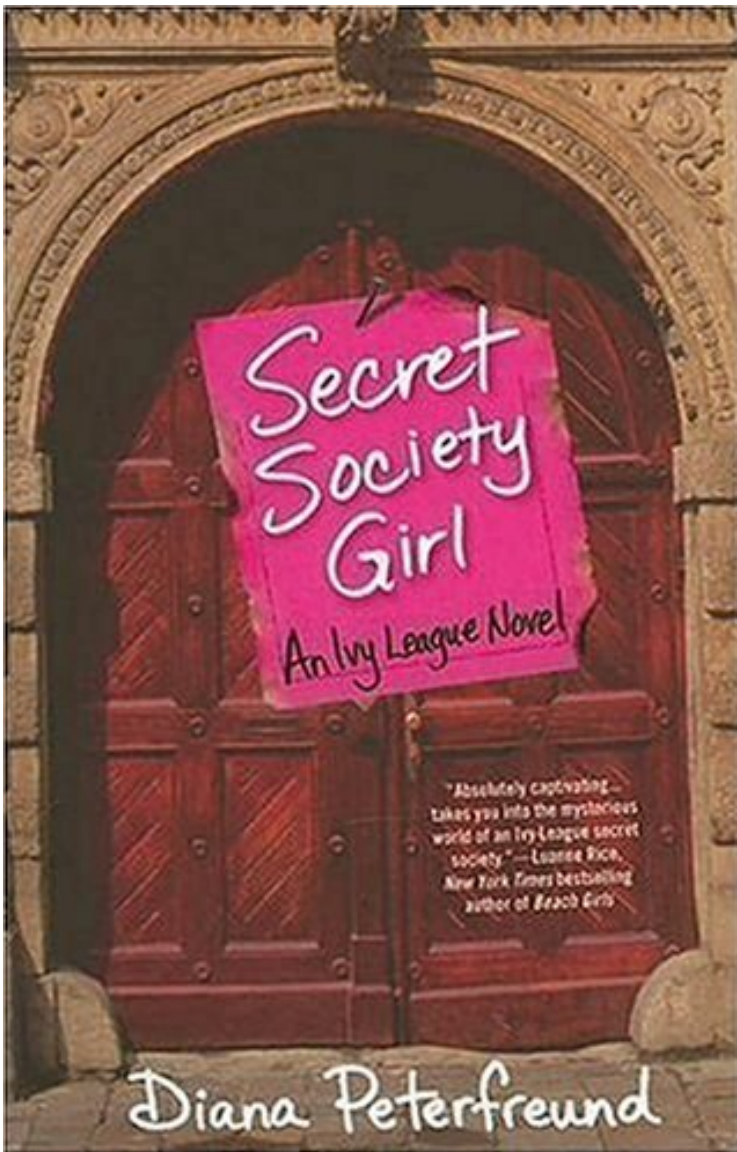


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Secret Society Girl: An Ivy League Novel



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Par Diana Peterfreund

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(Free pdf) Secret Society Girl: An Ivy League Novel

Par Diana Peterfreund : Secret Society Girl: An Ivy League Novel before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Secret Society Girl: An Ivy League Novel:

Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurFans of Cora Carmack (Losing It) and Tammara Weber (Easy) will devour the original New Adult novels: Secret Society Girl, Under the Rose, Rites of Spring (Break), and Tap Gown. At an elite university, Amy Haskell has been initiated into thecountry's most notorious secret society. But in this power-hungry worldwhere new blood is at the mercy of old money, hooking up with the wrongpeople could be fatal. Eli University junior Amy Haskell never expected to be tapped into Rose Grave. She isn't rich, politically connected, or . . . well, male. So when Amy is one of the first female students to receive the distinctive black-lined invitation with the Rose Grave seal, she's blown away. Could they really mean her? Whisked off into an elaborate initiation rite, Amy awakens the next day to a new reality and a whole new set

of "friends"--from the gorgeous son of a conservative governor to an Afrocentric lesbian activist whose society name is Thorndike. And that's when Amy starts to discover the truth about getting what you wish for. Because Rose Grave is quickly taking her away from her familiar world of classes and keggers, fueling a feud and undermining a very promising friendship with benefits. And that's before Amy finds out that her first duty as a member of Rose Grave is to take on a conspiracy of money and power that could, quite possibly, ruin her whole life.

From the Hardcover edition.

Chapter 1

It all began on a day in late April of my junior year. I was in my dorm room, for once, trying to squeeze in a load of laundry between a tuna salad sandwich in the dining hall and my afternoon lecture on War and Peace, or as I like to think of it, WAP. (That's not an acronym, by the way, but onomatopoeia. It's the sound the hefty volume makes when I drop it on my desk.) Professor Muravceks* lectures tended toward the impenetrable side and I wanted to spend some time brushing up on my notes. I was tilting toward a B in that class, which was unacceptable if I wanted to graduate with honors in the major. However, it was either laundry or rushing out that night to buy a new package of underwear. You know you're desperate when trekking downtown to GAP Body is easier than waiting for a free dryer. But neither Tide nor Tolstoy was in the cards for me that afternoon. I'd just finished disentangling my disentangling my fuchsia lace thong (Friday night date panties) from the legs of my going out jeans and was on my way out the door with a load of darks when the phone rang. Crap. It was probably my mom. She seemed to have a divine sense of when I'd be in my room. I balanced the basket on my hip and picked up the phone. Hello? Amy Maureen Haskel? You got her, I said, shaking one of my balled-up gym socks free. Your presence is required at 750 College Street, room 400, at two o'clock this afternoon. Two o'clock was in fifteen minutes. Who is this? 750 College Street, room 400. Two p.m. And then the line went dead. I plopped back onto the faded couch, strewn tank tops and pj bottoms across the floor. Talk about rotten timing. There was no question in my mind who it was on the other end of the phone. Quill Ink was the literary senior society on campus, the usual refuge for scribblers of all varieties. It boasted several well-known writers amongst its alumni, and as the current editor-in-chief of the campus literary magazine, I knew I was a shoo-in, just like my predecessor Glenda Foster had been before me. That is, I would be if I made it to the afternoons impromptu interview. I was going to have to have a long talk with Glenda. She was in the Russian Novel class, too, and knew I was struggling, yet still scheduled my society interview during lecture time! Society interviews were always arranged on super-short notice. Part of the test was to see if you could get there. I hadn't yet figured out what they did if the prospective tap didn't answer her phone if she was busy, for example, enduring both the crime and the punishment of Professor Muravceks' soporific speaking voice. Laundry all but forgotten, I hurried back into my room. Though the interview would be merely a formality, I fully intended to follow along with society pomp and circumstance and dress up. (Societies are all about the spectacle.) My suit was crammed in the back of my closet behind my ski jacket and the flared velvet getup I'd worn to February's seventies-themed Boogie Night. I hadn't worn my suit since January's spate of internship interviews, during which I'd landed a posh (insert eye roll here) summer job xeroxing form rejections at Horton. It needed a good lint brushing, but otherwise, it was okay. I paired it with a fresh cotton shell, and went spelunking for a pair of panty hose sans runs. On the third dip into my underwear drawer, I found one. When, oh, when will I learn to throw away unusable nylons? (Not today, apparently.) I stuffed the other two pairs back in the drawer and wrestled the third onto my legs. I needed to shave, but the nylons would cover that. In January, I'd gotten my light brown hair cut into one of those shoulder-length, multilayered bobs I was positive was the height of fashion for the Manhattan literati. (It wasn't.) The downside of the cut was that, even with three months' growth, it took twenty minutes with a blow dryer and a big round brush to make it look halfway decent. I didn't have that kind of time right now, so I was relegated to ponytail-ville. I slipped into my black pumps and clattered through my suite's early Gothic complete with lead-veined windows common room. We have one of the sweetest setups in the whole residential college: two sizeable singles connected by a wood-lined common room that featured a non-working, but darn pretty, fireplace. Only downside is the slightly pockmarked hardwood floor. Have I mentioned how much I hate heels? The door to the suite opened before I could turn the knob. My suitemate and best friend, Lydia Travinecek, entered, balancing an armload of dusty library books, a travel mug of coffee, and her dry cleaning. Lydia is always more organized than I am. She has time for lunch, homework, and trouser pleats. It's like she's a lawyer already. She looked me up and down. Quill? I shrugged. Who else? Quill Ink wasn't a secret society in the traditional sense. Heck, they didn't even have one of those giant stone tombs like the big societies used to hold their meetings: just a one-bedroom apartment above Starbucks. She nodded curtly, and flopped the dry-cleaning bags over the back of our couch. Two days ago, Lydia had

hurried out of here in her own carefully pressed suit. Good luck, not that you'll need it. Hasn't every Lit Mag editor gotten into Quill Ink since, like, the Stone Age? Pretty much. I pushed back the tiny thread of annoyance that Lydia hadn't yet told me what society had been courting her. It was silly; I knew that when Tap Night came around and she was picked by her society (whatever one it was), Lydia would drop the secrecy routine. She took a paper sack out of her messenger bag and held up a bottle of Finlandia Mango in triumph. Check it out. I thought we'd go tropical with our Gumdrop Drops tomorrow. Gumdrop Drops had become a weekly ritual in our suite since Lydia turned twenty-one last August (I didn't go legal until December). A bottle of vodka, two shot glasses, and a bag of Brach's Spice Drops to use as chasers were all we needed for a party. I wondered briefly what would happen to the tradition once we were both in our respective societies and had other obligations on Thursday nights (all the secret societies meet on Thursdays and Sundays). Awesome! Can't wait. Gotta run. I waved good-bye and clopped out of the suite, down the stairs, and into the sunny April afternoon. Connecticut had finally decided to get with the program and realize it was spring. I just knew Lydia would be tapped. She'd been vying for election into one of the more prestigious societies since the moment she'd stepped on campus as a freshman. She honestly felt that it was the only way to get anywhere at this school. I thought the attitude was a bit out-of-date, myself. This wasn't the twenties, when you were tapped into a society straight out of graduating from Andover or one of the other elite prep schools, and every student on campus was white, male, and rich beyond the dreams of avarice. In those days, failure to receive election into one of the big secret societies was tantamount to permanent social ostracizing. Forget the leather-furnished office on Wall Street, forget the vacation home in Newport. Your kids probably wouldn't even get into Exeter! But the world didn't work like that anymore. Now most of the societies had diverse membership rosters that reflected a modern student body composed of kids from every walk of life. There was no doubt in my mind that come Tap Night, even without the benefit of blue blood, Lydia would be elected into one of the best societies on campus: Dragons Head, perhaps, or Book Key. In fact, the only secret society I knew she would not get into was Rose Grave, the oldest and most notorious society in the country. But that was because all the members known as Diggers were men. As for me, I was joining Quill Ink for the same reason that I did everything else: it would look good on my resume. I was already well acquainted with the other literary types on campus. They were all my nearest and dearest. We didn't need the formality of a society like Quill Ink to cement our bond. What we did need was the networking and resume puffing it would provide us. You know how it goes. If there's an organization to head, an award to win, a connection to pursue: you've got to do it. Otherwise everyone would wonder why you didn't, and your whole carefully constructed C.V. of success would topple like a ninety-eight pound freshman at a kegger. This was it, 750 College Street. And, according to my watch, I had a little over ninety seconds to make it into the room. And yet, when at last I arrived, slightly puffing, at the darkened classroom on the fourth floor, the first words out of the mouth of the person who laser-pointed me to my seat were: You're late. I looked at my watch again, though I couldn't see the hands in the dark. The shadowed man sitting at the nearest table pointed something at me that glowed with a green 2:01 in digital numbers. This is an atomic clock. You were forty-eight seconds late. Are you joking? I squinted, trying in vain to see his face through the gloom. Since all of our classrooms are equipped with motion-detecting lights, I was surprised that they managed to pull this off. They'd draped the windows with black hangings, and though each of the dozen people seated about the room appeared to have a book light in front of their place, the most I could make out was a jawline here, the curve of a nose there. Wow, they'd gone all out. Must be the writers' creative juices at work. Are we joking, Ms. Haskel? Shadow Guy #2 said with what I swear was a sneer. I didn't even need to see it. Do you believe there is anything about this process that is a joke? Not until now. But come on, what was this, Eyes Wide Shut? No, sir. I strained my neck to see if I could recognize Glenda's features amongst the group, but I couldn't make her out. Where was she? Oh, let me guess. War and Peace. I was so going to swipe her lecture notes! Let me assure you, Ms. Haskel, Shadow Guy #2 went on, that we take our election procedure very seriously. Punctuality is of utmost importance to us. So is electing a person who can be trusted to obey the mandates of the society, no matter how minor they might seem. Whoa. So forty-eight seconds and I'd screwed the pooch? I sat up in my seat. I understand that, sir, and can assure you that I will take my position in the society very seriously. I paused, weighing the advisability of my next words. I didn't know I was supposed to invest in an atomic watch. Do I get one of those when I join? No answer. I giggled nervously. What about a grandfather clock? I heard every member of Rose Grave gets one at graduation. Quill, however, didn't quite have the endowment for such lavish presents. Maybe they could swing a Timex. Still nothing. Um, was this thing on? Though I suppose that a grandfather clock would be hard to lug

around. Lame, lame, lame. And probably not atomic. Shut up, Amy. Man, I was crashing and burning here. We sat in silence for a full ten seconds. And then someone three rows back spoke up. Ms. Haskel, if you could answer a few questions for us. I saw a shuffling of papers. I have here your transcript. It states that sophomore year you received a B- in Dust Pages: Ethiopian Immigrant Narrative of the Mid-20th Century West. Yes. Do you have an explanation for that performance? Yeah, beware of classes bearing colons. In this case, the prof was a prick who thought that everything in the text that was even remotely cylindrical was some sort of phallic representation, and unless our term papers explored the ongoing problem of feminine penis envy, we completely missed the mark. I think he had bedroom issues. The B- was my single black mark in my English major, or would be as long as I kicked all 1,472 pages of WAP ass in my Russian Novel final. I'm more of a New Critic than a Freudian analyst, I began, choosing the time-honored liberal arts tradition of obfuscation. If you can't beat 'em, confuse 'em. The signifiers of the primary texts in the classman, even I didn't know what I was saying by this point lent themselves to readings more in keeping with the works of Said, Levi-Strauss, and . . . Crap. I ran out of steam. Okay, pick an old standby. . . . Aristotle's theories as laid out in Poetics. Ha, question that! I was an English major. I could bullshit with the best of them. The third-row shadow smiled, and I could see that someone had a very talented orthodontist. His choppers were as bright and even as a movie star's. Good answer. Then he cleared his throat. All the lights blinked on and off. Twice. Shadow-Who-Smiles shuffled a few more papers. Do you remember Beverly Campbell? My third-grade teacher? I'd had to think about that one for a minute. Glenda had not warned me of any of this. No doubt she was sitting pretty right now, taking notes about the bleak Siberian winter in her usual purple gel pen. And here I was, getting grilled by Quill Ink for heaven knew what reason. Wasn't I supposed to be a sure thing? Furthermore, it was official: I didn't recognize any of these people's voices. Had they brought in alumni to conduct the interviews? If we asked Beverly Campbell about you, what would she say? That I was good with phonics. Enough of this. Come on, it was third grade. What about Janine Harper? Fourth grade. Marilyn Mahan. Fifth. James Field, Tracy Cole, Debra Blumenthal. Shadow-Who-Smiles proceeded to name every homeroom teacher I'd ever had. It was more than a little freaky. Can I ask you a question? I said, interrupting his recitation in tenth grade. Go ahead. Congressional confirmation hearings wouldn't care this much about my early childhood. Why do you? Quill was a second-rate society at best, more concerned with getting its members into J-school than taking over the world—the reported purpose of real secret societies. What was up with the Da Vinci Code act? Shadow Guy #2 spoke up. What are your ambitions, Ms. Haskel? I kinda wanted to write the Great American Novel. But not even Quill Ink would find that a satisfactory answer. Not goal-oriented enough. Not feasible. There aren't enough Nobel Prizes in Literature to go around. Plus, I wasn't sure I had any Great American Ideas. So, once again, with the fallback plan. To be a media magnate. There, that should hold them. You're lying. Shadow-Who-Smiles was no longer showing me his pearly whites. What makes you say that? I folded my hands in my lap. And why did they care? I'd have bet each and every one of these people had a frustrated novelist buried deep inside. Shadow-Who-Smiles (though he wasn't right now) picked up another piece of paper and began to read aloud. It was the first page of my unfinished novel—the one that no one but Lydia and I knew about. The one that existed only on my laptop's hard drive, back in my room. Hey! I shouted, and he stopped. Where did you get that? Did you hack my computer or something? Everything got really quiet. I thought I could hear the atomic clock whirring away. Who were these people? We have everything you've ever done, Ms. Haskel, Shadow Guy #2 said. He lifted a manila envelope from the table in front of him. This is your FBI file. My mouth dropped open. I have an FBI file? Why would I have an FBI file? I'd never done a summer internship at the White House or the Pentagon. My dad is an accountant, not a politician. I didn't need security clearance. And even if I did, how the heck did these people get their hands on it? There was only one answer. They were playing me. I shook my head, leaned back in my chair, and laughed. Right, my FBI file. The Federal Bureau of I-Dont-Think-So. Look, I'm glad I've given you guys a good laugh, but since you aren't the Men in Black, can we please get back to the interview now? There was a long pause, then all the lights on the tables blinked again. This time, most of them blinked once, except for the one in front of Shadow-Who-Smiles. I think, said Shadow Guy #2, that the interview is over. No! said Shadow-Who-Smiles. She's not what we're looking for. I don't agree. Hold the phone. I sat forward. Guys, I'm not quite clear what's going on here. Where's Glenda? Shadow Guy #2 tilted his head until I got a glimpse of pale cheekbone. Glenda? Yeah, Glenda. Glenda Foster, the old Lit Mag editor? The girl who is sponsoring me for this society? The girl who is too taken with Russian literature to show up this afternoon? Again with the silence, though this one was punctuated with a few snickers. Finally, Shadow-Who-Smiles (and he was definitely doing it again!) spoke

up. Glenda Foster is not a member of this organization. Holy shit. Who were these people?! Okay, to be fair, there was still one little corner in my mind that was shouting that Glenda had been lying to me all year, and that she wasn't a member of Quill Ink after all. But it was a pretty minuscule corner, the one where all of my most paranoid tendencies live. The rest of my head was busy spinning. I'd been taking this process rather lightly because, hey, it was Quill Ink. Not a big deal, and I was a sure bet anyway. But they obviously weren't Quill Ink. I was out of my depth, for one of the first times in my life. And I didn't have a clue what I was supposed to do. I think we're done here, Shadow Guy #2 said. No, we're not, insisted Shadow-Who-Smiles. Shadow Guy #2 turned around and I caught a glimpse of perfectly shaved neck. She's not what we want. We have to be serious about this. I can be serious! I leaned forward and smacked my hand down on Shadow Guy #2's notes. I saw his mouth drop open. Oops. Sorry, I said, sitting back and folding my hands demurely. I was a little confused. Clearly. Can I ask who you people are? This time, they all laughed, before Shadow Guy #2 said, No. So you get a list of my middle-school study-hall proctors and I get squat? That's why we call it a secret society. Shadow-Who-Smiles cleared his throat. Fair enough. Shadow-Who-Smiles flicked his light on and off a few times, and all the members began shuffling the papers on their desks. I wondered what the signal meant. Okay-doke. I figured I'd humiliated myself enough for one afternoon. I rose from my seat. Am I free to go? One moment, Ms. Haskel. Shadow-Who-Smiles put his hand out, and I was surprised that I could see it. Apparently, my eyes were adjusting to the dark. Tell us. What do you have to offer this organization? I bit my tongue to keep from snapping back with, And what organization is that? Okay, so they weren't Quill Ink. Someone else was courting me, and I'd royally screwed up any chance I might have had to impress whoever. The real question was, did I care? After all, this wasn't my thing. Lydia was the one who wanted to get into a secret society, any prestigious secret society. I just wanted to be in Quill Ink, so I could keep tabs on which literary agents were hiring assistants and whether or not Cosmopolitan needed interns. And finally, the absurdity of the whole situation hit me. All the juniors who, like me, had spent an hour in a darkened classroom, answering vague questions about their ambitions and accomplishments for a bunch of shadowy strangers, they hadn't the foggiest clue to whom they were spilling their guts. Lydia, for all her secretive, superior smugness, didn't know if she was being courted by Dragons Head or punked by a bunch of rowdy frat boys. And neither did I. What did I have to offer this mysterious, unidentified organization? Aside from the finger, which I lifted, to little effect in the darkness. I straightened my skirt, stuck out my chin, and laughed. You already know what I have to offer. Straight As in the major, except for that little snafu with Ethiopian Immigrant Narrative; the editorship of the Lit Magazine; participation and leadership in any number of other small campus publications; and thirty pages of a badly written novel. I don't do drugs, I've never been arrested, and from what I hear, I'm not too shabby in bed. Not that any of you people will ever have the opportunity to discover that firsthand. (Though, to be honest, I'd have no way of knowing, now would I?) Then I turned on my heel and marched out. And as I exited into the hall, head held high, I thought I caught the flicker of a dozen tiny booklights. From the Hardcover edition. *Revue de presse* "Peterfreund's descriptions of the ambitious Amy Haskel's collegial life are both vivid and amusing." *The New York Observer* "Readers will cheer on the not-so-underdog as she faces disgruntled male alumni and finds that membership does indeed have privileges." *Tampa Tribune* "A fun, breezy, beach-perfect diversion with a myriad of cultural and intellectual references to everything from *Eyes Wide Shut* to Aristotle's *Poetics*." *Winston Salem Journal* From the Hardcover edition.