

THE  
~~REAL~~ LIFE  
OF  
GREY  
MONROE

CATHERINE LYON



## Chapter 1

*Liar, liar, pants on fire.*

Grey Monroe, slumped in the backseat of her family's sleek black Mercedes, would have thought the text was a prank if it weren't for the number that had sent it. She'd entered the contact into her phone as *Lucy from Algebra* just in case her mother ever saw a text coming through, but one glance at the chat history would have raised even Astrid Monroe's perfectly plucked eyebrows.

*LeMarc is dead, Grey told herself. The text couldn't be from him.*

She leaned her head against the glass of the car window, wincing in the sunlight as she looked out at the crowd in front of St. Andrew's. Everyone had donned their finest black attire and porcelain masks of sorrow for Collin James LeMarc. *Lucy from Algebra*. Grey could almost picture him amongst the somber guests, those dancing eyes full of mischief.

In the front seat, her mother tugged on a pair of black silk gloves. "You'd think they would have picked a better time for it. Right in the middle of the day! In this heat, we'll all melt before they get the coffin in the ground."

Astrid's blonde hair was piled high today in an elegant twist, her lace-covered black dress barely long enough to be decent. "Not that I'm complaining. The world's that much brighter with one fewer of those wolves in town."

Grey closed her eyes against her mother's words, but the back of her eyelids only played back memories she didn't want to see. LeMarc, fingers grazing her cheek, whispering in her ear. The flash of an impish smile, that scar just above his top lip. The necklace he'd given her, gold shining in the moonlight. Blood on her clothes. Blood on her hands. Blood everywhere.

"Astrid, try to have some compassion," she heard her father say. "I know their family and ours have had our share of strife, but he was just a kid."

"He was a LeMarc." Astrid waved the funeral announcement back and forth like a fan to cool herself off. "Heaven knows the only reason I'm here is to see that old crone and her greedy thug of a husband on the worst day of their lives."

The feud between the LeMarcs and the Monroes had been going on since before Grey's older brother Danny was even born, but a funeral was hardly the time for her mother's venom.

"Mom, can you please just stop?"

"Why do you care? You hated Collin. He used to pick on you in grade school."

"No one called him Collin," Grey muttered to the window, but her mother didn't hear.

If Danny were here, he would have done something outrageous to set their mother squawking: make up ridiculous internal monologues for all of the stuffy guests outside, or recite a list of the top ten ways to put the "fun" back in "funeral." It would have been a nice distraction from yet another of Astrid's tirades about the LeMarcs.

Grey's phone beeped again, another text.

*Did I say pants on fire? I meant you, Grey. You might have killed me, but I'm still going to see you burn.*

Grey gasped and dropped the phone. It clattered down to the car floor, landing underneath her mother's seat.

Her father met her eyes in the rearview mirror. "Everything all right?"

Grey nodded and forced a shaky sound through her lips she hoped he'd take as a yes, clutching at the seat with her fingers to keep herself upright.

*It's not him. It can't be him. It's a prank. Just a cruel joke.*

Whatever the person behind the text was implying, she hadn't killed LeMarc. She *hadn't*.

And once she remembered who the real killer was, she'd be able to prove it.

Several hours of time were missing from her memories of that horrible night. Grey could close her eyes and be right there next to LeMarc by the river again—feel his hands, his lips, hear his voice soft and sweet and low—but then there was nothing. It was all blank until the moment she'd woken up in her bed, groggy and covered in blood. But even if Grey didn't remember what had happened, she knew she would never have done anything to hurt LeMarc. Never in a million years.

So who thought she had?