

In Love With My Evil Stepbrother Chapter 14

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Chapter Fourteen Alex's eyes widen immediately at that. His mind must be spinning with confusion right now. I felt queasy, partially because of Alex's hesitated reaction, but also Eason's deathly glare at us. I can see from the corner of my eyes that Eason's hands are clenched into a tight fist, as if the next second he's going to throw a punch at Alex. Why he hates Alex so much is beyond me, and I try not to be so self-conscious to think that this is all about me, but it's always nice to see him get pissed off.

But if Alex turns me off right on the spot, it's going to be a huge price for me to pay.

I hold my breath, while waiting for Alex's response. "This is ridiculous," Eason's tone is cold and jeering, "Why do you think he'd be willing to go with you?"

I sniff. "I'm not asking you, aren't I?"

"Just saying the obvious. You can't just grab someone randomly from the street and ask him to

But his sarcastic comment is interrupted by a simple word from Alex.

"Yes."

My heart rate dramatically increases, as I look at him unbelievably.

Did he just say "yes"? As if to reconfirm what he just said, Alex reveals a gentle smile to me and repeats himself, "yes, I would love to come to the ball with you. I'm so glad that you asked me."

A surge of gratitude and warmth passes through me, as I can't help but smiling back to him. He must have sensed the awkward situation that I'm in. I feel bad for using him like this. I'll thank him later.

Eason's jaw tenses, seems like he's trying hard to suppress the anger. "Charming," he says through gritted teeth. "Guess I'll see you guys at the ball." He turns his heels and leaves us, with Valerie following him closely. She intentionally knocks on my shoulder and mutters a "loser" with a voice so loud that everyone can hear. What a baby. Seeing the drama has come to an end, the crowd finally scatters. I finally get the chance to turn to Alex, as it happens, he's also looking at me. We lock eyes with each other, then burst

into laughter at the same time. “Well. May I get a chance to drive my dance partner home? If she’s fine with it?”

I giggle, “I think she just said yes.”

As we start heading towards the student lot, I take the chance to apologize to him. “Sorry about earlier...that I cornered you that way.”

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“Not at all,” he assures me. “I’m happy to do it. I was planning to do some training on the ball night, but it might be nice to take a day off. You know, to shake off some stress.” Alex drives a fairly new Volvo, which got completely buried away by the flock of fancy cars in the parking lot. But I’m somehow relieved that he’s not a member of the rich-brat club.

During our drive home, we start talking about his training, which is when I find out that we have so much in common. We both spent some time down south, fell in love with the sea and dedicated ourselves to windsurf. He even offered to introduce me to his coach, which I enthusiastically said yes.

Time flies by so fast. Before I even realize, the car has already pulled over in front of the town house. He hits on the brake and smiles at me widely, “guess I’ll see you here on the ball night?”

I nod sheepishly. “Sure...Or we can just meet up at school? You don’t need to pick me up.” “Hey I’m happy to do it. It’s not like you forced me into anything.” I begin another round of stammering thanks, and clumsily climb out of his car. He waits till I get inside the house and wave him goodbye through window, then finally drives away. Mom is in the living room, pretending to read a novel while simultaneously peering over her shoulder. When I turn around, she instantly rises from the sofa and snickers, “So? Who drove you home?”

“Alex. A guy from school,” I try to push down the corner of my lips, but eventually fails at it.” He’s taking me to the homecoming ball.”

I thought mom would be elated at the news, but her chuckles stop short, as clear disappointment flits across her face. “Alex? I thought Eason was taking you.”

This is absurd. “What made you think that?” I snap.

“Well, when I asked him to take you shopping, I also expressed my concerns...since—you know

—you didn't know anyone at school, so I was afraid that you'd end up going alone. And naturally I asked him to—”

“You what?” I am appalled. “Mom. Please. Please tell me you didn't beg him to take me.”

Mom is clearly in panic, as she begins to twist her slim fingers together nervously. “Well, technically, I didn't beg him. Because he offered himself before I -”

“Mom. Stop messing with my business,” I suppress my anger the best I can and tell her stoutly. “I appreciate your effort. But I'd rather go to this ball alone, than having Eason take me out of pity. Me and him are never going to be friends, no matter how much you wish that to happen.”

She sucks in a shaky breath and mutters a “fine”, obviously shocked by my sudden increase of volume. I turn my back on her and hastily walk away.

When I get into my room, I notice a very nicely wrapped box laying on my bed. It's a delivery from that designer brand store that Eason took me.

I sit on the bed and stare dejectedly at it. The moment I open that box, so many painful and

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shameful memories will be unleashed. These memories all involve the same person, who occupies my thought by day and keeps me awake by night.

Whenever I think of him, I feel a spasm of pain mixed with sorrow, like someone has cut open my chest, grasped my heart, and squeezed it. Now I'm forced to realize that I have let him into my head and myself to be deluded by his gorgeous face and temporary kindness.

I pick up the box and place it next to the diamond necklace he gave me. I've decided to give these back to him after the ball and clarify things with him one thing for all. And that'll be the end of everything.

With the homecoming ball looming on the horizon, the entire school is in celebratory mood for a whole week. I can hear people talking about it everywhere. Even in the middle of a class, chattering and whispers about the ball business still won't fade into the background, no matter how hard teachers have tried to bring orders back into the classroom.

It is a good thing for me though. With everyone so occupied by the ball, Valerie and her minions have lost their interest in me. As long as I keep my head down and avoid any confrontation at all ends, school life isn't so bad at all. I quietly pray for this situation to last, even after the ball.

On the ball night, students are dismissed a few hours earlier to get ready. And despite my vehement protest, mom has invited a stylist to our home to do my makeup and hair. For the following two hours after school, I'm forced to sit on the chair quiet and still and let the stylist dresses me up like a Barbie doll.

Finally, the stylist's words come as a salvation to me. "All finished. You can check it out now darling."

I take a quick glance at the mirror and get stung by it. I have to admit that he did a wonderful job at it. My usually messy hairs are combed nicely now, cascading smoothly past my shoulder. He didn't apply too much makeup to my face, but he made a special effort to highlight my almond-round eyes and thick eyelashes. My lips are wearing a peach-pink lip gloss, which made them even more plumpy. Mom is dabbing the corner of her eyes with a tissue. "My god honey, you look so beautiful. Whoever is taking you to the ball must be the luckiest guy in the world."

Her bias has blinded her. I sign and remind her again, "his name is Alex."

"Yes, Alex. Well, you should quickly get dressed. We are running short on time. You don't want to keep him waiting, do you?"

She and the stylist exit the room, leaving me some privacy to get changed. When I'm alone, I finally open the box and takes out the gown for the first time. It fits me perfectly, bringing out all the curves.

I spin around in front of the mirror, and then carefully hides the label under the cloth. I have decided to give back this dress and the necklace to Eason after the ball. If he refuses, I'll simply return them and send back his money. I won't owe him anything.

Once dressed up, I carefully exit my room and step downstairs in the high heels that mom

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bought me, clinging to the handrail to keep balance. Right at that moment, I heard a chuckle, and looked up to see Eason standing at the foot of the stairs, looking up at me with a crooked smile on his face.

"Having trouble?" he grins at me widely, as if he just witnessed something amusing.

I roll my eyes at him. "Nothing I can't manage."

His smile grows wider, as he reaches out and offers his hand at me. But I ignore his help by marching right pass him. It wasn't hard to notice how handsome he is today. He's dressed in a fine-cut black suit, which fits his tall and well-built body perfectly. All his hairs are worn back, revealing his full forehead and statuesque features. I've always known him as good-looking, but today his beauty is even more striking. I'm even a bit afraid to look at his face directly.

He spins around to follow me. "You look nice in that dress," he whispers.

I got disoriented by his low and husky voice for a moment, but then quickly sturdy myself and reply frigidly, "Thank you." "Though you may need some help with those heels." "I have my help." I pause, then glare defiantly at him, "In fact, I think my help is waiting by the door right now." He squints down at me, lips gradually twisted into a cold sneer. "This is the final chance to change your mind." "Change my mind to what?" "To go to the ball with me," he says quietly, as if it's a matter of the obvious.

I almost burst into laughter. He and his mood-swing issues have got to be checked up. "Are you seriously inviting me right now? Did your dear girlfriend Valerie stood you up?"

His forehead ties into a frown. "Who told you Valerie is my girlfriend?" "Whatever Eason. Just get lost," I hiss and walk around him. I may get to enjoy the ball, so he's not ruining it now. The doorbell rings just in time, and I rush to the door to get it. Alex is standing outside, with a bunch of tulips in hand. "Wow you look so nice!" From the glimmer in his eyes, I can tell his compliment is sincere.

"Umm I don't know which flower is your favorite...so here, hope you like it."

I'm flattered when he hands me the bouquet. None of my dates have brought me flowers on a date, not even Zack. So my face turned tomato red. "Thanks, I love it."

Mom rushes to the door and kisses me goodbye, telling me to enjoy myself and say hi to Ramirez at the ball. I got embarrassed, smattered, and escaped her blabbering. When we are finally ready to leave, Eason appears again in the doorway.

"Eason. Are you going to pick up your date?" Mom asks him excitedly. How I hoped she would just ignore him and let him leave.

"Yes, on my way to it." He nods casually and strides towards the door. I watch him warily as he

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suddenly stops in front of us. "Alex," he says slowly. "Take care of my sister, ok?" I find it odd hearing him address me as his sister. Alex must be felling the same way, as he nods uncertainly: "Yeah, sure thing." A hint of sneer appears on his face. That's when my intuition flickers: he's not letting me walk away this easily. Suddenly, as if to prove

my sixth sense correct, Eason grabs my elbow. I let out a short cry of surprise, as he lowers his head to the hollow of my neck. "Eason! What the fu— My burst out in horror. If he does anything inappropriate in front of Alex, in front of mom, I

swear to god Then I hear a quick sound of snapping, and something is ripped off from my dress. The next second, he rises up again, takes the tag of my gown from his mouth and tosses it at me. He just ripped that off with his teeth. "You forgot to take it down," he smiles at me derisively. "Well, enjoy yourself at the ball." He walks away from us, down the stairs and out of the yard, completely ignoring the stunned expression on everyone's face.