

# Chapter One

*Last day of school.* Are there four sweeter words in the English language?

Not that I dislike school, don't get me wrong. But after conquering seventh grade — four As and one A-minus, thank you very much — I was ready for two whole beautiful months with no homework, essays, or pop quizzes, that was for sure.

I gazed around the cafeteria, where I was sitting at my usual table, finishing up lunch with my friends. The lunchroom was louder than normal, buzzing with a slightly wacky last-day-of-school energy. A group of sixth-grade boys were tossing their milk cartons into a garbage can halfway across the room. Everyone laughed when Eddie Noonan missed and beaned Maria Gonzalez in the head.

She threw it back at him, nailing him right in the stomach. The room erupted into cheers.

“They’re going to get detention,” said my friend Amy Arthur worriedly, pushing her black, rectangular glasses higher up on the bridge of her nose. Back in fifth grade, a substitute teacher had unjustly accused Amy of passing notes. She’d received her one and only detention and now lived in fear of it — for anyone.

“There’s no such thing as detention on the last day of school,” our other friend Heather Hanson scoffed, tossing her dirty-blonde corkscrew curls over her shoulder. Heather may look like a china doll, but she is tough as nails. She pointed to a group of teachers, allegedly on lunchroom duty. They were chatting away, oblivious to the cafeteria Olympics. “The teachers want out of here as much as we do.”

Amy shrugged and changed the subject. “Are you guys aware that this is the last lunch we will ever have together as seventh graders?” she asked, gazing at each of us solemnly.

“Wow,” Jessica Wu said in her sweetly spacey way. Her straight black hair, up in a ponytail, was even spikier than usual. “That’s intense!”