

## Pregnant For My Bully Chapter 12 - Tips

Under the table, I pinched my wrist, just to be sure. It hurt. And I was aware it hurt. I wasn't dreaming. This was real. This was as real as the day that broke.

"You . . ." I began, my throat feeling rather parched. "You want to talk to me?"

He nodded at my question, brown eyes shades of eagerness.

Around me, Jason always bore an annoyed expression, his face threatening, stance intimidating. His voice was almost always in a growl. Times when it wasn't, he was busy barking orders. But today, right now, his countenance was relaxed and hopeful. And for the first time ever, I was seeing the beauty in Jason. Yes, beauty. Jason was . . . beautiful with a childish expression, when he wasn't scrunching up his face, that is. His thick dark eyebrows, which were raised, accentuated the childish, hopeful look as he stared at me.

"Aren't . . . aren't you supposed to be at practice?" I swallowed, still unable to understand how, what exactly had changed.

"Coach Hens canceled today's practice." He told me.

The way he answered my question, without hesitation, anger, or without thinking me dumb . . .

Was Jason sick? Maybe someone had . . . cast a spell on him. Absurd as it might seem, it looked like the only option at the moment. Jason had been hypnotized into treating me nicely. Like I was human too.

"So, can we talk?" He asked once more. "Please? Outside."

"Um," I blinked. "Okay?"

"And you don't have to do this anymore." He reached forward and took his project from me. "I'll finish it up myself."

Someone punch me. Jason was talking about doing his project himself. Wait a minute, did we move three generations forward while I was asleep? How long had I slept for?

Slowly, my heart racing, I stood up, and Jason followed suit. I began walking toward the door, almost robot-like, Jason trailing behind me.

It could be an act. It could all be an act. There was no way Jason Asshat Shitface Davenport could just change overnight. Yes, I said overnight because, although I'd failed to notice this until now, Jason hadn't bugged me throughout today.

The two classes I had with him were stress-free, and during lunch, he'd passed me no glances. After school when I waited for him in the field to give me his homework, he didn't show up, and after some minutes of waiting, I resorted to going to the library to finish up his project that was due next Wednesday.

So, back to the main topic: it could all be an act. Pretense. For whatever reason.

The thought that Jason was just faking his changed personality surfaced in my mind. Filling it up. And remaining there. As we walked past tired-eyed Mrs McConnell and till we got outside to the spot at the back of the cafeteria, I refused to let go of the thought.

That is until Jason did something that shook it's grounds. He smiled at me. Not a toothy one, but one that certainly reached his brown eyes, crinkling them. His face a radiant structure, eyes lulling me to calm, I couldn't help but wish, dearly, that this wasn't an act.

Sitting on one of the benches, he said, "Sit. Please."

The word again. Who knew Jason could actually pronounce the word 'please'.

"Are—are you sure?" I stuttered.

"Yeah," he nodded. "Of course, why not?"

Gingerly, I sat down at the far end of the bench, my cautious side taking over.

For moments, we sat in silence, my eyes low, cast to the grassy ground, occasionally traveling from the grass to Jason's white converse sneakers to my scuffed black ones and then to the grass once again.

"I don't . . ." Jason began with a sigh. "I don't really know how to say this. How to . . . put it so you believe me."

I moved my gaze up from the floor then, settling them on his face. His eyes. Our gazes held. It was surprising, really, how just yesterday I'd been unable to maintain eye contact with him for fear of him saying something hurtful, or worse, hitting me.

He opened his mouth to speak. Paused. Took in a deep breath, and then lowered his gaze from mine, his relatively long lash casting a faint shadow below his eyes.

"I'm sorry," he said, his hand folded before him, eyes still cast to them. "For the way I . . . treated you all this while. In the past. The things I said. Did. I've realized . . . I was wrong. And I should never have done that."

"You're kidding, right?" Was the first thing I said after the silence that ensued at his last word.

He looked up at me then, brown eyes meeting mine once again.

"No, Amelia, I'm not." He shook his head. "I know this is hard, and you don't believe me—"

"Hell, yes, I don't," I cut in.

"I understand if you don't believe me, Mel," he said slowly. "Trust me, I do. It's normal. All I want to do, right now, is apologize and hopefully invite you, firsthand, to the party I'm throwing two days from now, Friday night. But it's entirely your choice to . . . forgive me. And your choice to attend the party."

"So, why the sudden change of heart?" I asked with spite in my tone. "You only just realized I'm a human being too?"

"You wanna know why I changed?" He raised his eyebrows. "What made me realize what I was doing was wrong?"

"Please, by all means, tell me, Jason," I shrugged, still not convinced by his words. "I guess . . . scratch that, of course, I want to know."

Once more, he lowered his gaze.

"Yesterday," he began, "I had an encounter. With my dad's wife, and I saw how she treated me, even when all I've been to her is mean. She looked past

my facade, I guess, and saw, deep down, I was really hurting, and despite my attitude toward her, she took care of me.

“And, I don’t know how, why, but I remembered you. At that moment, all I could think about was you. All I’d done to you was bully you for . . . no apparent reason, when, in retrospect, I could just be nice to you, or in the very least, neutral towards you. And I felt really upset, with myself, for my behavior. Also really bad. And today, I decided I’d apologize to you, as hard as it may be.”

I had to admit, his words were pretty convincing. Everything about him was convincing, from his sudden meek nature, to the innocence and hope on his face to the calmness in his voice, it all pushed my doubt further to the background, such that all I could think of were his words and how genuine and heartfelt they sounded.

“And you really expect me to believe you, in the least. Or just . . . forgive you. After everything you’ve done to me.”

“I don’t, really.” He looked back at me. “I don’t. I can only hope. But this I promise you. Never again will I bully you. Or say mean words. Or tell you to do my homework. You can go home after school. Whenever you want. You don’t have to do anything for me. Ever again.”

“I’m sorry, Amelia,” he added. “I really am. It’s your choice to forgive me just as it’s your choice to not. I can’t force you, but at least, I know I apologized.”

With a sigh, he rose from the bench.

“I have to go,” he said, looking down at me. “I really do hope you accept my apology. At this point, honestly, I don’t want anyone to hold a grudge against me. You most especially.”

With that, he turned around and began walking away. My eyes remained on his retreating back until he walked back into the school.

What just happened?