

BadBoy 21

Chapter 21

Hey mom

Did you read it?

I stare at the note in my hands until the words blur, my teeth sink into my lips, I lean on the shelf and sigh. Yesterday when I came to return the letter, my note was untouched. But today, there is a reply. I shake my head like Let—I have decided to call the owner of the letter that—can see me. I didn't read it. I only caught a glimpse of the first line and chose not to. But right now, I am curious. Is it someone I know?

The handwriting is strange, maybe like me, the person has handwriting for different occasions. Tearing out a note from my jotter, I write out one word on it: No. Curiosity niggles me, I want to know what is in the letter, I need to know. I squash the paper and tear out another piece to put up a new response. A lie.

Yes. Sorry.

Before my conscience weighs in on me, I shove the note into the novel, run out of the library and drive out of the school like a cast of Fast and Furious. I don't stop to think until I am safely in my room, under the sheets with the letter in my hand. Taking a deep breath, I beg God for forgiveness and dive into it.

Hey mom, I hope you are happy. I hope you are happy knowing you picked your husband over us.

How do you sleep at night knowing you picked the father of the girl who molested your son over him? You say you love us, yet you force us to come to Thanksgiving, have Christmas dinners with your new family like we want to be there. You fought with dad a lot because of that, remember? You hated us being at home for Christmas dinners, you wanted to be outdoors on Thanksgiving, how come you love it now?

With Jack, you pretend we are a happy family, that we are your whole life but it's a big lie. How can we ever be a happy family if you don't love us? You hate us mom. Why? A mother will never pick a man she just met over two kids she brought into the world. Jack can never be our father so stop trying to force him on us. Daddy might be dead but he's a better man than Jack will ever be. A better parent than you.

Why can't you love us mom? Is it because I shouted at you the last time we met? I am sorry mom, I was so upset and you refused to listen to me. You didn't care that AJ no longer dances. You never listen to anything we say to you unless Jack agrees. But that's okay, we forgive you, parents don't know it all. But please leave him. If you leave Jack, I promise we will be good boys. We won't talk back at you. We will make you cheesecake, you still love it, right? We can live anywhere, even a shoebox, we won't mind as long as we are all together. Let's go back to the old days, the years after daddy's death, before you met Jack. We were all we had and we worked. You said we were your whole world, how do you exist without your world? You said we make you happy, how are you happy without the source of your happiness?

AJ wants his mom, I want my mom too. I miss her, I miss your forehead kisses. I might have complained a lot but I miss you coming to our room at night to kiss us goodnight. At school, when other parents show up for PTA and Thanksgiving feast, I am the one who has to attend because you say you will be there but you never keep to your words and you never apologise. It is never your fault. You are too busy being the trophy wife to a multimillionaire and a mother to his paedophile daughter to care about me and AJ.

After his games, games he no longer loves to play, I have to pick him up. I love AJ but I would like to be a normal teenager for once in my life, to truly experience high school, do things regular teenagers would do. I am tired of being so responsible all the time. I want to go to a party and not have to check the time because I fear I'll overstay or I am too busy worrying about AJ to actually enjoy the party. I want to try and smoke or drink at least once because it looks cool. You probably think my ideas stupid and I know it's stupid but that's the point. I want to do something stupid for once without thinking of the consequences.

Do you know I have never had a girlfriend? I have never even kissed a girl. Everyone at school thinks it must be easy to get any girl I want and maybe they are right but every time I try to talk to one of the girls, I see your stepdaughter and I am reminded of all the times she put her filthy hands on me. The times she made me touch her in places a kid should never be allowed to touch an adult. All the times I cried to you that she was molesting me and you didn't believe your son, your baby. You said I was your baby and you would always love me but you chased me out of your room when I came to tell you, do you remember? You said in your own words that I will be grounded until thy kingdom comes if I utter such nonsense again. But what was so hard to believe? That she touched me? I have never lied to you mom. Mom, why?

You have ruined me mom. It's unfair that you get to move on, live your life normally and be happy while I am this broken boy who has to take care of his younger brother because at the end of the day, he's all I have got and I am all he has got because you never come through for any of us. You ruined our family.

I really hope you are happy mom. Really happy. I hope Jack slits his throat the next time he shaves. I hope you cut your finger the next time you are making club sandwiches. I hope she chokes on her smoothie or dies of food poisoning. I hope I make enough money so I never have to accept help from you again. I wish daddy didn't have to die. I wish we didn't miss you. I wish I had my own money. I wish you never went out that morning to get us donuts, you would never have met Jack. I wish we didn't put your happiness before ours by encouraging you to go on that date with him. The date that changed everything.

Daddy might have been a bad husband to you but he was a good father to us and I wish you had died in his place. I hate you mom. I hate that you still exist while he rots in the ground, I hope you die very soon.

All my hate,

Your once beloved boy.

Wow.

Hot tears stream down my cheeks, I drop the letter to the bed with shaky hands and hug my pillow. Guilt stabs me, I don't bother wiping my tears. I shouldn't have read the letter. I don't know him but I am hurting for him. It's all too much for a teenager to bear. I clench my eyes shut. To think I always thought I had problems. More tears leak out of my eyes, I tighten my hold on the pillow and cry for the little boy in the letter who misses his mom. The teenage boy who wants to be a normal highschooler, the poor kid who was molested by his stepsister. His younger brother who has to deal with it all.

Switching off my bedroom light, I snuggle under the covers and pull it over my head. A message from Maria pops up, I switch off my phone and slide it under my pillow. I want to be left alone for now.

Someone knocks on the door, I hide my face in the pillow with no intention of moving, I can always say I didn't hear them knock. The knocking ceases, I curl into a ball and chew my lip. I don't want to think of Let, I don't want to imagine him to be one of those students I might have treated badly or ignored.

The bed dips, the cover is pulled away from my head, I open my eyes to see Mum staring worriedly at me. She touches my cheek with the back of her hand, feels my forehead to be sure I am not running a temperature and I manage to smile at her. She is not like Let's mom, she will never leave me or Hayden.

“Sweetheart, are you okay?” I nod. I am okay. I am more than okay because I have her and daddy, they will always be a couple. They will always love me no matter what. “Why are you crying? Are you hurt?”

My tear dam bursts open once again, I lunge myself into her arms and cry into her chest. She tries to pry my hands from her waist but I hold on tight. I don't know the boy behind the letter but I feel his pain and I am thankful for the things I have, even the little ones I might have taken for granted. I am thankful for Daddy and his busy shifts. I am thankful for Mum and her warm hugs. I am thankful for Hayden and his brotherly love. Mum rubs circles on my back and my cries eventually reduce to hiccups and sniffles.

“I'm sorry if I've not been the best daughter to you,” I say, my voice a bit muffled from the tears.

“Sweetheart, you are the best daughter a mother could ever wish for,” she whispers. I pull away to peer at her face, sure enough, she's telling the truth. She tears up a little, her thumb caresses my wet cheeks. “You and Hayden are the best kids a parent can have.” I nod and she dabs my cheeks with the heels of her hands. “Is that why you're crying?” I nod again, she tucks a strand of hair behind my ear and palms my face so I can't avoid her gaze. Staring into my eyes, she says, “Don't cry. You are a good daughter.” She presses a kiss to my forehead, I hug her again and she smiles. “Did someone say something to you?”

I giggle. See why I love her, she's the best mother on earth. I love her always. “No. I'm just grateful.”