

BadBoy 59

Chapter 59

Ben is here

My bath lasts all of ten minutes. I hop to my room while humming a tune I am not sure where I heard it. Hayden is on my bed, snacking on the batch of cookies I made earlier this week. I was hoping to see Ben so I could give some to him and his brother. I have missed Asher's sweet comments about my baking.

Hayden scoops more ice-cream into his big mouth, I walk over to him and smack the back of his head.

"Yo," he says, turning his head to me with a deep scowl. His eyes rake over my wet body and he plugs his nose. Stupid. He's the worse sometimes. I squeeze the water out of my hair and splash it on his face. "Was that necessary?" Batting my scanty lashes, I nod. "That's not cute, Tessa." Ben will gladly disagree.

I flash my teeth, well aware he will beat the hell out of me if we were ever to engage in a real fight. He and Coach Greyson are the reason I can fight. "That's my ice-cream." I point to the saucer. "And cookies."

"So?" he asks as he wipes the spoon clean with his tongue. My lips press into a line, he grins and I stalk away from him. Brothers. He continues munching on my snack, making irritating sound to annoy me. He's lucky I love him. Placing my laptop on his crossed legs, he says, "What movie do you suggest?"

"Movie?" I stop my search in the wardrobe and pull out two gowns on two hangers. If we are eating out tonight, I bet it's somewhere fancy.

Our parents love to get out of the house during the holidays. They spend couple's time before we all go for a family dinner so I am a bit surprised Mum made this request. She should be enjoying her date with Daddy.

"Shouldn't you be getting ready?" Hayden's face scrunches in confusion, I facepalm. Did he forget so soon? He has the brain of a goldfish. "You told me Mum said we are going out to eat so why aren't you dressed?"

Hayden blinks. "Oh." He stares down at his joggers and wife beater like he just realised he's not dressed yet. A smug grin takes over his lips. With a shrug, he says, "I can get dressed in five minutes. I'm a guy."

To buttress his point, he stretches his legs and pulls my duvet to his waist. I hide a smile when I notice the bed. He laid it. "Whatever." Raising one hand, I ask, "This?" The other hand shoots up. "Or this?"

With his head bent over my laptop, he murmurs, "I like the first one."

That boy didn't even look at the gowns. I push the door of my wardrobe close with my foot. "Hayden."

"What?" I dangle the clothes in my hands and he narrows his eyes. "The one on your left."

"Good choice," I tell him and return the other gown to the wardrobe. "Go get dressed."

"Yes, Mum."

The door shuts behind him, I scoot to my bed and take an undignified scoop of ice-cream, painting the corners of my lips in white and pink colours. I can never decide between strawberry and vanilla flavour so I always go with both. They taste better.

I set my phone on the dresser after checking to see if I have any more messages from Ben. Nothing. I shoot Maria a text while blow drying my hair to curl it later. A simple: I miss you and she replies with hearts and crying emojis. I shake my head and tap on my playlist.

Drama queen.

Pop music interrupts the silence and I sing along to the familiar tune. I try a few dancing moves in front of the mirror, mostly moves I will never replicate in the presence of anyone because of how horrible I look while doing them. I pause in the middle of dressing and palm my bare stomach.

A smile tugs on my lips as my eyes lower to the white, uneven patches on my legs and belly. Ben's words strengthen me. I twirl in a small circle and end it with a courtesy. It's my superpower, I don't have to be ashamed of it.

Minutes later, I am done dressing and ready to go. I grab my phone and tuck it into a silver purse that matches the beaded neckline of my black gown and wristwatch, beaming at myself in the mirror.

Hair down, winged eyeliner and a dab of red lipstick. I look good. A burst of confidence runs through me the longer I stare at myself. This is not the face of a loser or whatever Olivia called me in the past. I take a selfie for Ben, another for Maria and whip my hair slowly like a high paid model at a hair commercial.

The house is unusually quiet as I walk down the stairs. My fingers run over the bannister and the sound of my heels connecting with the wooden surface rings out in the silence. Maybe I am a bit overdressed.

Maybe not.

Mum left the house looking fancier. Hair in a bun, body hugging gown, and flawless makeup with her signature red lips. Daddy was in a suit so I believe Hayden will dress the same to avoid looking out of place. I halt when I hear male voices. There's not one but two of them. Hayden and someone else.

I cover the flight down the stairs as quietly as my shoes allow me and my heart jumps to my throat when I spot the two male figures hanging the last decorations on the tree. The TV is on. A match is playing. Hayden says something to his partner, both of them laugh and Hayden slaps him on his back.

They are backing me so none of them notice me stop at the foot of the stairs. The other guy turns.

Wait, what? I rub my eyes, expecting the person standing beside Hayden to disappear but he doesn't.

They plop into one of the sofas arranged in the shape of a U with the TV at the centre and my heart crashes against my ribcage. My purse drops to my feet, a soft thud echoes and his head snaps my way.

Ben smiles. I gasp. This is not a dream. I am still processing this when he runs around the couch I am leaning on to support my legs that have turned to jelly and pulls me into a hug.

Oh, my God. Ben is here.

His scent surrounds me, I take a satisfying whiff of his cologne and moan in content. My boyfriend is in my house. He was with my brother. They were talking like old friends. We break apart and grin foolishly at each other. I giggle as Ben rubs the back of his palm against my cheek, too happy to react otherwise. My heels add a few inches to my height, I press my lips to his in a soft kiss that soon turns wild and hungry. I missed this guy.

Hayden clears his throat. "Ahem... Kids."

I wheeze with laughter at Hayden's failed attempt at being serious. With his hands akimbo, hair strewn over his forehead and that scowl, he looks more cute than stern. Ben wiggles a brow and I laugh harder.

At Hayden's grunt, we turn to him. The Christmas tree behind him occupies a corner of our living room, some of the branches extend to the top of the TV. The lights flicker and a Christmas song starts playing.

While Hayden tends to the singing tree, I peck Ben on his lips. It has been too long. Ben takes my hands in his and directs me to the couch farthest from Hayden. I glance at him and my smile widens. I want to jump him. Kiss him until my lips are swollen. One hug isn't enough. I need more body contact. His hands on my belly in silent appreciation of my vitiligo.

We have not seen in six days. I have been counting.

Sparks dance where our bodies meet and my lips remain in a perpetual smile. My boyfriend is here.

Ben's hand never leaves my knee. I am not sure he notices but I love the way his finger randomly moves across the visible part of my skin. Hayden picks the remote and start flipping through channels. I frown. He is still as undressed as he was when I kicked him out of my room. And he didn't tell me about Ben.

I fold my hands on my knee. "Why aren't you dressed?"

Hayden stares at us with a bored expression, then grabs the cookies on the table. "I'm not going."

"Why?" He shrugs and takes a big bite from the stash of cookies that's slowly reducing. "That's for Ben."

My boyfriend nudges me with his elbow. "I already had some." He nods to reassure me. I don't want him lying on behalf of Hayden. Hayden throws him a pack he easily catches. "They are delicious." My parents praised the cookies earlier but hearing Ben say it to me causes my heart to flutter. He breaks a piece into two and feeds me the other half. I think I die a little out of excitement. "You did really good."

"It tastes better when it's hot," I tell him. To my annoying brother who's tapping rapidly on his phone after switching off the TV, I say, "Why aren't you dressed?" I glance at my wrist watch. "We will be late."

And I am yet to inform Mum we have a plus one. I didn't invite him but I am more than glad he's here. I peck him again and run my fingers through his tresses, scattering the hair he must have spent time on.

"About that..." Hayden starts. I sigh. I smell bad news. He grins at Ben, my eyes narrow with suspicion and my boyfriend shrugs. They just met today and they are already ganging up on me. "I kind of lied."

My brows nearly disappear into my hairline. I squeeze Ben's hand. "What do you mean you kind of lied?"

That indifferent shrug again. Hayden throws his leg over the table. "We are not going anywhere to eat. Mum said he was coming to surprise you, I didn't want to ruin it." My jaw grounds in frustration. Argh. Hayden makes a face at me. Ben keeps his gaze on my brother. "How else was I supposed to get you into a cute dress without lying?"

My dress is not cute. It's sexy, I think. "I don't know. You could have tried something else." I stand and pull Ben to his feet. Smoothing the creases on his jacket, I press another warm kiss to his lips. "You have a lot of explaining to do." Ben chuckles, I slap his arm and he laughs harder. "Not funny."

Ben's smile dies off when his phone pings, he walks over to Hayden and they do the brotherly hug thing where they clap each other's backs and grin like idiots. Why can't they hug normally like we girls do? My heart races as they exchange hushed conversation, Ben looks my way and his lips crack in a sexy smile.

I love that idiot. They talk some more and end their chat with another handshake and a pat on the back.

Ben returns to me with a grin so wide I have to smile. He offers me his hand, I tuck mine into the crook of his elbow and he guides me to the front door. The front door opens and a gust of cool air sweeps in.

We take one step out and Hayden screams behind us, "Be back by 12."

"Yes, Mum."

I'll be back whenever Ben wants me back.