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Opening extract from

Getting Away with it

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CHAPTER 1
TOGETHER

Mark missed Katie. Two weeks was a long time to be apart. He saw her at school, but she was always with her friends. She was always busy. He thought of giving her a call but didn't know what to say. His mates told him to forget her.

"It's over!" Tommy said. "Get someone else."

"I saw her out with a bloke," Pete said.

"No, that was her brother, you donkey!" Tommy said, flicking his finger on Pete's head.

"Was it?" Pete said, rubbing his head and looking upset.

Mark was working on a car when Katie rang him. He spent most of his free time at Eddie's Motor Repairs, his dad's garage. Big Norman was showing him how to check the brakes on a van when he heard his ring tone. When he saw the

name ‘Katie’ on his mobile he walked outside to take the call. The cold air hit him. He stamped his feet to keep warm. His breath made little clouds.

“Meet me tonight,” he said as soon as she spoke.

“At the sports centre?” she said.

The Sport and Fitness Centre was where they’d met two months before. She’d been playing in the girls’ football team and he’d been at the running club. He’d walked past the pitch and seen her blonde ponytail bobbing up and down. It was also the place where she dumped him.

“No,” he said. “Let’s go to Kings.”

Kings and Queens was a club they liked. It opened late and the music was good. You had to be over 18, but Mark and Katie had some fake ID and always got in without any questions.

“We have to get the last bus back.”

“OK!”

“Meet me at nine.” He ended the call.

When Mark got home, his dad was looking at himself in the hall mirror. He was combing his hair so that it covered a bald spot on his head.

“I’m staying at Lisa’s tonight,” he said.

“Again?” Mark said.

“Is that OK?”

“Sure.”

His dad seemed to spend most nights at his girlfriend’s house. It meant that Mark spent a lot of time with his grandad. He didn’t mind that. He liked the old man. Now and then he wished his dad was there more often. Then they could tell each other jokes and play cards. Sometimes they could have play fights. Like they did when he was younger. Before his dad met Lisa.

Just after 8 o’clock, Mark picked up his keys.

“See you later, Grandad,” he shouted and closed the front door behind him.

He met Katie inside Kings and Queens. He saw her straight away. She was wearing black jeans and a silver top. Her hair was loose, hanging down her back. She looked like a pop star.

“I’m sorry,” she said. “I made the biggest mistake breaking up with you.”

He gave a shrug.

“Did you miss me?”

“I can’t hear you!” he said.

The music was so loud that Mark felt as if the song was playing inside his head.

“Did you miss me?” she said, in a loud voice.

“Of course I did,” he shouted.

“I’ll make it up to you,” she said.

He liked it when she said that. He liked it when she made it up to him.

“There’s some seats over there,” he said. “Let’s sit down.”

As soon as they sat down Katie pulled his face round and kissed him hard on the mouth.

“Don’t feel like dancing anyway,” she whispered.

Mark just nodded. His lips were tingling from the kiss. He pulled her close. Her hair was on his face. He could smell lemon shampoo.

He and Katie were back together. It was perfect.