

## Bad Boy's Protection

### Chapter 3

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Even though I went to bed early last night, I woke up with a throbbing headache. Mom wouldn't even let me stay home. She told me that missing a day of school because of a headache can result in serious consequences. In my opinion, she was overreacting. I could easily catch up after staying home one day. But she wouldn't listen to a single word I had to say. So, I had to suck it up and go to school.

By the time it was lunch, my headache was a lot worse, especially since I sat behind Belle and her friends in my English class and they spent the whole period blabbing away.

As I was putting my books in my locker, the six people decided to pester me again. I always dealt with it, hoping they would get bored and move on. That was never the case.

"How was detention yesterday?" Devon asked.

I didn't answer. I was not in the mood for them to pester me. Having a headache this bad would probably cause me to snap at them, which would make Belle's story about me 'ruining her life' more believable.

"What's wrong?" Belle asked in a fake sympathetic tone. "Cat got your tongue?"

"I'm just not in the mood to talk," I muttered.

"Why?" Devon asked. "You feeling guilty for ruining Belle's life?"

I wasn't able to contain myself. "I am not ruining her life!" I snapped before I could stop myself. I rubbed my head and sighed, hoping nobody was watching the conversation.

"No wonder nobody likes you," Devon said. "You're so temperamental." His diss resulted in high fives amongst the six of them.

"Just leave," I said, closing my locker.

"Leave?" Belle asked. "You expect me to leave you alone after what you did?!"

"I did nothing!" I repeated for what felt like the hundredth time. "What happened wasn't my fault!" Great, my yelling was causing my headache to get worse. There was no way I was going to be able to concentrate in the rest of my classes.

"I'll believe that once pigs fly," Belle scoffed.

"I don't care what you believe," I said. "I am seriously not in the mood for all of you to pester me. Go bother someone else."

"And what if we don't?" Devon asked, taking a threatening step closer to me.

"You'll regret it," a voice behind me said in a cold tone. I turned to see Grayson. Him always showing up while I was being pestered was a miracle. My headache was still getting worse and having Grayson here to tell Devon off made me feel a lot better. The headache wasn't gone, but I felt relieved.

Devon immediately glared his dagger-like eyes at Grayson. "How many times do I have to tell you to stay out of it?"

Grayson stepped between me and Devon. "I don't know. The same amount of times I have to tell you to leave her alone."

"You're not all that, Grayson," Belle said as if it was an insult.

However, Grayson didn't take it as one. "Thank you, Captain Obvious. I *really* appreciate the feedback. Now why don't you do me a favor and leave? Or I could beat up your boyfriend. Your choice."

Devon scoffed, though I saw a hint of fear in his eyes. "You really think you could beat me up? I'd like to see you try."

"Is that a challenge?" Grayson asked, taking a step towards his enemy.

"Let's just go," Belle muttered, pulling Devon's arm. She must have thought Grayson would have pummeled Devon.

Devon gave Grayson a sharp glare before the six of them left. Finally. I was free from their stupid and pointless pestering.

"Thanks," I said to Grayson. "It's nice to have someone to have my back."

Grayson shrugged as I rubbed my forehead after receiving a sudden sharp pain. "You okay?" he asked.

"Not really, no," I said honestly. "I have this massive headache, but my mom wouldn't let me stay home. And the stress of school plus Belle and Devon is making it worse."

"Then let's cut class," he said simply.

I raised an eyebrow. "Cut class? I don't know... ."

"I know this quiet café near the beach," he said. "It will help your stress level go down."

"My mom will kill me if she finds out," I told him. Biology is the last class and that was one of the main classes I needed to become a doctor. If she found out I skipped that class, I'd most likely be grounded or dead.

Grayson shrugged. "Then don't let her find out."

"Doesn't the school call if someone misses a class?" I asked.

"Yeah," Grayson said. "But the school doesn't start calling parents until around four, so when you're home, be by the phone and get ready to impersonate your mom."

"I still don't know... "

Grayson sighed. "Stop over thinking things, Flower. I do this all the time and I've only been caught once or twice."

"Alright, fine," I said.

Grayson smiled. "Great. Let's go." He lead me outside of the school and towards his car. I honestly felt a bit nervous skipping school since I had never done it before. What if Mom found out? What if I ran into my parents or Tony? What if...

Grayson snapped his fingers in front of my face, pulling me out of my thoughts. "Flower, stop over thinking."

"I wasn't over thinking," I lied as we got into his car.

"Remember when Mr. Pierce said that you're not the best liar a few days ago?" Grayson asked. I nodded. "He wasn't lying."

Grayson started up his car and pulled out of the school grounds. "I haven't skipped before, so don't blame me for being nervous."

"But if you over think too much, your headache could get worse," Grayson pointed out.

I sighed and leaned back against the seat, knowing he was right. I decided to just relax, clear my mind, and enjoy the thirty minute drive to the beach.

"Grayson," I said after a few minutes of silence. "Why are you being nice to me?"

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"Belle convinced everyone at school to turn against me," I said. "So why not you?"

Grayson shrugged like he usually did. "It might be the fact that Devon is taking Belle's side and I hate agreeing with him. Or maybe because I know something happened between you and Belle and it won't be fair to assume Belle's side of the story is true."

I frowned at the memories suddenly rushing through my head. My headache was starting to worsen at the memories, so I began rubbing my temples in attempt to soothe the pain.

"Is the headache getting worse?" Grayson asked.

"Yeah," I said. Stupid memories... Stupid Belle... Stupid Ben... "The stress of having Belle around is making it horrible. I can't say exactly what happened, but I will say that she blames me for it."

"When did this thing happen?" Grayson asked.

I didn't mind him asking. As long as I didn't have to talk about the specific incident, I was fine. "In July. During summer vacation." I started rubbing my forehead again as the memories came back. "I need these memories gone. I tried everything, even a psychologist. Nothing worked."

Grayson raised an eyebrow. "A psychologist? Wow. What happened must be pretty bad."

"Yeah," I said quietly. "It was."

Nobody said anything after. It took a few more minutes before Grayson parked by a café near the beach. Less than half a dozen cars were parked there, giving me some hope that I'd be able to have some peace and quiet.

Grayson and I walked into the café. I immediately fell in love with the delicious aroma filling the air. It was a mix between freshly baked chocolate chip cookies and brownies as if they were fresh out of the oven. I had to try my best not to drool.

While looking at the menu board behind the cash register, Grayson turned to me. "So Flower. What do you want? My treat."

"You sure?" I asked.

He nodded. "Yeah."

I ordered a chocolate chip cookie -mainly because of the smell- and a latte while Grayson just ordered coffee. Sitting down in the café was definitely helping my headache go down. I knew it wouldn't completely leave, but not having a massive headache put me in a better mood.

Grayson must have noticed because he asked me, "Feeling better?"

I nodded. "A bit. I guess having a break from school was all I needed."

"See?" Grayson said. "I told you."

"Well thanks for taking me away from the school," I said. "I haven't hung out with a friend since Belle turned everyone against me."

"So you two were friends?" Grayson asked.

I nodded. "Yeah. Best friends. Almost sisters. We had been since kindergarten. But now, she hates me... ."

"If you want, I can beat up Devon for you," Grayson said.

I furrowed my eyebrows. "We were talking about Belle..."

"I know that," Grayson said. "But I don't hit girls and since Devon is her boyfriend and a complete ass, it's the next best thing."

"Yeah, I doubt that would fix everything," I said. "Besides, nobody knows exactly what happened. Not even Devon. He just thinks I did something wrong because his stupid girlfriend said I did."

Grayson shrugged. "Suit yourself. I'd probably beat him up sooner or later anyway."

The bell above the door dinged, signaling someone walking in. I just thought it was a normal customer. I was so wrong.

"Poppy?"

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