

I Am Number Four—Sarah's Journal Entries

#1:

[Lead-in line] **It's the first day of the new school year. The first day that Sarah meets John Smith.**

[Entry starts]

Mom bought me this journal after I got home from Colorado. A place of my own to work out my thoughts, she explained. I think I got her all worried, breaking up with Mark and quitting cheerleading. And I have been acting a little antsy. I guess I just had this silly notion that things would be different now, since *I* was different.

Lately I've been bringing my camera everywhere with me, thinking that maybe, through its lens, my hometown would look like a whole new place. Like what I'd needed all along was simply a lens to be my filter, to help me find the unexpected amongst all of this. But even through my lens, all I saw was what had always been here. It didn't matter the angle I chose, or what filter I used, or how I cropped the image, because in the end it was still Paradise, Ohio, population 5,243. Nothing different, nothing changed.

Until today.

I first saw him outside school. Mom had mentioned him, told me to keep an eye out for him. But he wasn't what I expected. Then again, I guess the unexpected never is. With a name like John Smith, I'd figured he'd be average, run-of-the-mill, Paradise-worthy. He's anything but. He's good-looking, but that's not even it. I mean, half the football team is good-looking. *Mark James* is good-looking. It's something more than that, something I can't quite put my finger on. This dog came running up to him while I was snapping pictures, a beagle, dirty but cute. John said he'd never seen him before, but you could tell the dog liked him, and honestly, I couldn't

really blame him. There's just something different about him, something that made me want to look twice.

For the rest of the day, things finally started to feel like they were changing a little. Maybe it was just being back in school. Maybe it was having only one (!!!) class with Mark. Maybe it was seeing the cheerleaders in uniform and not being in one myself. Or maybe it was finding John in my home ec class and knowing that Paradise, Ohio's population was no longer 5,243.

Sarah

[Entry ends]