

## Ugly Love

### Chapter 1

Bella

‘Be my girlfriend, Bella.’

I couldn’t believe what I heard. Marcus was asking me to date him. Marcus Remington!

‘Are you sure?’ I asked, my voice trembling with nervousness.

He chuckled, his brown hair almost covering his eyes, making him look more attractive than ever. When did he notice me? I thought I was invisible to him.

‘So, is that a yes?’ He leaned closer, his breath warm against my cheek. Blood rushed to my cheeks, and I looked away, nodding. Internally, I was screaming, laughing, and jumping with happiness.

‘I need you to say it,’ he insisted.

‘Yes,’ I managed to reply.

‘Do you like me, Bella?’ He sat closer, intertwining our fingers. I nodded, and he grunted, ‘Words, Bella, I need to hear you say it.’

‘Yes, Marcus. I like you very much.’ I gulped before summoning the courage to ask, ‘Do you like me?’

He studied me for a moment, and I couldn’t help but feel nervous under his gaze. Was he really noticing my acne scars or my braces? I tried to close my mouth as much as I could. I wasn’t wearing my best outfit either.

There were so many other pretty girls in school. He must have chosen me because he saw something more in me than just looks. ‘Of course, I like you. Why would I ask you to be my girlfriend if I didn’t like you?’ He smiled, and I couldn’t help but return the smile, displaying my braces proudly.

‘I want you to come with me to Steven’s party. It’s the day after tomorrow.’

And just like that, my dreamlike moment should have been shattered, but it wasn’t.

‘Of course, I’ll come.’

He smiled and leaned closer, his lips nearly touching mine. Was I going to have my first kiss?

Suddenly, I felt a sting on my forehead. ‘Ow!’ Marcus icked his middle finger against my skin, causing a slight pain.

‘I have to go meet my friends. See you later, Duckling.’

And with that, he left.

I looked down at my arms, noticing goosebumps. When did I get so lucky? Just a month ago, I had condescended in Ariella about my massive crush on Marcus, and now he was asking me to be his girlfriend.

I have a boyfriend now!

And my boyfriend was the boy of my dreams!

I couldn’t contain my excitement, jumping and squealing with joy. But my happiness was short-lived as I accidentally bumped into someone, causing their pile of books to fall to the floor.

‘I am so sorry!’ I exclaimed.

He didn’t even glance at me, simply bending down to pick up his books. I immediately joined him, apologizing profusely.

‘I’m so sorry. Let me help you.’ I handed him his thick-rimmed glasses, which had fallen to the floor, and he gathered the rest of his books before swiftly departing.

Spotting my best friend Ariella, I rushed over to her, engulfing her in a tight hug.

‘What’s got you so ecstatic?’ she inquired, her interest piqued.

‘A miracle! A miracle happened, Ariella. I still think I must be dreaming.’

‘What is it?’ she pressed, her impatience evident as she inspected her freshly manicured nails.

‘Okay, are you ready?! Marcus Remington asked me to be his girlfriend!’ I exclaimed, brimming with excitement.

Her laughter filled the air. Wiping away a tear, she finally ceased her laughter. ‘Oh, Bella, did you fall asleep reading another romance novel again?’

‘I’m serious, Ari! He proposed to me just a few minutes ago and invited me to Steven’s party.’

Her smile dimmed for a moment, and I caught a glimpse of something unsettling in her eyes before it brightened again, even more radiant than before. ‘Oh, I’m genuinely thrilled for you, Bella! How did it happen? What did he say? Tell me everything!’ she urged eagerly, and I recounted the entire enchanting tale from beginning to end.”

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The whole walk back home was a journey of pure elation. Happiness bubbled inside me, making me feel like the luckiest girl alive. I couldn’t shake the disbelief that Marcus, of all people, was interested in me. I had always thought he had eyes for Ariella. It had taken me immense courage to condescend in Ariella about my crush on Marcus, and her reassurance that no one could take away my right to crush on him had been a comforting balm to my insecurities.

Upon reaching the graveyard, I made my way to my dad’s grave, pouring out the events of my day to him. I shared the news of having a boyfriend now, someone who genuinely liked me. For the first time in what felt like forever, I found myself feeling beautiful and content with who I was.

If someone had told me a year ago that Marcus Remington would unexpectedly ask me to be his girlfriend, I would have dismissed it as pure fantasy. Yet here I was, living that very reality. Life had a way of surprising us when we least expected it.

After leaving some flowers on my dad’s grave and the one next to it, I made my way back home, my steps light and filled with joy. I couldn’t resist a skip and a song as I walked.

Arriving home, I rushed to the kitchen to catch a glimpse of myself in the mirror. A smile spread across my face, genuine and unapologetic. For the first time, I didn’t feel self-conscious about my acne, my style, or my braces. Because in Marcus’s eyes, I was enough just as I was.

A notification ping on my phone diverted my attention. It was a text from Ariella.

‘Guess who’s coming with you to Steven’s party?’ she teased, adding a wink emoji.

Attached was an image of a party pass.

‘OMG! Yes, with you there, it would be so much more fun. Can’t wait!’ I replied eagerly.

With Ariella by my side, I knew I could relax and enjoy the party without any reservations.

Sinking onto the couch, I closed my eyes, a smile lingering on my lips.

Life couldn’t be better...