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YOU
WERE
MADE
FOR
ME



I

The day I created a boy started out like any other.

I woke up at about 6:30 AM and dragged myself out of bed. I wrote a few paragraphs for the short story I'd been working on, then I had a shower, brushed my teeth and—

This is what you're starting with? Skip to the important part!

Libby, don't interrupt. And this *is* the important part! I mean, we don't know exactly what happened that day to cause—

It definitely wasn't you brushing your teeth.

You're the one who insisted I was the best one to record what happened. Why are you questioning my methods?

I didn't think you'd start by talking about brushing your teeth. Also, the day "I" created a boy? Really, Katie? Is that what happened?

Okay, the day WE created a boy. We being Libby and me. Better?

Yes. As long as you don't talk about brushing your teeth

again. Are we going to have to go over every bowel movement you've had in the last few months, too?

LIBBY!

...Do you not think I can do this?

Don't even. Of course you're the best person for the job. But every good writer needs a good editor, right?

Well. I don't know about "good..."

I swear—

But I do know I've got a story to tell. And I can only tell it my way.

My story—*our* story—is wild...and completely unbelievable.

It's also absolutely 100 percent true.

Well, no truth is absolute. Everything is subjective.

Okay. It's *my* absolute truth.

All I can do is lay it out there. No matter how hard or embarrassing it might be. *Especially* when it's embarrassing or hard, because then you'll know I really am telling the truth. What you make of it from there, of course, is entirely up to you.

Now, where was I...

Right.

The day *we* created a boy. It started out like any other...



“Declan Bell Jones is the perfect guy,” I said with a sigh.

(I’ve skipped to the interesting part, as Libby requested. Well, not the *really* interesting part—that comes a little later—but the lead-up is important, trust me.)

It was a Friday, after school, and Libby and I were dawdling by the soccer field on our way home so that I could sneak glances at Declan Bell Jones as he trained. He was in my geography class, and I’d been staring at the back of his head all year. I’d memorized every inch. The ashy blond hair. The tan skin of his neck. The little mole just below his hair line, which his collar caressed every time he moved (which was often; he was a fidgeter).

I thought a lot about what it might be like if I were the one caressing that mole.

Which might explain my marks in geography.

“I swear, if I had a dollar for every time you said that, I could afford my own car,” Libby said, interrupting my thoughts about Declan Bell Jones and his mole.

“You can’t even drive,” I replied.

“Minor detail.” She took a bite of the Fruit Roll-Up she’d wrapped and twisted around her index finger so that it resembled a weird red monster’s claw. Still chewing, she said, “Anyway, what did Miss Lui say?”

I’d hung back after sixth period to talk to my art teacher about signing up to paint a mural on one of the

walls around the main quad. The school had designated six areas for students to decorate. They were trying to move away from the concrete prison block look, I think.

“They just want free labor,” Libby had muttered when the news was announced at assembly that morning. But she’d nagged me nonstop for the rest of the day until I agreed to speak to Miss Lui. That’s the thing about Libby. She grumbles that I spend too much time daydreaming, but she’s also my biggest supporter—she believes in me more than I believe in myself most of the time. I’ve known her for longer than I can remember (literally—we met in preschool). We have the kind of friendship where you can tell the other person anything—*anything*—and we won’t take offense or judge each other.

I mean, we even fart around each other.

That’s how you know it’s true friendship.

“She said she thinks I’d be great,” I told Libby. “‘Marvelous’ was the word she used, actually.” I smiled to myself. Hearing my favorite teacher say that about me had unraveled the nervousness I felt about putting my art (and myself) out there.

“Maaaaaaaarvelous,” Libby intoned, in a pretty good imitation of Miss Lui. “See, I told you.”

“I still have no idea what I’d paint though,” I said. “I mean, it’s so much pressure! The whole school is going to see it. And it could be there for, like, generations to come.

What if it's terrible? What if I suck? What if—"

"What if it's brilliant? What if it's maaaaaarvelous? What if—"

Libby stopped abruptly, and I turned my head to see what had suddenly caused that look of horror to come over her face. We were nearing the goal area of the soccer field, and standing there was none other the devil herself, flanked by two of her demon minions.

Mikayla Fitzsimmons, Olivia Kent, and Emily McAlister. The unholy trinity.

They were giggling as they watched the boys on the field and hadn't spotted us. Yet.

"Uh, let's go back the other way and cut through the parking lot," Libby muttered.

Here's what you need to know about Mikayla Fitzsimmons: she's one of the hottest girls in our year. Tall, blonde, about 80 percent legs. Curly hair that somehow always manages to look cute and controlled, unlike my unruly mass.

Her personality, on the other hand...

She's a total feral.

Libby and I, and the rest of our friends, we're not exactly in the "cool" group at school. Although we're not at the bottom of the food chain, either (that sad distinction belongs to Tiff Richardson, who never seems to shower). But Mikayla treats basically anyone

who isn't her minion—or a cute guy—like month-old garbage (the minions only get treated like day-old garbage, lucky for them).

Mum used to tell me Mikayla's insults were a sign she was jealous, but what was there to be jealous about? She never let me forget just how ugly and worthless she found me, calling me all sorts of names over the years. Pancake, thanks to my flat chest. Four-eyes, thanks to my glasses. Pinocchio, thanks to my nose. Calamari, thanks to my surname (it's Camilleri). Cousin Itt. Crater Face. Freckle Fart from Kmart.

With Libby, Mikayla had this whole thing where she pretended she didn't exist. The name-calling worked on me, I guess, because I always froze and didn't talk back, whereas Libby wouldn't hesitate to fire back a cutting remark that Mikayla would pretend she hadn't heard. It didn't seem to bother Libby. Until one day, I guess it got to be too much. Or rather, something happened that pushed Libby over the edge.

It was when we were in Year 8. Mikayla went through this spitting phase. I mean that literally—she would spit constantly. It's like she thought it made her look cool and hard or something. It was disgusting, but no one ever called her out on it.

Until Libby.

We were walking across the quad one day, on the way

to art class. Mikayla and her friends weren't far behind us, whispering and giggling. I heard that all-too-familiar *hocking* sound, and Libby suddenly came to a stop beside me. Her lip curled and her face went bright red. She slowly turned around and glared at Mikayla.

“Did you just spit on me?” she said.

Mikayla smirked and stared at the space above Libby's head. She took a step as though to keep walking, but Libby didn't budge. Mikayla was going to run right into her.

“Come on, Libby, it was probably an accident,” I heard our friend Amina whisper, tugging on Libby's elbow to try and get her to move.

Mikayla took another step. And another. It seemed like everyone else was stuck in place.

And then Libby lunged forward.

She and Mikayla became a blur of limbs as they scratched and clawed at each other, screeching and yelling. Words like “disgusting” and “get off me” were soon drowned out by someone screaming “FIIIGHT” and the noise of a stampede as the crowds that had been heading to their afternoon classes converged where we were.

I'm not sure how long it took before Mr. Green, a geography teacher, managed to elbow his way through the crowd and pull Libby and Mikayla apart. It felt like forever, but it couldn't have been more than a minute or two.

He gave them both afternoon detention for a week.

The first time in my life I ever got detention. My parents were furious.

It was worth it.

It was impressive. And it somehow got Mikayla off our backs.

Because I complained that her behaviour was part of a pattern of systemic harassment, and she got put on probation for a month. All her teachers had to fill out a sheet about her behavior every single period.

She still gave us nuclear-level death stares whenever we crossed into her line of sight, and whispered behind our backs with Emily and Olivia. But mostly they just steered clear of us.

And we *really* steered clear of them.

Which meant we were a little surprised when we saw them at the soccer field. Mikayla and Emily live a few suburbs away, and they usually catch the bus home straight after school. Olivia lives near me and Libby—we actually went to primary school with her and used to play together sometimes—but if we ever see her out of school, we all do the mature thing and look the other way. She's usually alone, so it works just fine.

That day she wasn't alone though, and I had a feeling the mutual invisibility thing wouldn't be quite as effective. Not with Mikayla the fire-breathing monster there—and

with no teachers around to make her act like a human.

Without another word to each other, Libby and I frantically started to back up, trying not to draw attention to ourselves. Our eyes were on Mikayla, not the field.

Which is why I didn't see what was coming or even register the call of "Heads up!" until it was way too late.

A blur of black and white came *whooshing* at my face. For a split second I thought it was a magpie, and I screamed.

Then there was nothing but darkness and voices that sounded really far away.

My eyelids felt heavy. Slowly, I opened them.

I blinked.

Blinked again.

And thought I had died and gone to heaven.

Because looming over me, hazy but right there, was the spectacularly handsome face of Declan Bell Jones. I watched in wonder as his features rearranged themselves from concerned to relieved.

I crashed down to earth two seconds later when Libby appeared above me, shoving Declan out of the way and throwing herself on her knees next to me.

"You're alive!" She declared theatrically, cupping my face in her hands. She still had that Roll-Up wrapped around her index finger, and it was sticky against my skin.

"I think so," I said, sitting up with her help. It was

only then I took in the crowd gathered around me. Not just Declan, but all of his teammates and their coach. Plus Mikayla Fitzsimmons and her friends. Ugh.

I was contemplating the likelihood of a sinkhole opening up and swallowing me on the spot when something incredible happened.

Declan reached down to help me up.

Let me repeat that.

Declan. Reached down. To help me up.

His hands. Were gripping my arms.

His hands. Were moving to my shoulders.

His eyes. Were peering into my face.

All thoughts of Mikayla—of anyone or anything, really—instantly dissolved. I nearly fell right back on the ground.

“You alright?” Declan was saying.

I grinned and said the first thing that popped into my head. “Magpie?”

Magpie?!

“Hell, she might be concussed,” I heard a deep voice say. Declan moved away from me, and his coach stepped closer. He bent forward and spoke loudly. “It wasn’t a magpie, love, it was a soccer ball. Smacked you right on the head. Here, how many fingers am I holding up?”

“Huh?” I was still feeling a bit dazed, but I wasn’t sure if it was from the fall or Declan’s proximity.

“How. Many. Fingers. Am. I. Holding. Up?” the coach

repeated, even louder this time.

“Ummm.”

“You don’t need to yell, pretty sure she can still hear,” Libby said. “Can’t see too well without her glasses, though.” She plucked them from where they’d fallen on the ground and handed them to me. I held them up to my face. The lenses were miraculously intact, but one of the arms was twisted at an angle that definitely wasn’t right. I groaned. My mum was gonna kill me. I’d only had these frames for two days.

The coach dropped the hand he’d been holding up and straightened with an exasperated sigh. He turned to Declan, who was still hovering close, even though most of his teammates had started trickling back onto the field.

“We better take her to the hospital,” the coach said.

“No! She’s fine,” Libby said. She knew how much I hate hospitals. “You’re fine, aren’t you, Katie?”

“Kate.”

“What?”

“I told you to call me Kate,” I whispered.

Through gritted teeth, Libby said, “Is this really the time, *Kate*?” Her gaze flicked toward the others. I noticed that Mikayla had moved to stand next to Declan, her hand gripping his upper arm.

“I’m fine. Just fine,” I blurted out, although I was feeling anything but.

“I really have to insist on taking you to—”

“You know what, her doctor is just down the road there, I’ll take her right now. No need to worry, sir,” Libby was saying. She tugged on my arm.

“I think I should come with you,” the coach said. “Wait there, I’ll grab my wallet. I left it in my glove box.” He started jogging toward the parking lot.

There was an excruciating moment as the rest of us just stood there in silence.

Declan was the first to break it. “I’m really sorry,” he said to me. “About your glasses. And your head.” He laughed nervously. “Does it hurt?”

Before I could answer, Mikayla cut in. “It’s not your fault, babe. They shouldn’t have got in the way.”

“Okay, we’re done here,” Libby said. “Come on, Katie.”

I let her pull me away. As we rushed toward the alleyway that led to my street, I heard the coach yelling after us. It only made us giggle and speed up. I glanced over my shoulder as we rounded the corner away from the field. Without my glasses, I could just make out the blurred shape of Declan still standing there, with the smudge that was Mikayla apparently glued to his side.

“Are they going out?”

Libby snorted. “Looks like it. So much for the perfect guy.”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean, how great can he be if he’s interested in

Mikayla ‘The Devil Incarnate’ Fitzsimmons?”

I let out a huff. I still thought he was pretty perfect.

Except, of course, for the fact that he wasn’t interested in me.

Not that I blamed him.

(See, I told you I’d tell you the whole truth. No matter how humiliating it is.)

It does get pretty humiliating.