



LoveReading4kids.co.uk
is a book website
created for parents and
children to make
choosing books easy
and fun

Opening extract from
All the Rage

Written by
Courtney Summers

Published by
Macmillan Children's Books

All Text is Copyright © of the Author and/or Illustrator

Please print off and read at your leisure.



First published in the US 2015 by St. Martin's Griffin

First published in the UK 2016 by Macmillan Children's Books
an imprint of Pan Macmillan
20 New Wharf Road, London N1 9RR
Associated companies throughout the world
www.panmacmillan.com

ISBN 978-1-5098-1759-7

Copyright © Courtney Summers 2015

The right of Courtney Summers to be identified as the author
of this work has been asserted by her in accordance with the
Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced,
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means
(electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise),
without the prior written permission of the publisher.

1 3 5 7 9 8 6 4 2

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Designed by Anna Gorovoy
Printed and bound by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon CR0 4YY

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not,
by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, resold, hired out,
or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent
in any form of binding or cover other than that in which
it is published and without a similar condition including this
condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

the boy is beautiful.

She wants him to look at her.

Look at me, look at me, look at me.

Look at her. She's young, she's vital, she's a star in the sky. She's agonized over this night, agonized over every second of getting ready, like the perfect combination of clothes and makeup will unlock the secrets of the universe. Sometimes it feels like that much is at stake.

She has never been hungrier in her life.

You look perfect, her best friend, Penny, says, and that's all she needs to hear to feel worthy of the

4 COURTNEY SUMMERS

six-letter name she's tattooed on her heart. Penny would know about perfect. Penny's got the kind of face and body that stops traffic, turns heads, leaves people open-mouthed, in awe. The kind of pretty that makes you prettier just by being close to it and she's always close to it, because they're close. Secret-keeping close.

Thank you, she says. She's never had a best friend before, let alone been one. It's a strange feeling, to have a place. Like there was an empty spot beside another (perfect) girl, just waiting for her. She pulls at her skirt, adjusts the thin straps of her top. It feels like too much and not enough at the same time.

Do you really think he'll like it?

Yeah. Now don't do anything stupid.

Is this stupid? It's so much later now and *beautiful, beautiful*, she's saying to the boy because she can't seem to shut up. She has had one, no, two, no, three-four shots and this is what happens when that much drinking happens. She says things like, *you are so beautiful. I just really wanted to tell you that.*

The boy is beautiful.

Thank you, he says.

She reaches clumsily across the table and threads her fingers through his hair, enjoying the feel of his dark curls. Penny sees this happen somehow, sees through the wall of an entirely different room where she's been wrapped around her boyfriend because suddenly, she's there, saying, *don't let her drink anymore.*

I won't, the boy promises.

It makes her feel warm, being looked out for. She tries to articulate this with her numb tongue, but all

that comes out: *is this stupid? Am I stupid?*

You're one drink away, Penny says, and laughs at the stricken expression this news inspires. Penny hugs her, tells her not to worry about it, whispers in her ear before disappearing back behind her wall, *but he's looking at you.*

Look at her.

Drink.

Six-seven-eight-nine shots later and she's thinking *oh no* because she is going to puke. He walks her through his house, guides her away from the party.

You want to get some air? You want to lie down?

No, she wants her best friend because she worries she is so many drinks past stupid now and she doesn't know what to do about that.

It's okay. I'll get her. But first you should lie down.

There's a truck, a classic pickup pride and joy. There's the truck's bed, and the cold shock of it against her back makes her shiver. The stars above move or maybe it's the earth, that slow and sure turning of the earth. No. It's the sky and it's speaking to her.

Close your eyes.

He waits. He waits because he's a nice boy. A blessed boy. He's on the football team. His father is the sheriff and his mother sits at the top of a national auto supply chain and they are both so proud.

He waits until he can't wait anymore.

She thinks he's beautiful. That's enough.

The hard ridges of the truck bed never warm under her body but her body is warm. He feels everything under her shirt before he takes it off.

Look at me, look at me, hey, look at me.

He wants her to look at him.

6 COURTNEY SUMMERS

Her eyes open slowly. His tongue parts her lips. She's never felt so sick. He explores the terrain of her body while he pretends to negotiate the terms.

You want this, you've always wanted this and we're not going that far, I promise.

Really? His hands are everywhere and he's a vicious weight on top of her that she can't breathe against so she cries instead, and how do you get a girl to stop crying?

You cover her mouth.

No, I'm not there . . . I'm not there anymore. That was a long time ago, a year ago, and that girl—I'm not her again. I can't be.

I'm in the dirt. I'm on my hands and my knees and I'm crawling in it, what I came from. I don't remember standing, don't remember ever being a thing that could stand. Just this dirt, this road. I opened my mouth to it, tasted it. It's under my fingernails. A night passed from the ground. Now it's early morning and I'm thirsty.

A dry wind moves through the trees off the road beside me, stirring their leaves. I dredge up spit to wet my swollen lips and lick my bloodstained teeth. It's hot out, the kind of heat that creeps up on you and makes mirages on the road. The kind that shrivels the elderly and carries them into the waiting, open arms of death.

I roll onto my back. My skirt rides up my legs. I pull at my shirt and find it open, feel my bra unclasped. I fumble buttons through holes, covering myself even though it is so. Hot. I can't. I touch my fingertips to my throat. Breathe.

My bones ache, have aged somehow in the last twenty-four hours. I press my palms against the grit and the bitter hurt of it startles me into semiawareness. They're scraped, raw and pink, what happens when you crawl.

A distant rumbling reaches my ears. A car. It passes and then slows, backs up, comes to a halt beside me. Its door opens and slams shut. I close my eyes and listen to the soft crunch of soft soles on rough gravel.

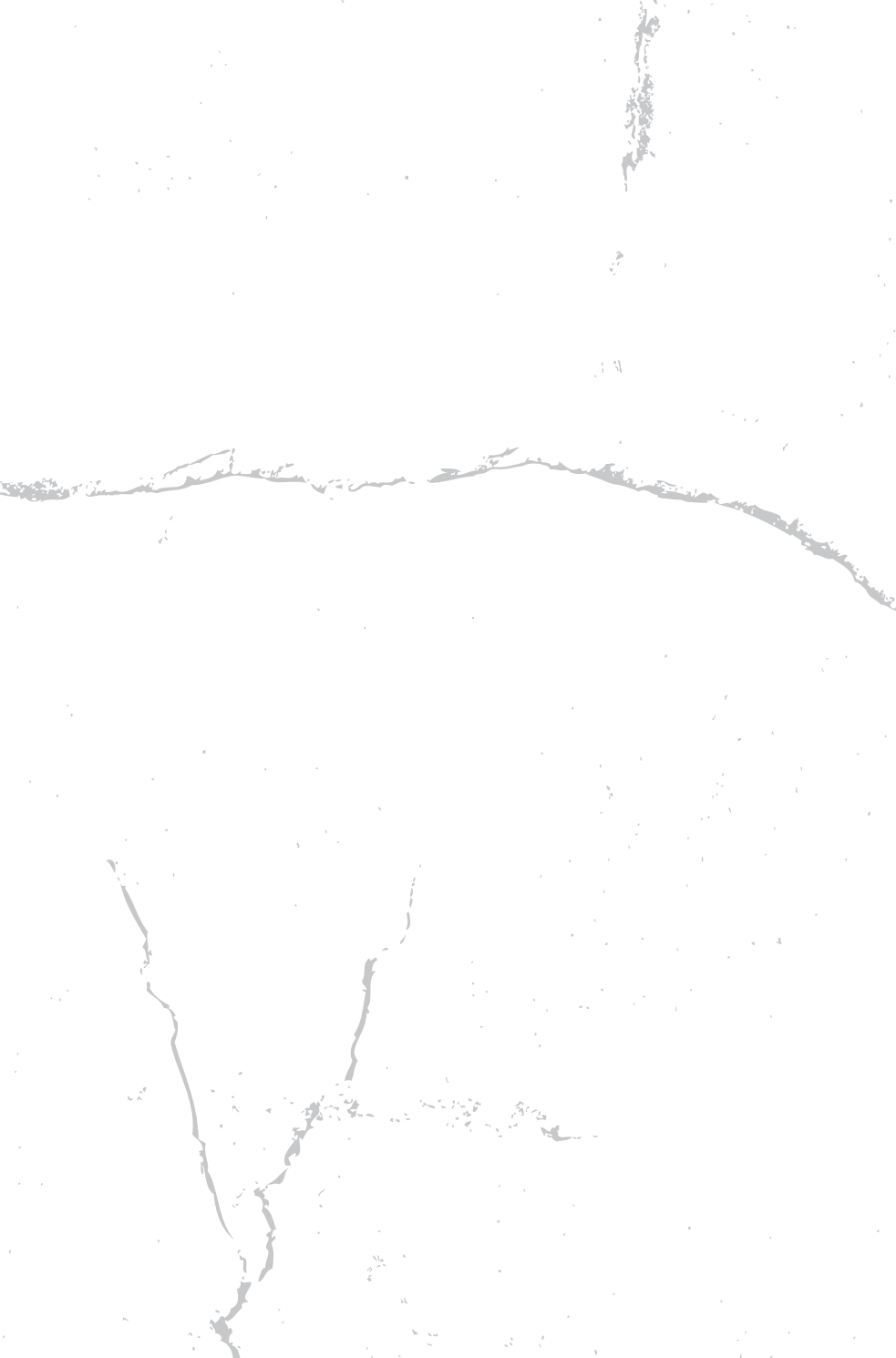
Birds are singing.


The footsteps stop but the birds are still singing, singing about a girl who wakes up on a dirt road and doesn't know what happened to her the night before, and the person standing over her, a shadow across her body that blocks out the sun. Maybe it's someone nice. Or maybe someone come to finish whatever it is that's been started. About a girl.

Don't look at her.



**TWO
WEEKS
EARLIER**





before i tore the labels off, one was called *Paradise* and the other, *Hit and Run*. It doesn't matter which is which. They're both blood red.

Proper application of nail polish is a process. You can't paint it on like it's nothing and expect it to last. First, prep. I start with a four-way buffer. It gets rid of the ridges and gives the polish a smooth surface to adhere to. Next, I use a nail dehydrator and cleanser because it's best to work with a nail plate that's dry and clean. Once it's evaporated, a thin layer of base coat goes on. The base coat protects the nails and prevents staining.

I like the first coat of polish to be thin enough to dry by

the time I've finished the last nail on the same hand. I keep my touch steady and light. I never drag the brush, I never go back into the bottle more than once per nail if I can help it. Over time and with practice, I've learned how to tell if what's on the brush will be enough.

Some people are lazy. They think if you're using a highly pigmented polish, a second coat is unnecessary, but that's not true. The second coat asserts the color and arms you against the everyday use of your hands, all the ways you can cause damage without thinking. When the second coat is dry, I take a Q-tip dipped in nail polish remover to clean up any polish that might have bled onto my skin. The final step is the top coat. The top coat is what seals in the color and protects the manicure.

The application of lipstick has similar demands. A smooth canvas is always best and dead skin must be removed. Sometimes that takes as little as a damp washcloth, but other times I scrub a toothbrush across my mouth just to be sure. When that's done, I add the tiniest amount of balm, so my lips don't dry out. It also gives the color something to hold on to.

I run the fine fibers of my lip brush across the slanted top of my lipstick until my lips are coated and work the brush from the center of my lips out. After the first layer, I blot on a tissue and add another layer, carefully following the outline of my small mouth before smudging the color out so it looks a little fuller. Like with the nail polish, layering always helps it to last.

And then I'm ready.



cat kiley is the first one down.

Today, anyway. I don't see it happen. I'm ahead, my feet kicking up track while the others pant behind me. The sun is in my throat. I woke up choking on it, my skin slimy with sweat and stuck to the sheets. It's a dry, stale summer that doesn't know it's supposed to be over. It breathes itself out slowly, wants us to forget other seasons. It's a sick heat. Makes you sick.

“Cat? *Cat!*”

I glance behind me, see her sprawled out on the track and keep moving. I focus on the steady rhythm of my pulse and by the time I've circled, she's coming around, less the girl

she was before she fell. Pale and monosyllabic. Sun-jacked. That's what the boys are calling it.

Coach Prewitt is on her knees, gently pouring a bottle of water over Cat's forehead while barking out questions. *You eat, Kiley? You eat breakfast today? Drink anything? You on your period?* The boys shift uncomfortably because oh God, what if she's bleeding.

"Does it matter? We shouldn't be out in this anyway," Sarah Trainer mutters.

Prewitt looks up and squints. "This heat ain't news, Trainer. You come to my class, you come prepared. Kiley, you eat today? Breakfast?"

"No," Cat finally manages.

Prewitt stands, her has-been athlete joints crackling and popping. This small act, this kneeling and rising, blossoms beads of sweat across her forehead. Cat struggles to her feet and sways. Her face is going to meet that track again if nobody gets ahold of her.

"Garrett, carry her to the nurse's office."

The lineman steps forward. Number 63. Broad shoulders, all muscled and firm. Never trust a blond boy, that's what my mom always says, and Brock Garrett is so blond his eyebrows are nearly invisible. The light above catches the fine hairs on his arms and makes them shimmer. He lifts Cat easily. Her head lolls against his chest.

Prewitt spits. It dries before it hits the ground. "Get back to it!" And we scatter, we run. There are thirty minutes of this period left and we can't all still be standing at the end of it.

"Think she's okay?" Yumi Suzuki gasps out ahead of me. Her long hair flies behind her and she makes a frustrated noise as she tries to hold it back with one hand before quickly giving up. Her elastic band snapped earlier. Prewitt wouldn't

let her go in for another because nothing short of collapsing gets you out of her class and even that gets taken out of your grade.

“She’s faking,” Tina Ortiz says. She’s tiny, just slightly over five feet. The boys used to call her an ankle-biting bitch until puberty hit and breasts happened. Now they just call her. “She wants to be carried.”

When Prewitt’s whistle finally blows and we’re dragging ourselves back inside, she grabs me by the arm and pulls me aside because she thinks I can run, she thinks I could get trophies or ribbons—whatever they give you for it.

“It’s your last year, Grey,” she says. “Make a difference for your school.”

I’d burn this place to the ground before I’d ever willingly make a difference for it, but I’m smarter than saying that out loud and she should be smarter than tempting me. I shake my head, wave her off. Her thin lips twitch with disappointment before melting into all the other lines on her worn face. I don’t much like Coach Prewitt, but I like her lines. No one fucks with her.

I fall in with the rest of my classmates and we stumble through the back entrance of Grebe High on spent legs, quietly moving past classes still in session. At the fork in the hall at the bottom of the stairs, Brock reappears, looking awfully satisfied with himself.

“Cat okay?” Tina asks.

“She’ll live.” He runs his hand over his head, flattening hair that’s barely there. “Why you want to know?”

“Did you even take her to the nurse’s office?”

He peers cautiously down the hall but Prewitt never follows us in, never sticks with us a second longer than she has to. We screw around in the halls, she hears about it. Makes us pay for it later.

“Eventually,” he says.

“That’s what I thought.”

“You jealous, Tina? Fall tomorrow. I’ll pick you up.”

She rolls her eyes and heads for the girls’ locker room, down the hall’s right tine. Not being outright rejected makes Brock man of the hour, so slap him on the back and tell him, *I bet she will. I bet tomorrow she’ll be riding your dick.* Do it; you’re so cool.

Brock punches Trey Marcus in the arm. “See that? That’s how it’s done.” Then he catches my eye. “What, Grey? You want to ride it?”

I follow the other girls to the locker room, where I get undressed. My fingers curl around the edge of my limp and dusty shirt. I bring it over my head and then I’m in my bra, sneaking looks at the other girls’ ribs, ridges, innies, outies, A, B, C, D and—Tina—E cups. Yesterday, Norah Landers learned something new about nipples. *They’re not all the same, you know.* We did, but the types apparently have different names. She ran us through them. It’s not like that in here all the time. Norah just couldn’t keep it to herself, I guess. So after we listened, entranced by this unexpected piece of information, and after we all glanced down and cataloged ourselves, we told her to shut the fuck up so we could go back to pretending we didn’t exist in this space together while being all too aware that we do.

“So she was faking,” Tina says to no one. Everyone.

I take my bra off. “If Brock Garrett said it, it must be true.”

Tina faces me and the faint tan lines on her light brown skin is all she’s wearing. She’s always first undressed. Confrontational nudity. I don’t know. Everything with Tina is a confrontation.

“What would you know about the truth?”

“Fuck you, Tina. That’s what I know.”

“Give it a rest,” Penny Young says.

“Why would I want to do a thing like that?” Tina asks.

Penny shimmies out of her shorts.

“Because I said so and you’re supposed to listen to your elders.”

“Well, my birthday’s next, so watch out. And how was Godwit, anyway? You didn’t call me back like you promised.” Tina arches her eyebrow. “Good weekend?”

Penny doesn’t answer, busying herself with the buttons of her collar. Tina stalks into the showers and I hear her muttering about what a whore I am before she slips into one of the curtained stalls because Tina always gets the last word, one way or another. The rest of the girls trail in after her and then it’s me and Penny, alone. She clutches a towel to herself but she doesn’t look like she needs a shower. No trace of Phys Ed on her, her hair no worse for wear, her skin sun-kissed instead of sun-killed. Penny Young is the most perfect girl you know and those kinds of girls, they’re put on this earth to break you. Peel back her skin and you can see her poison. Peel back mine, you can still see traces of where her poison’s been.

“Moving day,” she says.

She’s talking to me except we don’t talk. Sometimes a word or two will slip through, but only out of necessity. This is not that. I never told anyone about the move, but nothing stays secret long in Grebe. Word travels. Slurred in bars, murmured over fences between neighbors, muttered in the produce section of the grocery store and again at checkout because the cashier always has something to add. Cell phones don’t run as fast as the mouths in this town.

“What did you say?” I ask.

But she’s not looking at me and I wonder if I imagined it, if she said anything at all. I leave her there and find a shower

stall for myself where I run the water hot as the sun. It stings my skin. I imagine it eroding lines into me, all over my pale body, my arms, my legs, and especially my face until I look like one of those women. The kind no one fucks with.

I'm last out, I make sure of it. I turn the water off and stand there a minute, my wet hair clinging to my neck, drying fast and frizzing. When I get back to the change room, my locker is open and my clothes are on the floor.

My bra and underwear are gone.

My bra, one of the two I own, is an embarrassment. That's what Tina called it, once. It's a thin strip of material with skinny straps because there's nothing on me that really needs to be supported. I wore black bikini-cut underwear, nothing special. I grab the rest of my clothes. Today was cutoffs and a flimsy black shirt that needs something underneath it, but I try not to think about that. The others silently watch me dress. They watch me take out my lipstick and press it into my lips. They watch me check my nails for chips. As soon as I'm gone, their excited voices drift from behind the door.

Was it you? Did you do it? You're so cool.

I think of myself naked in that shower, think of the water running over me while someone moved around the next room and took the things that touched the most intimate parts of my body. I make my way down the hall with my arms crossed tightly over my chest.