

# Bad Boy's Protection

## - Chapter 4

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"Poppy?"

Oh, I was in so much trouble. Tony just had to be in the exact same café I was in when I was supposed to be in school. Out of all the cafés in Florida...

"Hey, Tony," I said nervously as he walked over to the table Grayson and I were sitting out. "What are you doing here?"

"I could ask you the same thing," Tony said. "Aren't you supposed to be in school?"

I sighed. "Yeah, but Mom wouldn't let me stay home when I have this awful headache and Belle was tormenting me again and I was just feeling really stressed."

"So you decided to skip school?" Tony asked.

"Sorry," I muttered.

"Why are you apologizing?" Tony asked. "I skipped school a few times when I wasn't feeling well. Besides, I know how stressful Belle can be with the situation."

I nodded, agreeing completely. Belle was a painful person to deal with ever since the incident happened. "You won't tell Mom or Dad, will you?"

Tony shook his head. "I'll do you one more and call the school to say you went home sick. You're welcome. Just stay out of trouble." He went to the front counter to order.

"You're lucky," Grayson said. "If my older brother saw me here, he'd probably force me to go back to school."

"Older brother?" I asked.

Grayson sighed and nodded. "Yeah. He's twenty-one. He always looks down at me."

"I know the feeling," I said. "That's what my mom is like."

"And my dad," Grayson added. He sighed and shook his head. "We should be going. School's going to be over soon."

I nodded before checking the time on my phone. Back at school, it should be the break between classes right now. Perfect. "I'm just going to text my mom to say you're driving me home after school," I said as I typed the message into my cell. "Done."

"Let's go, then," Grayson said.

I said goodbye to Tony, who was now sitting at a table, before following Grayson outside to his car. The drive was silent for a bit before Grayson spoke up. "So," he said suddenly. "You're brother knows what happened to you and Belle?"

"Yeah," I said. "He was kind of there when it happened. He's the only person supporting me through it all. My dad is usually too busy working and my mom is telling me to get over it. She obviously doesn't know how much it affected me."

"Will you ever tell me what happened?" Grayson asked.

I thought for a bit. Even though Grayson was the bad boy of the school, he seemed to care about what happened. And it was nice actually having a friend since I haven't had one since the incident. "Possibly," I said. "I just hate talking about it. Or thinking about it."

"Can you at least give me a hint about what happened?" Grayson asked. He sounded like he was genuinely worried about what happened and he didn't seem nosy at all.

I sighed. "Let's just say that what happened didn't really involve Belle. She's just mad at me and blames me for the outcome. But she wasn't even there when it happened."

"So she basically blames you for no reason?" Grayson asked.

I nodded. "Yeah. And I didn't even ruin her life. She's only taking... .." I stopped before I could say *Ben's side*. I couldn't talk about this anymore. The memories were already flooding back to me, causing my headache to get worse. I began rubbing my forehead, trying to get the memories out. They wouldn't leave.

"What's wrong?" Grayson asked in a sympathetic tone.

"Nothing," I muttered.

Grayson didn't ask any more questions for the rest of the ride. Instead of going straight to my home or the school, Grayson asked if I wanted to hang at his house for a bit since school was still in session. I didn't mind. My headache came back and I really needed a place to relax.

Grayson pulled into the driveway of his house. It wasn't that far from my house and it was in a peaceful part of town, not to mention beautiful part. Many of the front yards and gardens of the houses were flourished with beautiful bright flowers. Not a single house looked out of place.

No other cars were parked in the driveway, so I assumed none of his family was home. Grayson led me inside his house. "I got video games in the gaming room," Grayson said. "I know you like playing."

"Sure," I said. I just hoped the volume of the games we played wouldn't make my stupid headache worse.

After about only ten minutes of playing, I had to stop because of the headache. Grayson offered to get me a glass of water, so while he did so I just closed my eyes to rest. After a while, Grayson shook me. "Flower," he said. "You've been sleeping for an hour."

I opened my eyes, blinking a bit to clear my vision. "I have?" I asked, yawning right after.

"I came back with some water and you were fast asleep," Grayson told me. "And I didn't want to wake you because you just looked so peaceful."

Suddenly, I remembered something very important. I told Mom that Grayson was driving me home after school and according to the clock hanging above the TV, I was supposed to be home a long time ago. "My mom must be wondering where I am!" I said, getting up quickly. I got up a little bit too quickly because I immediately felt the blood rushing to my head.

Grayson pulled me back down on the couch. "Relax. I texted your mom on your phone and told her that we were going to do some homework together." He grabbed my phone off of the table beside the couch and handed it to me. "By the way, I don't think your mom likes me that much."

I went to my messages, reminding myself to put a password on my phone. The last one from Mom made it very clear that she didn't like Grayson:

*Don't stay too long. I don't approve of Grayson. He's a troublemaker. Stay safe.*

"Wow, Mom," I muttered to nobody in particular. "Harsh much?"

Grayson heard me. "Don't worry, I've been called a lot worse. I'm not that surprised that your mom doesn't like me. Almost all the families of my dad's co-workers can't stand me."

"And why's that?" I asked.

Grayson shrugged with a smirk on his face, telling me that he didn't care about if people liked him or not. "You tell me." He stood up from the couch and helped me stand up. "I should be taking you home now. You really should be resting now."

"Okay," I said, knowing he was right. I didn't know what was up with my headache, but I knew that I should be resting.

I followed him out of the gaming room just as a man walked inside the house. He looked like he was in his twenties and looked a lot like Grayson. That must have been his brother he was telling me about.

Grayson's brother eyed me for a few seconds before turning to Grayson. "Who's this?"

Grayson didn't seem to have a strong relationship with his brother judging by the glares he was sending. "None of your business," he said in a low voice.

"Whoa little brother," Grayson's brother said. "No need to be angry at me. I was just wondering who your pretty little friend is." He flashed me a smile, making me feel a bit uncomfortable.

Grayson crossed his arms. "I don't have to tell you anything, Graeme. Now if you'll excuse us, we need to go somewhere that is none of your concern."

Grayson took a step forward to leave but his brother, Graeme, stopped him. "Dad wants you home before five. His having visitors over."

"Cool," Grayson said. "Now I really need to take Poppy home." He started walking towards the front door, so I followed him. When we were in his car, he sighed. "That was my brother, Graeme. He's always looking down on me, yet he's not so perfect himself." He pulled out of the driveway and started driving to my house. "He flirts with basically every girl that I talk to."

"Really?" I asked in a quiet voice.

"Yeah," he sighed.

I nodded and looked away. If Graeme ever flirted with me, that would make the memories come back even more.

"It bothers you, doesn't it?" Grayson asked.

"Yeah," I said. I couldn't tell him why it did, but I had to tell him one thing. "Can you do me a favor and make sure he doesn't? I know it sounds weird, but... ."

"It doesn't sound weird," Grayson said. "If you don't want my brother to ever flirt with you, then I'll make sure he doesn't. Just out of curiosity, does it have to do with what went down between you and Belle?"

"Um, no," I lied.

Grayson pulled into the driveway of my house. He stopped the car and turned to face me. "How many times are you told that you're not the best liar?" Grayson asked. "Look. I'm not

trying to ask what happened between you and Belle. I just want to know that if it Graeme possibly flirting with you bothers you because of what happened."

"Fine, it is!" I said. "I can't have any guys flirt with me or else it will bring back all those horrible memories!" I got out of his car and went straight into my house without another word.