

Bullied By The Badboy By Maramartha Chapter 3

Be quiet

Breathe, Tessa. Breathe.

It's just hey. I know it's a simple word but it's coming from him and that makes all the difference. I feel my cheeks heating up under his stare and avert my gaze to the board. Holy cow. Ben spoke to me.

Now is really a good time to fan myself. Hold on, what's wrong with me? I need to get a grip. I don't do boys. High school isn't for dating. I fiddle with the pendant on the necklace Hayden gave me. It's my good luck charm, I wear it everywhere, even in the ring. The coldness of the necklace pressed against my palm manages to calm my thoughts, I forget Ben for a second and focus on the formula on the board.

Mr Sam is explaining the formula, saying something about a pentagon. Or was it a hexagon? Whatever it was, it ends with a gon. Ben nudges me with his foot twice, for some reason, I choose to ignore him.

His chair squeaks as he drags it closer, his breath fans my neck, chills run down my spine. "Nice slap."

My eyes almost pop out of their sockets, I swallow. I will melt if I hear his smooth voice one more time.

Ben just said more than a word to me. I might look calm but I am screaming on the inside. Wait. Nice slap? My head jerks to him, he chuckles and pushes his seat back without a sound. At my confused look, he waves his phone at my face, ducking it out of my reach when I make to grab it. Dread settles in the pit of my belly, I refuse to consider the only possibility. It cannot be. We were alone in the hallway.

“Let me see,” I whisper to a smiling Ben, he is all too happy to see me worked up. “Please?”

A strand of hair falls into his face, he flips it in slow motion like he knows how sexy that little action is. He’s hot and he’s smart, I am allowed to appreciate that combo but he doesn’t have to know that. Putting my best poker face, I hold his gaze for a brief second and that arrogant smirk returns to his lips.

Aish. He’s so full of himself. I point to his phone, hoping he will take the hint and show me the video but he doesn’t. He shrugs and slides the phone into the pocket of his jeans without breaking eye contact.

Jackass. I should have grabbed it when I had the chance. Sparing him one last dirty look, I scoff and train my eyes on the back of Mr Sam’s head as he scribbles on the board. This time, I’m determined to pay attention to the lesson. But Ben is bent on making that impossible. He nudges me again, I ignore him.

A crumpled note falls to my desk, courtesy of him. As curious as I am, I flick it off my desk without a peek and his muffled groan makes me grin, he must be so used to getting his way. The students in front of us are taking notes, unlike me and him, I pull out my notebook with the intention of busying myself.

Ben pokes me at the side with his pencil, I grit my teeth and my head snaps to his stupid smiling face.

“What?” I bark at him.

The classroom goes silent, heads turn to us with a death glare directed at only me and I shrink in my seat. Mr Sam pauses his intense writing, his gaze alternates between me and Ben and his eyes narrow at me.

“Theresa, be quiet.”

I offer him an apologetic smile, Ben chuckles besides me but no one calls him out for that. I suppress a hiss at the partial treatment and start doodling on my note, all interest in the class disintegrating. The bag at my foot vibrates, I bring out my phone and bile rushes to my throat at the message in all caps.

“Hey.” It’s Ben again but I’m too focused on Maria’s message to listen to him. If it’s all caps, then it has to be urgent but I don’t want to open Broadway Gossip, which is exactly what her text demands. “Next time, you should punch her. Break her nose or something.” I glare at him, he winks. “Nice necklace.”

At that, I shove my necklace into its hiding spot. He snickers but doesn’t bother me again. Mr Sam throws us a warning glance but says nothing, I convince myself to open the blog and my head spins a bit.

No, no, no. Not this.

Nice slap? Next time, punch her? It all begins to make sense at the video of me slapping Olivia staring at me. The worst are the comments asking if it’s Photoshopped while some reply with memes of the slap.

Oh my life. I’m in deep shit.

Maria sends another text to confirm if I’ve seen the video and I reply to her with a picture of the type of flowers she should bring to my graveyard because I’m dead. When I finally lift my throbbing head from my phone, the class is empty or so I think until I notice Ben watching me. Is he waiting for me? He looks away before I can comment my suspicion, I pull my bag over my shoulder and stand. This is weird.

It's also our first time being in the same place alone. We speak a few times in unavoidable situations but I'm sure he doesn't remember those encounters, I doubt he knows my name. I clear my throat to call his attention but he continues staring out the window as if he's embarrassed to get caught staring at me. Jerk; I can look good if I try. I follow his gaze outside, nothing of interest but the school's parking lot.

Alright then. Without a word to him, I exit the class for my next lecture.

The rest of my classes are a blur, stolen glances and more stolen glances. A few pointed fingers and giggles. I faintly remember Maria leading me into the cafeteria and dumping a tray in front of me. No soda. No junk. I have a fight tomorrow but she doesn't know that. She thinks I'm watching my weight. As if I am not already skinny enough. I pick at my food, taking only a bite before I push the tray away.

"Cheer up, it's not the end of the world," she says in her overly cheery voice. Easy for her to say, she's used to being the centre of attention while I'll rather remain hidden. "The video will be forgotten soon."

She twirls a strand of her blond hair, I nod and she grins. Her jacket is gone, revealing her black crop top which hugs her chest. It must be nice to have great boobs, not the dots God stuck on my chest as an afterthought. I tune her out as she rambles on about her latest music video on her YuuTube channel.

Of her five siblings, she's the best singer and her dream is to one day perform with Shakira. I am all for supporting your best friend, heck, I was her first subscriber but I need some peace and quiet for a few minutes. Pressing my fingers to my temples, I release a sigh. The cafeteria was a bad idea, the library is better. I jump to my feet, prepared to leave when the doors of the cafeteria burst open. I sink into the bench as everyone's attention is redirected to the group strolling in and my eyes instantly locate Ben.

Ben, the show stopper. And he doesn't even try.

They halt at the centre of the cafeteria as if giving us the chance to properly admire them but the only person I am interested in is Ben. The tall hunk with a flirty grin. My smile vanishes as his arm snakes around Olivia's waist, he must have known I was staring because he pecks her loudly on the cheek.

Are they dating now? Who cares? I stab the sandwich on my plate, my heart constricts and I dig my nails into my jeans, maybe I do care even if it's only a little. My eyes follow them as they drop down to an empty bench, Olivia claims Ben's laps with her hands sitting nicely around his neck while his settles on her waist and that tightening in my chest occurs again. He must be out of options or lacks taste in girls.

Maria taps me but I cannot look away from the couple. They fit together.
"Are they dating?"

Ben doesn't date, I have been in this school long enough to know that. What if Olivia manipulated him? His eyes meet mine over Olivia's shoulder, I freeze, my cheeks burning a bright red at his subtle wink.