



## CHAPTER 1

# LAST NIGHT

My head is pounding. The room is spinning. There is a horrible bitter taste in my mouth. I look at the clock. It's quarter to eleven. The sun is peeping out from behind the edges of the curtain. Even though it feels like I just fell into bed minutes ago, it is morning already. Slowly, I pull myself up into sitting position. I look across at my best friend, Jade. She is still asleep, snoring softly, stretched out on the guest bed she uses when she stays at my house overnight.

“Jade,” I hiss loudly.

No response. I try again but she still doesn't answer. Carefully, I climb out of bed. When I stand up, the room seems to tip from side to side. My legs feel wobbly as I make my way over to Jade. I sit on the edge of her bed and gently shake her. She doesn't move. I think about pulling back the curtains and letting the sun stream in. That would wake her up. But I decide not to — I am not ready for bright sunshine. The thought of it makes my head ache even more. I shake Jade a bit harder. Finally, she stirs. Her eyes flicker open.

“Leave me alone, Layla,” she moans sleepily.

“I can't. It's late. Nearly 11 am. If we don't get up now my mum will come in to wake us. If she sees the state we're in, she'll guess we've been drinking,” I explain.

Jade doesn't answer straightaway. I know she's fighting against getting up, but I'm expecting Mum to knock on the door any minute. I can't let her go back to sleep. Jade closes her eyes and then pulls the covers over her head.