

## My Bully's Love by Stacy Rush Chapter 7

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#### CHAPTER 7: FORGIVE ME

Something happened the night that Jace came to my room. I'm not quite sure what it was, or what caused it, but he hasn't bothered me in over a month. Our eyes will meet in the halls at school, but it's as if he is looking right through me, and not seeing me at all. No more being shoved against lockers or tripped in the halls. There are no more punishments in the Art room during last period; those are what I miss. I try thinking back to that night, when his hands touched, and caressed me; where they filled me with a desire that I have never felt before. I had sworn to put on a show for him that night, because it's what he had wanted, but in the end, there was no acting on my end. He had succeeded in taking what he was wanting from me; he knew I would deliver like the good girl that I am, and he was so right.

I watch him when nobody else is looking, and he is the same guy around everyone else; it's just me. I'm not sure what is worse, him bullying me, or him ignoring me completely. At least when he bullied me, I still felt like a person, like someone who was still thought of, even if it was just to torture me. Aside from Jace ignoring me, nothing else has changed with the rest of my classmates...or so I thought.

I'm just sitting down to eat lunch in my own little corner, away from the rest of the student body, I sense a presence behind me. My eyes roam the cafeteria before I dare to look to see who it is. There are a few students staring in my direction with stunned expressions. Whoever is behind me must be a big deal, if other students are finding it surprising. I turn slightly, peeking over my shoulder. A face that I see on a daily basis, but never interact with, is gazing down at me with a slight grin.

"Hey, Ella. It's been a long time."

I'm momentarily speechless. Mason Baker stands in front of me with his hands in his pockets, looking a tad uncomfortable, but still grinning, "Hey, Mason." I turn back around and pretend to be interested in my lunch. What else am I supposed to do? It's been two whole years since Mason last talked to me, just like everyone else. Why is he choosing now to come talk to me?

"Do you mind if I sit down?"

I shrug, "Sit wherever you like."

Mason is a lineman on our football team, so he's pretty big, muscular-wise, and when he sits beside me, I feel the table lift a little bit. He has no food with him, and. I'm pretty sure that this isn't his lunch period, but here he is anyway, bothering me. I really feel no need to talk to anybody in this school since they all shunned me, Mason included. I shuffle around my pasta salad on my plate before bringing the fork to my mouth to take a bite, trying to ignore the guy beside me.

"So, how have you been, Ella?" If he's noticed my lack of interest of him sitting with me, he doesn't show it, as he continues to ask questions, "Why don't I ever see you around town anymore?" He makes it sound like I've been unsociable, forgetting the fact that everybody turned their backs on me, including the Baker twins.

His questions are annoying, so I just stop him before he can ask anything thing else, "What is it that you want, Mason?" Annoyance laces my voice, and he flinches.

"I'm sorry, I was just trying to make conversation, Ella." He actually looks a little sheepish when he answers me, making me want to bite back my snarky comments, but I can't.

"Oh, it took you two years to come over and ask me? I've been around, but you all," I point around the room, "chose to not acknowledge me."

Mason's face reddens a little, and he looks away for a moment. When he turns to face me again, there's a look that can almost pass as apologetic, "I'm know, I was a douche bag, along with everyone else, but I wanted to make amends. You didn't deserve any of it, and if it weren't for Jace, then we..."

Hearing my bully's name has me holding my hand up, and cutting Mason off, "What about Jace? Do you know why he stopped being my friend, or how he got the whole school to shun me?"

He's quick to answer, which only brings me to the assumption that there is more to this whole thing, but I sit and listen anyway. I don't trust anybody at this point, but at least Mason is putting forth effort to try and make amends.

"I don't think anybody knows for sure, but I do remember a rumor going around that you stabbed him in the back, or something. As for how he got the whole school to turn on you, I can't answer that, but with me, he had pulled me aside and told me that you had told him everything from that night of the party and that if he ever saw me even talking to you that he would make me

Forgive Me

disappear because he has friends that can make it happen," he sighs, "You have to remember that we had just moved here, and I didn't think a girl was worth that kind of trouble, so I ignored you. I'm sorry, Ella."

I don't utter a word as I contemplate everything he's telling me. On one hand, I believe what he is saying, but on the other hand, why would Jace threaten him like that if Jace no longer wanted anything to do with me, and he didn't know anyone at that time who could get rid of people. I'm not sure what to believe, but I have to admit that it's nice to have someone other than my sister to talk to at school

"Please forgive me, Ella. I'd like to start over, if you do." Mason pleads with cute little puppy dog eyes.

Rolling my eyes, I hope that I don't end up regretting this, but I give him a small smile, "I can't say that I'll forgive you, Mason, but I can at least give you a chance to make it up to me and prove that you truly are sorry."

I'm graced with a really big smile that shows off his pearly white teeth, "Thank you, Ella! I promise that I will make it up to you! How about I buy you a coffee after school?"

I laugh at how excited I just made the big guy beside me, "Don't you have football practice after school?"

"Oh shit that's right!" He thinks for a moment before snapping his fingers, "I've got it! How about I pick you up after supper and I'll take you to go get a blizzard, or whatever ice cream you like?"

"Well," I'm still a little skeptical, and I do remember what happened the last time I was in his vehicle, "As long as you promise to keep your hands to yourself...and you are aware that this is not a date!" I say pointedly, lifting a brow.

He lifts both of his hands, "I promise! This is completely platonic, Ella."

"Okay, pick me up at my house about seven," I go to turn back to my food but I give him a warning first, "And don't make me regret giving you another chance, Mason!"

"I pinky swear that I will be on my best behavior." He holds his pinky out and waits for me to grab it with mine. I roll my eyes, and give in to the childish way of promising. He swipes his dark brown hair away from his eyes, so I can see the twinkle in his brown orbs before he stands up, "I'll see you at seven then, and I won't be late!" He calls out as he walks away, catching the attention of pretty much the whole cafeteria. Gasps can be heard, and jaw drops can be seen as everyone stares between the two of us. I glare at a few students before dropping my head, and finishing my lunch.

The new ice cream place that Mason takes me to is surprisingly packed by the time we get there. With it being Fall, you would think that most would be over ice cream, and more into pumpkin spice or hot chocolate, but because this is a new establishment, it's the 'IT' place to be. With that being said, all eyes turn to us as Mason holds the door open for me as we walk in. I want to turn right around and leave, but Mason places his hand on my lower back and urges me toward the counter.

“Don’t let them chase you away, Ella. You deserve to be here just as much as they do.” He smiles down at me, and I instantly feel a little less nervous. Giving him a little nod, I step up to the counter and glance up at the menu. “You can order a cone or a blizzard, or even a malt or shake, but my favorite are the ice cream bowls that you build yourself.” He grins and making him look like we just stepped into his favorite candy store.

“That actually sounds fun, I’ll do that.” I wait as Mason orders two of the Build Your Own Bowls and hands me a waffle bowl. He leads me to what looks like a buffet bar, and that’s exactly what it is, only it’s filled with every kind of ice cream you can imagine. Another buffet table has the same, only with different toppings, “Oh my! How does a person even decide?” I laugh as my eyes widen with such a huge selection.

Mason leans in a little, “I always scoop four different flavors into my bowl, and then just chooses the toppings that I like,” He winks at me, “If you do the same, then we can try each other’s to see which one is the best.”

“That sounds like a great idea,” I chuckle, “Only, I don’t like nuts in my ice cream.”

“Are you kidding me?” He fakes a gasp. “I’m the same way, no nuts for me!” We both laugh and precede in filling our bowls up.

Once we pay for our bowls, a corner table is just opening us, so we dash for it before anybody else takes it. It seems as though two other couples had the same idea, but we get here first. We give both couples an apologetic look as we sit down across from each other. Digging into my ice cream, I can’t help the moan that slips out as the chocolate ice cream melts in my mouth. It’s so creamy and sweet, and the chocolate syrup, whipped cream and Oreo cookie crumbs only adds to the deliciousness of the treat.

“That good, huh?” Mason chuckles.

“Mmhm!” I slide my bowl over to him and offer some. He takes a spoonful of mine as I do the same with his, “I never would have taken you for a plain vanilla kind of guy.” I tease before putting my spoon with vanilla ice cream and strawberry syrup, topped with

Forgive Me

gummy worms, into my mouth.

He shrugs, “I’m willing to try anything, once.”

I notice the innuendo in his response, but it wasn’t flirtatious; more like friendly than anything else. We grin at each other and continue to share our ice cream with each other as we chat about nothing in particular, school and classes mostly. I offer to help tutor him in math because he isn’t doing so well, and he has to maintain a certain grade

to in order to play sports. He hesitates at first, but then agrees to meet two times a week during last period in the library.

Everything is going well until a group gets up from a few of the middle tables, leaving an empty space and allowing us to see across the shop. A pair of green eyes glower at us from the other side. My hand halts halfway to my mouth and my heart begins to race. Mason notices my reaction and glances over to where I'm staring at. Cursing under his breath, he turns his attention back to me.

"It's a little crowded in here, how about we take these to go?" He offers softly.

I blink my eyes, trying to refocus on the person across from me, "Uh, what did you say?"

"I asked if you wanted to take our bowls to go?" "Oh, yeah. I think that's a good idea, it's getting a bit stuffy in here." I don't know what comes over me, but I say my last statement loud enough for others to hear.

As we collect our things, I quickly glance over to the table that Jace is sitting at with Toby and Brandon. His eyes are still on me, and they are looking angrier than they did the first time I looked over. Chills slide down my back when I feel Mason place his hand on my lower back again, as we leave. I feel a hole being burned into my back, but I don't dare to look behind me, I don't want to see the anger glowing in my bully's eyes. I don't know what his problem is, he hasn't tried contacting me or even bullying me in well over a month, and now he's pissed to see me out, enjoying myself?

\*Are you okay?" Mason asks as we settle back into his vehicle, "I saw the way Jace was looking at you, Ella. You shouldn't have to deal with that."

I give him a small smile, "Thanks, but I've been dealing with that for two years now. At least he hasn't bullied me in over a month." I spoon some ice cream into my mouth so I don't say anything else, because my voice almost cracked.

"I'm sorry, Ella. I guess I never realized how bad it really was. What do your other friends say about it?"

"What friends," I shrug, "Jace made sure that I had nobody but my own family to talk to. I thought everybody knew that."

"I guess I never paid much attention to what was going on if it wasn't about me." Mason really looks remorseful, and I'm beginning to believe him.

"It's okay. Soon, I'll be leaving for college, and I can start a whole new life far away from Jace Palmer."

We finish our ice cream bowls, and then Mason drives me home. He doesn't try anything with me, and has been the perfect gentleman. Seems as though Mason Baker

grew up. I'm smiling as we pull up in front of my house, happy that I have a friend now. Hopefully, he's here to stay.

"Thank you, Mason. I had fun tonight, regardless of other things, and I want you to know that I forgive you for the past."

"Thank you, Ella. I will continue to make it up to you, but I want you to know that I am here as a friend if you need it." For the first time, I notice that he has a dimple on each side of his face when he smiles.

"I'll probably take you up on that quite often," I laugh, "But for now, I will see you in the library last period tomorrow."

"I'll be there, Miss Baxter." He muses as I open the door and exit the vehicle. When I get to the front door, I turn and wave back at Mason. Once he sees me open the door, he waves back and takes off. That was sweet of him to make sure I get inside okay, I smile and think to myself, when a black jeep comes barreling down our street, well over the speed limit. Shaking my head, I spin and go inside the house, not wanting to think about Jace Palmer anymore tonight.

Forgive Me

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