

In Love With My Evil Stepbrother Chapter 4

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I don't believe this. He didn't want me to come down to Boston earlier. What happened? What changed?

Dad mumbles over the phone, "Of course you are welcome to come back. It's just—I think you should spend more time with your mom. When was the last time you visit her? Maybe this is a great chance for you to bond."

I don't buy that. "How long do you want me to stay here?"

He falls into silence.

My mouth goes dry. And my heart is falling into a bottomless pit. After a long wait, I decide to make this easier for him. "Dad. What is the real reason?"

Another painful silence. He finally speaks up.

"...Hallie wants to move in with me." His voice so low. Almost hard to catch up, "I thought it might be awkward if you two are both here at the beginning."

My mind went completely blank.

I don't know what to think, nor what to say. But I guess my reaction doesn't really matter to these people anyway.

"So, this is it?" I grip the phone till my knuckles turn white, "You are kicking me out because you want to please your girlfriend?"

"No!" Dad's voice is squeaky, seems like he's trying to hide the guilt, "I'm just afraid that you'd be uncomfortable. And I talked to your mom, Boston has better education. Maybe you'll have a greater chance getting into a better college if you stay there."

So mom is in this too. And it's a long-term plan.

Oh yes. Just looking out for me. As they have always been.

When they first got divorced, mom also kindly suggested me go to Miami with my dad because she was afraid that I would be "uncomfortable" here.

And the same excuse again.

I am a soccer ball to them? They can just kick me aside whenever they don't want me around?

"Nat?" Dad calls my name, "This is up to you really. If you want to come back—"

I quietly hang up on him.

I put away my phone and walk out of the room. Mom is standing in the hallway, twisting her frail fingers, looking nervous.

"Nat. Did he tell you?" She comes to me, "About his girlfriend Hallie?"

"Yes. And his plan of getting rid of me." I grip my fist and ask through my clenched teeth, "Have you ever thought of what I want? Why do you have to decide my life for me!"

Mom takes a sharp inhale. Her eyes are filled with tears and sadness. But I don't really care what she thinks right now.

I rush out of the townhouse.

I don't really know where to go. I thought I could stay with Zack when I came here, but that plan went to drain; I wanted to go back to Miami, but I was kicked out; my mom and that fancy townhouse shut the door on me long ago, so I don't really want to stay there either.

Guess I am homeless.

I wander around aimlessly and end up on a bus going out of town. The bus bumps up and down for more than two hours. I cry and fall asleep during the trip. When I wake up again, the bus has already stopped.

"Final stop, kid!" The driver shouts at me.

I stumble off and find myself nearby a city park. Through the woods I can vaguely see the sea. It's getting dark now. Might not be a good idea going into the park.

I slump onto a bench and start to question the point of this runaway. It's silly. Can I really live a life on my own without ever returning? I have exactly \$529 on my account, which can't last a month. Not to mention I will start college next year...

I want to scream, cry and smash things. What have I done to deserve this life?!

My phone has been buzzing nonstop. I take it out and find a ton of missing calls: mom, dad, Jenna...even Eason and Mr. Ramirez.

I can't believe mom told everyone about this.

I lay back on the bench and gaze blankly into the air. Maybe I'll go back and suck up with whatever plans they've made for me. But tonight, just tonight, I want to be alone.

Suddenly I hear heavy footsteps. I look up and find a group of drunk men coming around the corner. They are pretty wasted, I can smell the [shoppingmode vodka](#) as they approach me. It's an open street. But there's no one around except us.

"Hey!" one of the men spotted me, "What are you doing there!"

My pulse quickens. I quickly stand up, ducking my head down to avoid eye contact, and hurry down the road.

I pray for them to get lost. But today isn't my lucky day. Heavy footstep tags along as they keep teasing me with whistles and dirty jokes. "Hey where are you going? Get back there!"

They all burst into laughter.

I start running as I fumble in my pocket in search of my phone and call someone. The phone slips through my fingers during the chaos. I crouch down to find it. But someone suddenly grasps my shoulder from behind.

"No!" I scream, "Get away from me!"

"Shush..." someone locks both of my hands and presses my body against the tree. I start yelling for help, but he covers my mouth to muffle my words. "This one is feisty. I like her."

His friends chortle and gather around.

My body is shivering. I tried the kicking and biting, but none of those works. These are tough-built man and, even drunk, are still way stronger than me.

I've never thought of this even in my worst nightmare. Desperate eating me alive. I bite my tongue till copper taste fills my mouth, as tears drop down my cheeks and falls on a man's hand.

"She's crying!" someone shouts in excitement, "Go gentle on her."

I can smell his terrible breath, like rotten fish and putrid water. I hold my breath and close the eyes, giving up on any useless resistance.

Headlights pierce through darkness as a sport car flies around the corner making a shrill noise. Everyone is startled and turns back to look. The car full speeds towards us and makes a sudden stop, almost hitting a drunk man.

“Hey!” shouts the man, “look where you are going!”

The driver’s door bursts open. A tall figure immerses from the bright headlight. My eyes squint at the strong light but, the next second, I recognized him.

It’s amazing how you can feel so desperate and fear one moment and the next totally safe and secure. My vision is blurred by tears as I take in a shuddering breath.

It’s Eason.

As shocking and miraculous as it may be, he found me.

He marches towards us without any hesitation and pulls a heavy punch on the man closest to him. The man yells in pain and staggers back. This all happens so fast. Before they realize, he has knocked down a few of them with ease.

I dive aside. At first, I was still worried since they clearly outnumbered him. But a few moments later I realize there’s no way they can beat him.

“Get the fuck out of my sight!” he deeply growls, pulling me into his arms.

No one dares to challenge him. They immediately turn on their heels and run off into the darkness.

As soon as they disappear, the last bit of strength that keeps me standing vanishes. I almost collapse onto the ground, but he catches me.

“What the hell are you thinking?!” he roars onto my face. “What if I didn’t get here in time? What if I never found you? Before you shut off you phone, have you thought of the consequences!”

My heart’s still pounding from what happened earlier. The way he looks at me right now makes me want to scream and disappear. But his hands are still holding my arms firmly. Having nowhere to hide, I am forced to look back at him as tears scream down my face.

He freezes. Gradually, the fury in his eyes fades away, giving way to a more complex emotion.

“Stop crying.” He rigidly orders. But he sounds way less commanding than he needs to be.

Then I go from sobbing to wailing. I bury my face into his shoulders and let my tears wet his clothes. He didn't push me away. Instead, he holds on to me tighter, one arm around my waist and the other gently holding the back of my head.

I feel safe in his arms. So I cry and cry, venting out all my sorrow and suffering.

Between the choking sound I made, I hear his husky low voice mutters into my ears. "I was worried sick."