

Bad Boy's Protection

- Chapter 1

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I sighed as I heard heels clicking down the hallway of the high school. Only a few girls wore heels together and I was hoping the one coming towards me didn't belong to Belle Jones. I was not in the mood to see her today, or any day really.

"Poppy," the familiar feminine voice said, the attitude giving away the person. The heels did in fact belong to Belle.

I ignored her and continued looking through my locker, trying to find anything to distract me. I couldn't stay at my locker forever, but I knew never to walk away from Belle, no matter how annoying she was. Walking away always made things worse.

"You can't seriously ignore me," Belle said. "Or are you finding someone else to tattletale on?"

"That isn't what happened," I said through my clenched teeth, keeping my sight focused in my locker. I took a quick peek at my phone, happy that two minutes were left until lunch was over. Then, I could finally get away from her for the day.

"Sure it isn't," Belle said sarcastically. "You were obviously seeking attention."

"Why would I do that?" I asked, turning to face her.

"Because you're not me," Belle said with a smirk. Her two friends, Lisa and Loni, smirked as well, even though they had no idea exactly what Belle and I were talking about. Nobody knew about what happened and I wanted to keep it that way. Everyone would probably have the same reaction as Belle and say that I was just looking for attention.

I scoffed. "Trust me. I would never want to be you." I said this in a low voice, hoping she wouldn't hear me.

Apparently, she has some sort of super hearing and was able to hear me. "Why? Are you satisfied with your 'perfect' self?" Her air quotes around 'perfect' made me clench my fists. "Get it in your heard, Poppy. You are not perfect, nor will you ever be."

"I know I'm not perfect," I said. "Just leave me alone, Belle. I'm not in the mood to argue."

Suddenly, she gasped dramatically, making me furrow my eyebrows. "How dare you?!"

"What?" I asked, feeling a bit confused.

I was even more confused when she called our beloved principal, Mrs. Goth over. "What is it, Belle?"

Belle pointed accusingly at me. "She called me a name that's forbidden at the school!" Her friends nodded in agreement to back up Belle.

"What?!" I asked, completely shocked. "I-"

"Miss McCormick, cussing is forbidden at the school," Mrs. Goth said sternly.

"But I-" I began, but stopped when Mrs. Goth held up her hand

"Detention after school," Mrs. Goth said, pulling a piece of paper and pen out of her pockets. She scribbled something down before handing it to me. "Give it to the staff in charge if detention."

I widened my eyes. I had never had a single detention before. "Detention?! But I-"

Mrs. Goth shook her head, not listening to what I had to say before she walked away.

Belle smirked satisfyingly. "Have fun in detention," she said before flipping her platinum blonde hair and strutting away, her friends following. Belle left me with my mouth opened. I couldn't believe she did that. Actually, I could. Ever since the incident that happened, she hated my guts even though it wasn't my fault. She didn't want to hear my side of the story. Instead, she chose to hate me and turn the whole school against me.

The bell to signal the end of lunch rang. I groaned and grabbed my Astronomy textbook before slamming my locker shut. My mom was not going to be happy when she heard about my detention, even though I did nothing wrong. I failed to understand why everyone always believed Belle no matter what.

I slowly walked to my Astronomy classroom and immediately sat in the back of the class. Normally, I would sit in front of my favorite class, but I constantly heard people whispering about me. Sitting in the back didn't prevent it, but at least I could see who was whispering.

Mr. Pierce started the class after the late bell rang, leaving no time for any late-comers to arrive. Even if someone came a second after the bell, Mr. Pierce considered them to

be late and they had to go to detention. He was the only teacher in the whole school who did this.

Besides his late policy, he was my favorite teacher. He taught the class so effectively and never ceased to bore me in the class. It did help that I loved Astronomy. I loved the mystery that was space and anything to do with it.

Unfortunately, the class ended quickly. I did not want to go to my next class, Biology. I hated Biology, especially when we had to dissect things. It was gross and nearly made me lose my lunch a few times. Luckily, we were just reviewing for our test the next day.

When school finally ended, I went to an empty hallway and dialed Mom's cell number. I held the cell up to my ear, biting my lip. I did not want her to yell at me when she found out I had detention.

"Hello?" Mom answered.

"Mom, hey," I replied. "Um, you might have to wait a bit to pick me up."

"Why?" Mom asked.

"Uh....." I started thinking of another excuse. Maybe I was studying in the library or.....No, nothing would work. She could see, er, hear right through me. "I got detention."

"Detention?!" she shrieked, causing me to pull the cell away from my ear a bit. "How did you get detention?! More importantly, why did you get detention?"

"It was a misunderstanding," I said. "I'm mad about it too, but I can't do anything about it."

Mom sighed. "Poppy, I only pick you up now. I have a meeting with a client in an hour."

I rubbed my forehead. "I can't get out of detention. I'll just find another way to get home. If anything, I'll wait until you're done your meeting."

"Okay," Mom said. "And Poppy? Please don't get detention again."

"Got it," I muttered, though no promises could be made with Belle around. "I should be going now. I love you."

"Love you too, Poppy," Mom said. "Bye."

"Bye," I said before hanging up. Now to go to my number one nightmare: Detention. I had no idea what it was like, besides a few ideas I had from watching TV. Other than that, it was my first experience in detention.

The staff in charge of detention today was Mr. Pierce. He looked shocked to see me. "Poppy McCormick. You are in the correct room, right?"

I sighed and handed him the slip Mrs. Goth gave me earlier. "Unfortunately, yes."

He eyed the slip before placing it on the teacher's desk. He gestured for me to sit anywhere in the room. Finding a place was when I saw everyone in detention. Devon Burke, Belle's boyfriend was there, sitting in the front of the class with his two friends, Adam and Jace. Those three were constantly getting into trouble. I was surprised they weren't kicked off the football team after all the trouble they went through.

The person that stood out to me the most was Grayson Prince. Grayson was the bad boy of the school, so seeing him in detention didn't really surprise me. He was attractive with his ocean blue eyes and sandy blond hair. He was tall compared to me, but he was about the same height as most boys in the school.

Grayson was sitting away from the three boys. His arms were crossed as he glared at the back of Devon's head, but Devon didn't seem to notice. He was too busy talking to his friends about their upcoming football game.

I sat down in the back of the class, not wanting to be near anybody. I took my Biology textbook out of my bag and started studying for the test. Biology wasn't my strongest subject, and if I got anything less than a B, Mom would kill me for sure.

"Everyone," Mr. Pierce said, making me look up from the textbook. "I have to go photocopy some worksheets and notes for my class tomorrow. Please behave." The last sentence seemed to be directed towards Grayson.

When Mr. Pierce left, Devon turned around and glared at Grayson. "We wouldn't be here right now if it weren't for you."

Grayson didn't reply. He continued to glare at Devon. If there was one thing I noticed around the school, it was the mutual hatred between Devon and Grayson. I hadn't seen any fights before, but there were rumors of one's between those two.

Devon scoffed at Grayson not replying. "No words? That's a first." Grayson still didn't reply, so Devon turned his focus to me. "Poppy, what a surprise for you to be here."

I wanted to glare at him, but me being in here wasn't his fault, though I wasn't a big fan of him. "It's all your girlfriend's fault," I told him.

"Belle?" he asked in fake surprise. "Why, she would never do something like that!" The smirk written across his face told me otherwise. "Besides, whatever she did," his eyes narrowed and his voice got colder, "you deserved it."

I was tired of the accusations made to me because of Belle. Why couldn't she understand that what happened wasn't my fault?

I just turned away and focused back on studying. However, it was hard to do so because I felt Devon's cold eyes glaring at me.

"Silence only proves how guilty you are," Devon pointed out and his friends chuckled.

"Guilty of what?" I asked. "Belle should be the guilty one."

Devon never liked it when people accused his girlfriend and talked smack about her. Rarely anybody did, since Belle was the most popular girl in school and the scariest one as well. I would know as I victim of her torments.

I wasn't surprised when he got up from his desk and walked over to me with hatred in his eyes. He slammed my textbook shut and placed his hands on my desk. "Belle did nothing wrong," he said. "You're the one who messed up her life."

"I did no such thing," I said. "You don't even know what happened."

"I do know that Belle is going through a hard time because of you," Devon said in a low voice. "That's why everyone in the school hates you."

I didn't let his words get to my head. Devon was basically a male version of Belle and if I could handle Belle, I could handle him. "That's nice," I said, opening my textbook.

Devon closed it again and slid it off my desk. "You better listen to me, Poppy. You-"

"Leave her alone, Devon," an annoyed voice said from behind Devon.

Devon turned around and glared at Grayson. "Stay out of this," he hissed.

Grayson stood up and walked over to Devon. They were equal in height, so neither intimidated the other. "Stop fighting your girlfriend's fights for her," Grayson said. "What's going on between those two is none of your business."

"If Belle's hurt, it is my business," Devon objected, crossing his arms.

"If you want to play it that way, then fine," Grayson said. "If you hurt her," he pointed to me, "I'll make it my business."

I was confused as to why Grayson, the school's bad boy, was defending me, the girl everyone hated at school. We never talked before, even though his locker was beside mine and we were in most of the same classes. But why would he defend me?

"Why are you defending her?" Devon asked as if he read my mind. "Do you even know her name?"

Grayson looked at me. "What's your name?"

"Poppy?" I said, though it came out like a question.

Grayson looked back at Devon. "I do now. And I'm serious. Hurt her in any way and you'll regret it."

"Don't think I forgot about what you did," was the last thing Devon said before sitting back down in his chair.

Grayson sat down as well just as Mr. Pierce walked into the room. He stopped immediately in the doorway and scanned the room. "I sense a commotion happened," he said. It wondered me how he knew there was one.

"There wasn't," Devon snapped.

Mr. Pierce raised an eyebrow, not believing Devon. "Someone better speak up. Was there any fights?"

His gaze landed on me, as if I would tell the truth no matter what. Well, that would probably happen because I was a terrible liar. "No fights," I said.

"Any arguments?" he asked.

I hesitated. "No."

"Miss McCormick, you do realize that you aren't the best liar, right?" he asked. "Who was the argument between?"

I didn't want to say anything to get Grayson in trouble seeing as he just defended me earlier. However, Grayson decided to speak up. "It was me and Devon," he said. "Devon was bothering her so I told him to stop."

"Right," Mr. Pierce said in a tone that told me he didn't believe Grayson. "You see, Mr. Prince, I always have a hard time believing you."

"Yeah," Devon said. "I wasn't bothering Poppy,"

Grayson scoffed, but didn't say anything.

"Miss McCormick, who's telling the truth?" Mr. Pierce asked.

"Grayson," I replied. "Devon was bothering me a bit."

"I was not!" Devon lied, and his friends nodded to support him.

Mr. Pierce sighed. "Alright, I guess I have no choice. Detention tomorrow after school for all five of you." My eyes widened. "I told you to behave and now, there's two different stories about what happened while I was gone."

"But Mr. Pierce, I didn't do anything!" I objected.

"Sorry, but rules are rules," he said. "Unless there's proof about what happened, all five of you will be coming back here tomorrow."

I sighed and picked my Biology textbook from the floor and studied for the rest of the detention. When it was over, Devon, Adam, and Jace hurried out of classroom. I packed up my stuff, noticing Grayson walking out. I hurried after him, wanting to thank him for defending me in detention.

"Grayson," I said. He stopped and turned towards me. "I just want to thank you for defending me against Devon."

He shrugged and continued walking towards the front door. I still followed him. "Um, why exactly did you defend me?" I asked. "Especially since everyone at this school hates me."

"I don't listen to rumors," Grayson said. "I know something happened between you and Belle, but whatever happened isn't the school's business and it's definitely not Devon's business."

"Well, thanks again," I said, stopping when we were outside. He left and I pulled out my cell phone. Apparently, detention was only an hour long, so Mom just started her meeting. Dad was out of town for the week so there was no way he could pick me up. The only thing I had to do was wait.

Suddenly, a black convertible stopped right in front of me. "Need a ride?" Grayson asked.

It was either wait for who knows how long for Mom, or get into the car with a somewhat stranger. I didn't want to wait any longer than I had to, so I nodded and walked to Grayson's car as he leaned over to open the door for me. "Thanks," I said.

He just shrugged, once again, and pulled out of the parking lot. "So where do you live?" he asked.

I gave him the address to my house and he drove there. The drive from my house to the school was about five minutes, so we were at my house shortly. When he pulled up to my house, I was confused and the white car sitting in the driveway. Mom's car was blue and Dad was out of town. And I knew that wasn't his car.

I got out of Grayson's car, thanking him again for the ride. "See you tomorrow, Flower," he said before driving off.

Flower? I shook my head, not wanting to think about it. I wanted to know whose car that was. Unless...

I quickly dug my house keys out of my bag and unlocked the door. "Tony!" I said, seeing my older brother in the kitchen. I ran to him and gave him a hug. "What are you doing here?!"

Tony laughed and hugged me back. "Well, my apartment burned down..."

"What?" I asked.

Tony sighed. "Long story. Anyway, I'm staying here for a couple of days, maybe weeks, until I could find a new place."

"When did you get here?" I asked.

"Around noon," Tony replied.

I narrowed my eyes at him when I heard the time. "You were here at noon and you couldn't pick me up from school? Mom told me she had a meeting and never said anything about you being here!"

"Sorry, Poppy," Tony said. "If I knew Mom couldn't have picked you up, I would have."

I swatted my hand, showing him that it wasn't his fault. "Eh, it's fine."

"So, how's everything been since the, uh, incident?" Tony asked.

I sighed. "Honestly, not good. Belle hates me for what happened and she turned the whole school against me."

Tony frowned. "That's not nice. And why does Belle hate you for it? It wasn't your fault."

"I know," I said. "Apparently, I did it for attention and I'm ruining her life. Little does she know that she's ruining mine."

"You'll get through it," Tony said. "If you ever want to talk about it, I'll be here."

"Thanks, but I'm not ready to talk about it yet," I said. "Now if you'll excuse me, I need to study for my Biology test."