

# Chapter One

The whole thing started right after I erased my left eyebrow. Not that I'd meant to. Tuesday night I'd gone into high gear plucking my eyebrows. The next day I looked like I'd leaned too close to a Bunsen burner during a science experiment. This is big-time trauma when you're fifteen. I had to go around trying to keep my missing eyebrow covered with my

left hand. That was the day Brent Floyd decided to ask me to the Valentine's Day dance.

There I was at my locker, dumping my books. I was on my way to the Camera Club to develop a series of shots I'd taken around home. Mom and I share a house with my friend Sophie and her mother. I had taken some funny shots of Sophie and my dog Popcorn.

"Hey, Jujube!"

For as long as I can remember, everyone's called me Jujube. It's because I have one blue eye and one green eye. And now—one eyebrow. I looked up to see Brent coming down the hall. Of course, my brain stopped working. It always does in a crisis. I'd only liked the guy for about a decade—not that I admitted it to anyone. And it's tough trying to look casual with your left hand glued to your forehead.

"Hi, Brent."

Brent leaned against the next locker and looked at my lips. Whenever Brent talks to a girl, he looks

at her lips. The hand on my forehead was getting sweaty.

"I suppose a hundred different guys have asked you out for this Friday?" he asked my lips.

When Brent's nervous, he starts joking around. His being nervous made me nervous. My mind went blank. "Friday?"

"Yeah. Y'know—Friday? This is Wednesday. Then there's Thursday and then Friday. The dance, remember?" he teased.

"Oh yeah—the dance." My hand slipped and I got it back up into place.

He leaned closer. "Want to go with me?"

The guy who had his locker next to me came up behind Brent and said, "Excuse me," very loudly. I wanted to knock him one good one with my geography textbook.

"Sure," I said quickly before Brent moved—and changed his mind.

"Great!" he grinned, still looking at my lips.



Friday evening, Brent had to be at the school early to help the band set up. He didn't pick me up until 7:30. Sophie had to check out "the latest," and Mom put him through Twenty Questions at the door. She's pretty military with my boyfriends.

"Whew! I wasn't sure we'd get out alive," Brent said as we walked to his car.

I grinned. "It's called motherly love. Don't leave home without it."

I'd gotten used to having one eyebrow and had stopped living with a hand attached to my forehead. First dates usually give me lockjaw, but Brent's joking around helped. When we got to the dance, the two of us were having a great time. There was the usual problem with the slower numbers—figuring out whose hands go where, that sort of thing.

Brent liked to dance really close, closer than I was used to. Half of me wondered if we'd leave body

imprints on each other. The other half wanted to start taking his shirt off.

Partway through the dance, Brent had to go talk to the band about something. I wandered over to talk to Carlos, this guy I'd gotten to know in the Camera Club. He's the loner type and doesn't talk much. He was in his jean jacket as usual, leaning against a back wall. I leaned up next to him and watched Brent talk to the drummer.

"So you're here with Mr. Warp Speed." Carlos took a drink from his Coke.

"Mr. Warp Speed?" I asked.

Carlos looked at me for a moment, then grinned and handed me his Coke. "Brent."

I drank, trying to cover the blush I felt taking over my face. "Hey, two hours and I'm still a virgin."

Carlos laughed.

"And proud of it," we chanted together. Guys and girls get the same message in our sex-ed classes.

"So who're you here with?" I hadn't noticed him