

Synopsis

It's Spring semester at UCLA. The Delta Nu sorority sisters are certain that their sorority president, Elle Woods, will soon be engaged to her boyfriend, the eminently eligible Warner Huntington the Third. The girls gather to sing Elle their traditional Engagement Chorale. Elle dines with Warner. The moment is perfect. But instead of proposing, Warner breaks up with Elle. He explains that he's going to Harvard Law next Fall and he must marry someone "serious" in order to fulfill his life plan.

Heartbroken, Elle mopes in her room eating Milky Ways. Then she devises a strategy to show Warner that she's "serious." While her friends party their way through their final semester, Elle works hard and gets a 175 on her LSAT. But the Admissions Officers are unimpressed by her application--until she shows up with the entire UCLA marching band and cheer team in lieu of a personal statement.

At Harvard, Elle is ridiculed by her over-achieving classmates. During her first class, the merciless Professor Callahan tells his students that "you're nothing until/the thrill of the kill/becomes your only law!" Callahan discovers that Elle hasn't done her reading and throws her out of class. To make matters worse, Elle learns that Warner has a new girlfriend, her two-faced classmate Vivienne.

In her grief, Elle heads for the Hair Affair, where she asks the stylist, Paulette, to make her a brunette like Vivienne. Paulette talks her out of it, and they become friends. Paulette confides in Elle that her ex-boyfriend, Dewey, left her and took her trailer and her dog.

Vivienne invites Elle to a "costume party." Of course, only Elle was told to arrive in costume. As she leaves the party, she runs into Emmett, who finally learns why she came to Harvard Law. Emmett grew up poor and is working two jobs while attending law school. He convinces Elle that she, too, should "get a chip on her shoulder" and work hard to prove herself.

Elle stays at school over Thanksgiving break and Christmas, and Emmett and Paulette help her study. In class, Elle impresses Professor Callahan, who asks whether she's applying for his very competitive internship. Emmett and Elle help Paulette reclaim her dog by visiting Dewey and advising him that his ten-year stint living with Paulette is considered a Common Law marriage and entitles Paulette to half their property. Paulette is overjoyed, and Elle is exhilarated when she realizes that this is what law is really about. Back at school, the list of Callahan's interns is posted. Seeing their names on the list together, Warner impulsively proposes to Vivienne in front of everyone. Elle is shocked, but feels much better when she discovers that her name is on the list, too. Callahan assigns Emmett and the new interns to work on his latest case, defending Brooke Wyndham, accused of her husband's murder. Elle is the only member of the legal team who believes Brooke is innocent.

Brooke confides in Elle that she was having liposuction the day her husband was killed, and Elle swears not to reveal the secret. Callahan is furious that Elle will not reveal Brooke's alibi. He tells "ratty corduroy" and "legally blonde" to get lost for the day, so Elle takes Emmett shopping. She then has her nails done at the Hair Affair, where Kyle, the new UPS guy, appears and knocks Paulette's socks off. Elle and her Delta Nu Chorus teach Paulette the Bend and Snap, which catches Kyle's attention.

The next day in court, Callahan is impressed by Emmett's new look, and even more impressed when Elle saves the day: She notices that the D.A.'s witness—who claims to have been Brooke's lover—is impervious to her Bend and Snap, and realizes he must be gay. Emmett tricks him into outing himself in court. Back at the office Callahan congratulates Elle. He makes a pass at her and fires her when she rebuffs him. Elle is crushed, and although Emmett tries to stop her, she is determined to quit school and go home.

The next day, Paulette and Kyle's romance is blooming when Elle arrives to say goodbye. But Vivienne is there and acknowledges that she was wrong about Elle, urging her to stay. Elle heads her entreaty, but on her own terms. She returns to the trial in a pink suit with her dog Bruiser.

Brooke fires Callahan and hires Elle and Emmett as her counsel. Elle calls Brooke's frizzy-haired step-daughter Chutney to the stand. Chutney claims she had just had her hair permed and was in the shower when her father was killed. Elle requests that they re-convene the court at the scene of the shower, where she demonstrates the flaw in Chutney's alibi: if she had showered right after her perm, the treatment would have been ruined and her hair would now be straight. Chutney breaks down and confesses that she shot her father in an attempt to shoot Brooke. Seeing Elle's success at trial, Warner realizes too late that Elle would have been perfect for him. It's too late, however, as Elle proposes to Emmett during her valedictorian speech.