

Bad Boy's Protection

Chapter 10

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A week later, I knew something was going on with Devon, Belle, and their friends. Grayson was back at school and they seemed to be everywhere Grayson was. At lunch, wherever Grayson and I ate, they were there too.

After school, Grayson offered to give me a ride home. Since I was ungrounded, I had my cell phone back and I was able to call Mom to let her know. Usually, I had to use the phone in the office which took forever because there was always a huge line up.

I hadn't seen Ben since the time at the beach, thankfully. I was also so worried about seeing him again.

"Grayson," I said as he drove out of the parking lot. "Do you notice something weird going on with Devon and Belle?"

"Kind of," Grayson said. "It is my first day back after my suspension so I have no idea if they were acting like that when I was gone."

"Trust me, they weren't," I said. "It's kind of creeping me out."

Grayson looked in his review mirror. "Speaking of creeping..."

I turned around in my seat and saw Devon driving the car behind us with Belle in the passenger seat. "Are the seriously following us?" I asked.

"I have no idea," Grayson said. "But to be on the safe side, call your parents and ask if we could hang at the beach. If they knew where either of us live, then that would be a huge problem."

I nodded and pulled my cell phone out of my bag, thankful that I moved to a smaller house once Tony moved out. Belle knew where my old house was but not my new one. I dialed my home phone and held the phone up to my ear. Honestly, I was really hoping Mom didn't answer. I knew how she felt about me being friends with Grayson and she would probably decline.

"Hello?" Dad answered, causing me to let out a silent sigh of relief.

"Hey Dad," I said. "Would you mind if I hang out with Grayson at the beach for a bit?"

"I don't see why not," Dad said. "Make sure you're home before six."

"I promise," I said with a smile. "Thanks, Dad."

"Have fun, Poppy," Dad said before hanging up.

I put my cell phone back into my bag. "I'm allowed to go. Quick question, though. Why are we going to the beach?"

"I always use it as an escape," Grayson said. "If we don't lose these two through the traffic, then we'll have to find a way to lose them at the beach."

"I'm just hoping we don't run into Ben again," I muttered quietly, though Grayson was able to hear me.

"You seemed really shocked to see him yesterday," Grayson said. "When was the last time you saw him?"

"After the thing happened," I said. "He..." I shook my head, preventing myself from saying anymore. I really wanted to tell Grayson about what happened, but I still wasn't ready to talk about it. I even tried to, but I always stopped myself. I was hoping to do it soon though because I knew I was going to run into Ben again eventually. If Grayson knew exactly what happened, he would definitely understand more and make sure Ben didn't go near me again.

Grayson sighed. "I really wish you would tell me what happened. I'm so confused about the whole Ben thing."

"I want to tell you, Grayson," I said. "I really do, but I just can't talk about it. I try, but the memories are still too much for me to handle."

"I understand," Grayson said, glancing at the review mirror. He suddenly cursed and began driving a bit faster.

"What is it?" I asked, feeling a bit worried.

"Nothing," Grayson lied with a sharp tone. "But we need to make a little detour." He took a sharp right turn at the next intersection and looked at the review mirror again. "Are you serious?!"

I looked at the car following us, still seeing Belle and Devon. But I noticed someone else sitting in the backseat. "Who is that?" I asked since I didn't recognize him.

Grayson didn't answer as he continued driving down the road. We were driving down a road that was almost always vacant.

A black van was parked in the middle of the road horizontally, causing Grayson to step on the brakes before he slammed into the car. "Grayson, what's going on?"

Grayson still didn't answer as two people got out of the black van: Adam and Jace. Something was going and I wanted to know.

Belle, Devon, and a young man who somewhat looked like Devon walked to Grayson's side of the car. "Nice to see you again," the man said.

"Dedrick," Grayson said in a cold tone. "When did you get released from prison?"

"Wouldn't you like to know?" the man, Dedrick, asked. He then looked at me. "What a pretty friend you have. It would be such a shame if something were to happen to her."

Belle crossed her arms. "I hope that's sarcasm because I sure hope something happens to her."

"Oh, is this the girl who caused trouble for you and your brother?" Dedrick asked. "No wonder she's hanging out with someone like Grayson."

"What the hell do you want?" Grayson asked.

"That's my business," Dedrick asked. "We're just here to make sure your friend knows everything you've done. And to find your weakness so we could use it against you in the future."

"Subtle," Grayson muttered. "Just move the damn van so we could leave."

"Not yet," Devon said. "Tell me, did you tell Poppy that you almost killed me?"

I snorted. "That's funny, Devon." But then I looked at Grayson. His hands were gripped so tightly on the steering wheel that his knuckles were turning white. And his eyes told me that Devon wasn't lying. "Grayson?"

"Oh, I see," Devon said. "You didn't tell her because you were afraid she would no longer want to be your friend. Looks like our work here is done. For now." All five of them left and drove off.

Grayson didn't move the car. He just sat there, looking at the steering wheel.

I decided I was going to have to be the one to start talking. "What did Devon mean that you almost killed him?"

"I didn't almost kill him," Grayson said, not looking at me. "I almost had him killed. There's a difference."

"What happened?" I asked.

Grayson shook his head and started up his car. "Nothing." He started driving the car and I knew he was going to take me home.

"Grayson, drive to the beach," I said.

"Poppy," he began, but I didn't let him finish.

"You promised we'd go to the beach, so we're going," I said.

Grayson sighed as he made a U-turn and continued driving to the beach. I had to admit, I was a bit shocked that more happened between Grayson and Devon than I could ever think.

"Can you tell me what's going on?" I asked.

"Nothing," Grayson lied.

"Nothing?" I asked. "Devon followed us, they blocked off the road, this guy who apparently was in prison is trying to find your weakness to use against you, you allegedly almost killed Devon, and nothing is going on?"

"You don't want to know," Grayson said. "It will probably make you not want to be friends with me anymore."

"Just last week you said you're probably going to have to tell me a few things about you," I said. "And some of the things might scare me. But trust me when I tell you this. Nothing you say will scare me more than what happened today or what happened with me and Ben."

Grayson sighed. "Fine. I'll tell you when we get to the beach."

The rest of the drive was silent. Through the whole drive, I was wondering about what happened with Grayson. How did he almost get Devon killed? Who was Dedrick? Why were they trying to find his weakness?

We finally arrived at the beach. Grayson and I got out of the car and starting walking down the beach. It took Grayson a while to start talking but he finally did.

"Devon, Jace, Adam, and I were all friends," Grayson said. "One day, we were hanging around a bar, getting into trouble like we normally do. Then suddenly, Dedrick, who is Devon's cousin, rushed out of the bar. He told us that we needed to leave now and someone had to drive. Since I was the only one who had my license at the time. So we got into my car and drove off. Then a police car started chasing us. I was so worried about what was happening and so confused. I wasn't that great of friends with the three of them so there was some things they never told me. Dedrick told me to keep going and try to shake them off. I tried but I was just so dazed that I couldn't concentrate so I accidentally crashed." Grayson stopped in his tracks and I stood in front of him. "Devon was in the passenger seat and took most of the injury. He injured his back, his

neck, and he got a concussion. He almost died. And Dedrick ended up having illegal drugs with him and he was arrested."

"W-wow," I said, feeling totally shocked. "T-that's really..." I didn't know what to say, honestly.

"That's why they hate me," Grayson continued. "And that's why Dedrick wants to find my weakness. They want to get revenge on me, but so far they haven't found anything to can use against me. At least, I hope they don't yet."

I was thinking about what Grayson said. He trusted me enough to tell me what happened. Which was what gave me the decision to tell Grayson about my past.

"I'm the reason Ben was put into prison," I told him.

Grayson furrowed his eyebrows. "You... What?"

I sighed. "It happened in the summer. Belle and I were best friends and our families were really close. We were going on a road trip like we did a few times. We stopped at a hotel and that was when it happened." I looked down, contemplating if I should continue.

Grayson gently grabbed my hands and held them in his, which felt oddly comforting. I continued, but I kept my eyes glued to the ground.

"Belle and I were sharing a room, but she went to get some food since she was hungry. Then Ben came into the room saying how he has been waiting so long to do something, then he... He..." I couldn't continue. I thought I was ready to talk about it, but I couldn't.

But Grayson somehow knew what I was going to say. "He assaulted you, didn't he?" he asked quietly.

I nodded. "Yeah. I was able to escape before he did anything bad and I told my brother, who called the cops. There was a trial and he lost. His family has hated me ever since and said I made everything up."

Grayson wiped a tear off my cheek. "Poppy, I'm so sorry that happened to you. And trust me, I'll make sure Ben doesn't come near you again."

I looked at him and gave him a weak smile. "Thanks. I just wish Belle would realize it wasn't my fault."

"It wasn't your fault," Grayson said. "If she doesn't believe that, then it's her fault."

"But she lead everyone to believe that I was the one who turned her life into hell," I told him. "Because her brother was in prison, she thought her life was ruined. But I went through so much

because of what her brother did. Her family hates me, my mom makes sure I always do my best, and the school hates me."

Grayson then pulled me into a warm hug. "Poppy, I'm going to make sure Ben and Belle doesn't bug you again. I promise."

His words gave me a warm feeling. I didn't know why, but being with Grayson just felt comforting. It felt right.