

Chapter 26 Her Mock Apology

After he had turned his back to her, Roxanne stood there, transfixed to a spot.

She hoped, and hoped that he would turn back and look at her. That his eyes would rest on her with anything; she would not even mind pity, if that meant he would have mercy and offer her the job.

She couldn't find it in her to turn around and go home. Emily was waiting for her with ears itching for good news, how could she go back to her with tears in her eyes again?

Alas, when he was out of sight, Roxanne fought the urge to run after him and turned on her heels as well. There was nothing she could do anymore.

What was left to do was go back home and try again. She would keep trying until she finally won.

Perhaps, this was the universe telling her that being an employee to a man you had a one-night stand with was a bad idea.

She walked back to where Emily's car was parked and entered into it.

Even as she sat alone in the car, she still felt the tingling sensation she felt in the pit of her stomach whenever his eyes were on her. There was something about his gaze, no matter how cold that seemed to call out to her, that possessed her. Roxanne shook her head vehemently. She would not think or talk about him.

It did not matter that his face had been the main subject of her sexual fantasies after the night they shared. Now, she was going to bury whatever thoughts she had of him, it was obvious he wanted absolutely nothing to do with her. Her fists tightened against her steering wheel.

She now wanted nothing to do with him as well, or at least, she would try to.

As she drove back home, she heard her phone beep. Roxanne quickly used her left hand to search her bag for it. Perhaps, Lance had changed his mind and sent her a message. When she clicked the home button, it was a text from Emily.

"Hey baby, I am sorry I had to text you and not call. I am currently at the airport and my phone is down. I got an emergency call from my management. There is this French art collector who has picked interest in sampling some of my work in his gallery. He said he must meet with me and as soon as possible, I had to leave home immediately. I am leaving for France and I would be back on Wednesday morning. You can survive one day and a half without me, can you not? I'll do my best to call you once I land. Bon voyage love!"

Roxanne read aloud. With that, she sighed and fixed her eyes on the road.

The ride back home was silent. She came out of the car and managed to carry herself to the foot of her door. She opened it and flung herself on the first couch she set her eyes on.

All it took was a swift flash of today's events through her mind to cause her to shed tears again. With no one to cry to this time, she cried to herself.

She sought for what it was about her that seemed to magnet so much bad luck.

Suddenly, there was a knock on her door.

She groaned in annoyance, even amidst her tears as she rose up. The universe was certainly out for her head, and Roxanne did not know how long it would be until she succumbed to its desires.

She wiped her teary eyes with her palms, hoping it would take away the after-effects of all the crying she had been doing as well.

Roxanne planted herself in front of her door and steadied her posture, before opening the door a bit to see who it was that decided to add to her already ruined day.

When Roxanne caught sight of a very familiar - and highly unpleasant female figure, she shook her head to shake away the feeling of déjà vu that washed over her. Why did this all seem like it had happened before?

Roxanne had made up her mind. She was going to send Rayla to hell and bang the door at her face. But, just as she was about to, Rayla's eyes met hers through the small hole in the door. Her sister's hand held the door knob, to prevent Roxanne from shutting it.

Roxanne groaned in anger as she let the door open. Rayla stood in front of her, a bouquet of roses in her hands and a puppy eyed face.

Roxanne scoffed.

"What do you want Rayla?" her voice was shaky. She cleared her throat to push back the tears choking her voice.

Rayla sighed and smiled sadly, before allowing her eyes to fall to the ground.

"Roxy..."

The sound of her pet name from Rayla's mouth caused her to flinch.

"I came to apologize," Rayla finally spoke aloud, earning her an amused glare from Roxanne.

Roxanne did not know what to feel. Even anger was too small of an emotion to describe what she was feeling now. She had also gone past rage, so all she could do, was chuckle.

"You came to apologize?" she asked again. Making sure she heard exactly what her sister said.

Apology? Rayla wanted to give her an apology? A million and one "I'm sorry(s)" would never be able to erase all the pain that she had caused!

Rayla nodded and Roxanne's face hardened.

The nerve of her. But she was already too tired to explain why Rayla's apology would not mean shit to her. Instead, she stood straight and held the door again.

"Apology accepted Rayla, please take your lea..."

Rayla caught hold of the door again. If Roxanne did not know Rayla any better, she would have thought her sister was being sincerely apologetic. "Wait Roxy!"

Roxanne rolled her eyes. Here comes the fake speech.

"I know that I have done a lot of things to hurt you this past month, I see how that has ruined our relationship and I know that you might never be able to forgive me. But, I am willing to try my best to restore the relationship that we once had. You were always so good to me Roxy, and I have constantly taking you for granted. I'm very sorry."

Roxanne shrugged.

"Okay..."

"Allow me to make it up to you!" Rayla cut in again.

Roxanne forced back the urge to laugh. What did Rayla think she could that would be enough to pacify her?

"I ran into an old friend today. Turns out he is now a manager of one of the biggest news publication companies in the country! And he is based here in Manhattan. I took his card, told him that I had a sister he just had to meet! He is excited to meet you Roxy."

Roxanne watched as Rayla shuffled in her bag for a card. When she found it, she held it out to her.

Roxanne wanted to take the card and slap it across her sister's face. But, on second thought, it was probably the opportunity she had prayed for.

When one door closes, another opens right?

With that thought, she took the card from her sister's hand and took a good look at it.

"Jeremy Spears, Chief Editor of New York Times. It would be an amazing opportunity for you Roxy. Please, promise me you'll take it."

Promise? Roxanne simply nodded.

"Okay."

With that, Roxanne shut the door at Rayla's face and returned into her house. She picked up her phone and dialed the number on the card.

The excited masculine voice at the other end of the line scheduled a meeting for that evening 5pm, he had said.

Roxanne glanced at the clock above her television. She had about 4 hours more.

That was more than enough.

At exactly 4:30 pm, Roxanne made sure she was corporately dressed. She tucked her credential files into her hand bag and left the house. As she

drove through the night traffic of the city, she hoped that this would not be another futile effort on her part.

If Rayla was so sure of the man...she stopped to think. Wasn't that supposed to be a warning sign? Roxanne shrugged.

It was 5:05 when she stepped into the restaurant, the first eyes she met seemed to recognize her, because they beamed with smiles. She swallowed hard, if he recognized her, it could only mean that he was the man Rayla spoke about. Jeremy Spears.

He rose to wave at her. Roxanne took deep breaths in and out as she walked to him. She had to admit, he was tall and quite attractive. But, she had taken in a lot today to take note of his features. She wanted to get this meeting done with and go back home to her bed.

When she stood in front the table, he moved to draw out a chair for her and stood until she had settled into it. After that, he rushed back to his seat and settled into it as well.

Roxanne continued to smile nervously, still unsure of what to expect. She was grateful when he opened his mouth to speak first. "Roxanne Harvey, right? I mean, it's obvious seeing as you have a very intense resemblance to Rayla. She has told me all about you." Roxanne found herself forcing back the urge to roll her eyes.

"I'm Jeremy Spears," he said aloud. He appeared to be very delighted to mention his name. He said it with pride, she was envious of him.

Before Roxanne could open her mouth to speak, he was talking again. She sighed and melted back into her seat.

"I must say, when Rayla told me about you, I had expected you would be as tall as she is. I myself have always admired tall ladies. However, you are not as tall as she is, I suppose that's cause you are the younger one." He was laughing now, as if he had made a very funny joke.

Roxanne didn't find any of it funny, but she managed to force a chuckle.

His brown eyes danced around the room before he chuckled again. He leaned into the table, drawing his face closer to hers as he smiled.

"Forgive my manners Miss Roxanne. I did not even ask what you'll like to have." He turned to his right, signaling on a waiter.

When a waitress walked to them, Jeremy smiled at her.

Roxanne found his broad smile very uncomfortable. But she said nothing, only forced herself to return it.

"I would like to have steak sourced with cauliflower please. And a bottle of martini," he said aloud first. Roxanne watched as the lady took his order in her note. The woman's eyes rested on Roxanne. She was already mentally exhausted, food was the last of her worries right now.

"Same," was all she managed to say. As the waitress turned around, Jeremy turned to her again.

"You enjoy steak too, I see. Rayla was always the vegetarian. She had such strong principles and was always so passionate about animals. It was one of the things we loved about her in college."

Roxanne nodded. She was tired, she should have known that this was what would happen. A reference from Rayla could never be a good one.

"I looked at your profile, said you schooled somewhere in East Texas. As Rayla's sister, I had thought you would have attended another Ivy League school. Maybe Harvard even NYC. But Texas, that was a... not so impressive choice. Rayla also said that you did not further your studies, you did not attend post graduate school, unlike she who..."

She wanted to disappear, run, stand up give him a resounding slap and walk out of the room. She was too exhausted to do any of these. So she sat there and moped at him as he listed the thousand and one ways Rayla was better than her; all of which she already knew.

"...I mean, I would like to settle down myself, but it is very hard to find a woman of my taste you know, someone like Rayla..."

Her stomach turned again. With every second she sat there, her mental health drained. How did he even get to the topic of marriage?

Their meal had arrived, but Roxanne had not found it in her to touch her food. Luckily, he was so engulfed in talking about himself and Rayla that he did not notice.

Forcing food down her throat while listening to him would be impossible.

"...And as a man, I would like me a woman who can look out for me you know? Someone who would love me enough to tolerate all my excesses, because..."

She thought she would collapse to the ground. What was wrong with this man?

"Because, a mouth as uncouth as yours would need all the tolerance it can get."

Another masculine voice thundered from behind her.

Her heartbeat quickened, her entire body froze. The very familiar Arabian scent passed through her nose. The back of her neck itched unnaturally.

He took two steps forward, so that her eyes rested on his tall frame.

Roxanne felt her stomach turn.

His eyes turned away from the man and rested on her.

She had not been mistaking, it was him... again.