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## Sticks and Stones

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# Sticks and Stones

Amelia Jones

*Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.*

*7th Grade- the beginning*

Our story opens with a 13-year-old girl full of ignorant bliss and sleepovers with her friends every weekend in the summer. That little girl walked into school, sat at the lunch table with her peers, and had the world at her fingertips. School was great, grades were exceptional, and her middle school volleyball team was even going to the championship; life was perfect. However, life at 13 was much simpler than it is now.

It was the first day of 7th grade and she couldn't find her blazer. Looking around the house she finally found it hanging on the kitchen chair. A text message from her group message of best friends lights up on her phone,

“Can't wait for today! Btw who's in your advisor?!?!”

Typical.

A smile unfolds upon the youth's face; it was going to be a great year.

Or so she thought.

*Fast forward two months.*

Ambitious and driven, this middle schooler was on a mission. She was on the honor roll and participated in almost a dozen clubs while also balancing the duties of being the lead in the prestigious 7th and 8th-grade play. It was a lot to handle, but she could do it. Others started taking notice of her activities; some looked on with awe and others conspired to “knock her down a peg.” Soon enough, rumors started circulating, dirty looks ensued, and the invitations to hangout began to dwindle. Who are the ones committing these heinous acts against our protagonist you ask?

### **Her best friends.**

Without rhyme or reason, she was ostracized and cast out of her social group. Bewildered to what she had done to provoke her once trusted confidants into becoming her biggest bullies, our girl began to droop her head and to believe the evil words they uttered.

It was only the beginning.

*8th Grade- “Nobody likes you”*

Throughout the years the intensity heightened and suddenly she was in the center of some cruel game to make her life miserable by the majority of her grade. When she walked into school, the eyes were burning on her back and whispers echoed:

“We don’t want you here”

“Psycho”

“Nobody likes you”

“Why don’t you just leave already?”

Determined not to let the bullies win, the girl decided to run for freshman class president at the end of the year. She won by a landslide and she believed a light at the end of the tunnel began to illuminate. That light was snuffed out when only days later she was informed of a petition to “impeach” her signed by many of her classmates; the same classmates who voted her in.

*9th-11th Grade- Queen Bees and Wannabes*

*Finally, high school, a clean slate!* she thought.

Despite the petition, she was still able to carry out the duties of class president. However, a new threat was emerging from the crowd of her many critics: a ringleader. In previous years, the torment bounced back and forth from clique to clique without any specific order to the chaos. Now, someone had taken up the charge to unite the masses and launch a full-scale strike.

We'll call her Queen Bee.

It became a living nightmare from which she was unable to wake herself up. If only it was that easy. It was only a matter of time before she was attacked on social media. The cowards behind the screen sat in front of their computers, adrenaline pumping through their fingertips, and their conscience's clear while waiting for a response from the girl to their hateful messages. Little did they know, her tear-streaked face buried in a pillow was warranting the questions:

“What is wrong with me? Why me?”

Between sobs, her mom was always there with a comforting touch and words of wisdom. “You must keep your head up. Those girls feel so badly about themselves that the only way to make themselves feel better is to tear others down. Don't you dare let them see you cry because that lets them know they win. Always remember what Aibileen said in *The Help* ‘You is kind. You is smart. You is important.’” Little did she realize that this mantra would help her throughout the rest of her years.

At the start of her junior year, she stopped going down to the lunchroom. After getting her tray from the lunch line, she would set it on a table and sit down in the empty space. One by one the occupants of the surrounding chairs would collectively retrieve their trays and move one table over. This was no fluke, for every time the girl sat at a new table the same thing happened until she would ultimately end up eating alone, again. The worst part was that she was never offered an explanation for the action. The silence was deafening.

She now retreats to the library where she hides her packed lunch out of sight while her class is laughing and enjoying themselves downstairs.

### *The Confrontation*

Sick and tired of the years of torment from Queen Bee, our main character mustered the courage to finally confront her. On the day of the deed, the girl sat in her car with her mom before the first bell rang.

“Remember what we talked about: You is kind. You is smart. You is important. You can do this because you are invincible.”

Palms sweaty, she got out of the car and went into school. The day seemed to drag on as she watched the hands on the clock strike 3 o’clock. It was time. She took a deep breath, but it burned in her chest. A high-pitched giggle rang in the distance and Queen Bee came into view with her posse.

*It’s now or never.*

Almost running down the hallway, our girl ended up face to face with the leader of her unending torment.

“What do you want?” Queen Bee hissed.

“It’s my turn to talk now so listen up because I’m only going to say this once. For the past three years, you have made my life miserable. I never want to hear my name out of your mouth ever

again. I don't know why it has and quite frankly I don't care anymore. I'm about 90% sure you don't like me but I'm 100% I don't like you. So, stay out of my way."

The girl turned around and left the Queen Bee choking on her words.

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In a perfect world, the Queen Bee and her crew learned their lesson and the bullying finally came to an end; but we don't live in a perfect world.

For a very long time, our hero believed this was all her fault- that she was solely responsible for the treatment from her peers. Although the harassment continued, our girl no longer hanged her head, for she was invincible.

My name is Amelia Jones, and this is my story.