trying to get her balance in Massie’s heels. “Wait, I know—I bet they’re buying a ski house in Aspen right next to yours so we can go there together every Christmas. How awesome would that be?” The excitement made Claire lose her balance. She teetered for a few seconds and then fell face-first into the butt of the Bean mannequin, which then knocked over the Massie mannequin. They both came crashing down on top of Claire. In an instant she was buried under a tangle of spongy arms, legs, and paws.

“Ehmagod, are you okay?” Massie was glad Claire couldn’t see the smile that was fighting its way onto her face.

A muffled “ugggh” was all she heard back.

Massie started laughing so hard she couldn't breathe. Then tears welled up in her eyes. And before she knew it, her teeth were chattering and she was crying, for real.

Claire pulled herself out from under the heap of body parts. Her torso was shaking with laughter and her otherwise pale cheeks were flushed.

When she finally caught her breath, Claire looked at Massie with a trace of concern. “Are you crying? Because if anyone gets to cry, it should be me.” She rubbed her elbow.

“No.” Massie wiped her cheeks. “I just get teary when I laugh too hard.” It wasn't entirely true, but it was a lot cooler than saying, “I am crying because you're the closest thing I've ever had to a sister and I hate that you have to leave.”

“Sorry about the mannequins. I don't think they're broken.” Claire pulled off the teal boots and slid on her camo high-tops.

While Claire laced up, Massie double-checked her own outfit. Her new True Religion jeans fit perfectly and the chocolate-brown tweed blazer with the velvet rope belt was perfect for the club. But it needed a little extra something. Massie climbed up on her desk and reached for the red corkboard on her ceiling. She plucked the green four-leaf clover brooch out of the cork and forced the pin through the thick tweed on her lapel. She needed all the luck she could get.

“Ow!” she yelped.

“What?”

“I pricked myself.” Massie watched a ruby red bead of blood ooze out onto her finger. She waved her left hand in the air to shake off the sting.

“Does it hurt?” Claire asked. “Do you need a Band-Aid?”

Massie sucked on her throbbing thumb, thinking about what lay ahead. “Nah, it’s nothing.” The rest of her night was going to hurt a lot more.

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