

Forgiven

For Emily, everything turned out to be quite difficult. Nothing seemed to go as she'd planned. For example, when she'd met Jake last summer. He was amazing in every way possible, until he cheated on her. Also, the time she found that dog on the side of the road. Turns out, it had rabies. She'd often found out that things happened in unexpected ways.

A million thoughts swirled around in her mind. *Why was she so unlucky?* To clear her thoughts she decided to go for a walk. The woods were so peaceful in the spring. She hiked past the woods and through the thicket. She stopped at the bank of her favorite river. This spot was Emily's own wholesome secret. She loved to come here when she needed to think about something that was troubling her. At the moment, it was Jake. After all, this was their go to spot. Another thought she had was, *Why did I show anybody this place?* The river was so serene. The dew on the grass posed as a moist blanket against Emily's body. The birds flew by as they sang their morning song. It was a sweet sensation to Emily's ears. She had woken up early just to see the sunrise. It was beautiful to watch by the river. The sand was cold against her feet. After all, she needed a distraction. As she watched, minutes turned into hours. She woke up with a start. Standing before her, was the person she wanted to see least.

"Jake." she said with disgust. But the truth was, she wasn't disgusted, she was hurt. Jake had been her whole world. When she met him, he was the sweetest person she had ever known. He had sandy hair, and bright blue eyes that lightened up any space he looked at. He was kind, and smart. He stood up for what he believed in. Looking at him sent a wave of memories through her mind and body. The best summer Emily had ever experienced was only because she had spent it with him. He brightened her day with his dreamy smile. She started remembering everything. The first time she had ever hugged him, or held his hand. Or the time Jake gave her his jacket when she was cold in the movies. The memories that stuck out most to her was the first time they kissed. But the worst memory was the one that stung. It made her whole body ache, and sent a wave of fatigue over her body. This was the memory of when he left her.

Looking at his face she was confused. Emily could tell that he was feeling a million things at once, much like her. "Emily, we really need to talk." His comment made her angry. Emily had been trying to talk to him since September. Jake acted as if she didn't even exist anymore. "Are you just now realizing we need to talk? I've been trying to talk to you for months Jake! Everytime I see you, it's like you're in your own little world with Violet and I'm not even here. I don't understand what she has that I don't. I've spent so many nights comparing myself to her and trying to figure out why you chose *her* instead of me." Emily realized how rude of a tone she used, but at this point she didn't care anymore. She was so hurt, and didn't care what Jake thought of her anymore. "Emily listen, you shouldn't compare yourself to her at all. I broke up

with her in December and I've been trying to get the guts to talk to you ever since. I know I hurt you and I'm so sorry." He tried sounding reassuring, but Emily didn't buy it. He was the first person to ever really hurt her. She didn't mean to, but she started to cry. "Do you seriously expect me to believe you? Do you even remember that day? I remember every single detail." The memory of September fled into her. Emily was having a great Saturday. The Saturday of September the 16th to be exact. She got dressed, wearing her favorite American Eagle blue jean shorts, pink tank top, and her Birkenstocks. She grabbed her jacket, Stanley, and keys. She left her driveway so happy, but little did she know that that was about to change. When Emily pulled into Jake's driveway, she saw a white car that she didn't recognize. She thought to herself that *"Maybe it's one of his friends."* She walked through the front door, but his house was silent. "Jake?" She called out his name, hoping he would answer. She slowly walked into his room and found Violet waiting for Jake to get home. After that day Emily tried to talk to Jake, but she just couldn't do it. She was too heartbroken.

"Emily, I will never be able to forgive myself for what I've done to you. I am a terrible person, but I still love you. I have never stopped loving you. I don't understand why I did that to you, but I promise I will never hurt you again. I care too much about you." Emily made a crude realization. "Don't make promises you can't keep, Jake. You should go." He looked at her with a sad expression. "Wow, what happened to forgiveness? Oh wait, I doubt you even remember what I'm talking about, even though I remember every detail too." Suddenly, the memory came back to her. During the summer, Emily had led a seminar about forgiveness to kids at the library. That's where she met Jake. Forgiveness was something she valued dearly. If Emily ever hurt someone she cared about, she felt terrible. All she ever wanted was to be forgiven. Now, it was her time to give forgiveness.

At the end of the seminar, she saw Jake sitting in the audience with his little sister. She was adorable. She wore a pink dress, and had pigtails with little bows in her hair. Emily shortly learned that her name was Lily, and she was 6 years old. She remembered how Jake had told her that forgiveness was something they had been working on lately. Apparently Lily was starting to hold grudges. This was the first time they had ever talked, and Emily knew right then and there that she was falling in love with Jake. This sweet memory soon faded.

Emily began to break a sweat as she worried. Her hair had become frizzy and poofy, but Jake looked at her like she was so important. She started realizing why she had ever been attracted to him. "Jake I remember that day too, every bit of it." She managed a little smile. He sat down next to her as a silence spread over them. They stayed that way for a little while, until Emily decided to ask a question. "You know just how to get me, don't you?" She waited for his reply. "What do you mean?" "I mean, about the forgiveness thing. You remembered how important forgiveness is to me, I kind of forgot. Our relationship started with forgiveness at that stupid seminar, and ended because I had no more forgiveness. But I forgive you now, maybe, just maybe, we can start a relationship with forgiveness again." Emily was scared she had said too much. "That sounds like a perfect idea." In the end, forgiveness had saved not only her, but her relationship. Everybody can be *forgiven*.