



"I can't believe what a bitch they were making me out to be. . . . Now I just think of it like I play a character on a TV show."

blonde who tried to steal Stephen. "Even before the show, people would tell me that Lauren would sit on Stephen's lap in chemistry class," says Kristin. "She can't even hold a conversation. Because she's pretty and rich, she thinks she's better than other people." Says Lauren, "I saw Kristin cheating on Stephen, and it made me mad that she had no respect for such a good person. She knows she's a fun girl and people like her and she's really pretty, and she uses that to her advantage."

Kristin can't stand to lose one guy to another girl, even if that girl is Lindsay Lohan, who recently dated Talan, a *Laguna Beach* guy Kristin once had on a string. "One night when they were dating I slept in Talan's bed, I mean, I was fully clothed, wearing a long T-shirt—nothing went down," she says, her lips creeping into a smile. "Then at, like, 6 A.M. Lindsay comes in and freaks out! She starts crying, going 'aaargh!' and slams a glass on the table. I was like, 'Are you kidding me right now?' Talan had to tell her to leave." [Lohan's publicist denies this event ever occurred.]

This is the level of drama that Kristin deserves now. She's done with the babyish *Laguna Beach* stuff. She doesn't know much about Buddhism, but her father always told her that she is in control of her destiny, and now she means to be a star. She's taking only one class at her ocean-front Catholic university this year, and the rest of the time she's out presenting at the PETA awards, or at L.A. parties having photographs taken in borrowed dresses. One magazine did a spread on her shopping habits, featuring a photo of her in new clothes and with heaped shopping bags—"I'm wearing all my own clothes, and those bags were empty!" she trills triumphantly.

Tonight she's a guest on *Jimmy Kimmel Live*, though she's barred from entering the backstage bar, since she's under twenty-one. In her dressing room, she thrums with excitement and happiness, yelling "Yeah!" indiscriminately, a stylist securing her breasts with tape in a cleavage-baring dress, Alex murmuring approvingly from the couch. Her hair lengthened by extensions, Kristin sizes herself up in a mirror: a real woman, maybe not with a screwdriver or a drill, but certainly with a juicy past.

"Whoa," she says earlier. "I feel like the years are going by faster and faster." She grimaces, then smiles, resetting her confidence button. "I have a feeling this is going to be the best year ever, though."

"Totally," says Alex.

