

“Hi Beth,” Maddie says. “How are you? How’s Ross?”

I shrug. “Me and him broke up last week. I really don’t think we were made for each other.”

She looks me in the eye, which I hate. It makes me feel responsible.

“You say that every time you break up with someone. Or lose a friend. Or surrender a pet to the shelter. I don’t think you were made for anyone on this earth.”

I shrug again. “Someday I’ll find-”

“You say that a lot too. I don’t know why I keep talking to you.”

That’s not true. We both know why.

*When I was young, my mother died. My father hired a young woman to come and babysit me while he was at work.*

*One day, she asked if she could bring her daughter Maddie. My father said yes, so she brought her. We are the same age and everything. We instantly hit it off.*

“You don’t have to keep coming back if I bother you so much.” I snap.

She looks both hurt and relieved at the same time.

“Good luck, Beth,” she says as she walks away.

I kick the door closed and lean against it, sliding to the floor. I feel like crying, but over the past year I've already cried all the tears I had.

So I sit in a miserable heap. I decide to pull out my phone and check social media.

I see twenty-five new messages. Good. More time to escape. But where to start?

I notice a message from Holly, the one real friend who has stayed with me, even when I mess up. She was my friend from high school, and even though she moved to a different town, we still keep in touch online.

*"I saw this video and thought it might encourage you."* Her text says.

I click her link.

It is the hymn *Amazing Grace*. I have heard it a million times, but never really thought about it.

The graphics in this version, however, make it hard for me to ignore the message. Through pictures and a few captions, it introduces the person making the video someone who has heard about Jesus, but didn't really *know* him. Then there is a caption that says 'God loves you no matter what'.

One of the slides says 'Matthew 18:20'. I go to the other side of my tiny apartment and open the Bible my parents had given me. It has sat on the counter gathering dust since the day I moved out of my parent's house a year ago.

Mathew 18:20 says 'For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.'

I keep reading. ‘Then came Peter to him, and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?”’

Jesus said unto him, “Until seventy times seven.”’

Then Jesus tells a parable. A king is keeping his books. A servant is brought to him who owes the king a thousand gold pieces. The king forgives him of the debt.

The servant leaves, but before he makes it home, he runs into another servant who owes him a hundred silver pieces.

The first servant grabs the second and demands that he pay back everything instantly.

The second servant falls to his knees and begs just a little more time to pay it off, but the first, deaf to his plea, puts him in prison.

Some other servants see this, however, and tell the king everything.

The king is furious. He tortures the servant until he can pay everything back.

I honestly feel sorry for him, even though he deserves it.

Jesus concludes the chapter by saying “So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if, from your hearts, you forgive not every one of your brothers their trespasses.”

I feel convicted. I’m not very good about letting things go.

The story also leaves me with a question. Have I even asked God to forgive *me*? Until today, I never thought I needed to.

I go to my knees. *Dear God, I pray Please forgive me. I want to do the right thing, but sometimes I don't listen to You. Please help me to forgive those who have hurt me.*

Then I text Holly.

*Can you drive me to church tomorrow?*

She answers me in seconds. *Of course!*

I text Ross. *I'm not mad at you. I understand it's not your fault we didn't get along. I know I am difficult sometimes.*

It takes him a little longer to respond, but when he does, he says *It's OK.*

Then Holly texts me. You do have so nice clothes clean, right?

I start to text 'yes', then decide to check my closet.

None of my dresses are clean. I completely forgot that you should wear nice clothes to church, it's been so long since I went. So I have to run the washer again. Oh well.

I text Holly again. *I didn't. There's a dress in the washer now. Thanks for reminding me!*

Two seconds later, my phone dings.

*No problem!* Holly says.

Finally, I get around to texting Maddie. *I fell in love again.*

She texts back. *Again??!*

Yes. I answer *But not with a boy this time. With a song. And a Savior who forgave me. Can we be friends again?*

I go to Holly's church, which is nearly an hour away from me.

I thoroughly enjoy the song service, more than I've enjoyed church since I outgrew Sunday school.

But I have a thought halfway through the sermon that keeps me from hearing the rest. I have found Jesus, but what about the other people who haven't asked him to forgive them and forgiven the people who hurt them? I know people who haven't been forgiven yet, and I do not like the idea of them being tortured forever when they can just ask God to forgive them and, in turn, forgive those who have hurt them.

Then I make my decision. I will go and tell them.