

## In Love With My Evil Stepbrother Chapter 6

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I slightly open my mouth, but no words come out of it. I completely lost track of what I'm going to say.

A moment later, I stutter, "isn't it obvious? You chase me out of your room. You shout at me at the restaurant. And you—"

"And I drove around crazy trying to find you, I fought for you, and I risked getting a ticket just to cheer you up." He shrugs, "yeah, I must have hated your guts."

I flush. That's why he confuses me. "Thanks."

He grins, "as long as you feel better."

I truly do. The way I feel around him...it's so new and exciting and thrill. Being with him is such an adventure that it blows my head off. I know that's partially because he comes from a different world than I do. But I don't hate it when he gets his rich on, not the way I hated Zack.

And that's why he's so different.

We talk for a while and finish the beer. And he leads me to the guest room.

"Bathroom is inside. You'll find anything you need...towels included."

I giggle. "Anything in particular that I should keep my hands off?"

He lets out a short laugh. "No. Just make yourself at home."

We both smile at each other. Just when I'm about to say goodnight, he gently lets me into his arm, giving me a short and warm hug.

"Goodnight Natalia."

Before I can react, he takes a step back and closes the door for me.

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I had a hard time falling sleep. But once I did, I slept surprisingly well. I wake up feeling refreshed. Breaking up with Zack, running away and chased by some scums in the park all seem like a century ago.

I stretch a little in bed and reach out for my phone. God, it's almost 5 in the afternoon. How long did I sleep? I'm also not too surprised to find hundreds of missing texts and calls from mom.

I sign and toss it aside. My mom and her nagging can wait.

The house is super quiet when I come out. Seems like no one is around. I walk around a bit and see a slide door on the glazed wall. It was too dark last night so I didn't notice.

I stride over and slide the door open. Then I got completely astonished by the view outside.

There is an infinity pool outside.

Golden afternoon sunshine casts down on the sparkling water, as a muscular body emerges from it, creating radiating ripples. Hearing the door, he pulls himself to the surface and draws his wet hair to the back of his head. Gleaming drops run down his broad shoulders to his firm chest, he seems so handsome and godlike.

"Hey." He reveals a grin to me, "you are a late sleeper."

I step outside and crouch down by the pool. "If your house has a rocket ship, I still won't be surprised."

He laughs. Green eyes glitter with joy. I suddenly feel a pull inside of my heart. God he is so hot and attractive...almost toxic. No girl on earth can resist him.

He swims over and place his arms on the curb. "Care to join me?"

I gulp. "No thanks."

"Why not?"

"Well for one thing, I don't have a swimming suit."

He shrugs. "Take off your shirt and swim in your bra."

I gasp at his bold statement. "No! Not in a million years, no!"

He whines. "What's the big deal. We used to swim together all the time. You've grown into a prude you know that?"

Yes we swim together a lot, that summer three years ago. During that time, I see him only as my brother and friend. But we have both changed a lot since. Now it makes me blush just thinking of taking my shirt in front of him.

He extends a hand to me. "Come. The water is warm."

I am still fighting with the temptation as he suddenly takes a pull at my pants, almost yanking me off the curb.

"What the hell!" I steady myself and yell, "Let go off me."

He bursts into laughter and is about to say something, when my phone suddenly buzzes.

I take it out and, of course, it's my mom.

"Nat! Babe, are you alright? Gosh I was so worried last night. Where have you been? How did Eason find you? Where were you two last night?"

I have to chime in before she throws more questions at me, "Mom I'm fine. I am at Eason's place."

"Oh." She sounds relieved, "when are you coming back? At least talk to me. We can work everything out together—"

"I need some time." I pause, "Alone."

Mom falls into silence. I can tell she's breaking down piece by piece, but she's not going to win me over this time with tears and pleas. She has coped with my father to banish me. I deserve some alone time.

Then someone else speaks up on the other end. "Natalia. It's Shawn."

I involuntarily sit up straight. "Yes. Hi Mr. Ramirez."

Eason's father always scares the crap out of me. He is nice to me, no doubt, but he is also a very intimidating guy that no one dares to joke around. I've never passed first name basis with him.

"Your mom has been very concerned. We are all relieved to hear that you are alright."

I stutter. "Yeah, I'm fine...and I'm sorry that you have to fly back because of me."

"My business trip is ending anyway. So, are you coming back today? We can all have dinner together if you want."

I want to decline his offer. But Shawn Ramirez is not a person you can say no to. During my hesitation, he speaks up again, "Or if you want to stay with Eason for a couple more days, that's fine too."

I feel a tuck at my heart. Stay with Eason? But like...me and him alone? In his apartment?

I take a quick glimpse at Eason, who is still standing in the water and watching me closely. Yet the more important question is: would he let me stay?

"Natalia?"

"That sounds great." My answer slips out before I realize.

"Awesome." Mr. Ramirez sounds pleased, "Let me know if he gives you a hard time. Though I know he wouldn't dare."

I hang up. Eason immediately pursues, "Was that my dad? What did he say?"

"Well..." I'm a little nervous and try to avoid eye-contact with him, "He asks me if I want to stay here for a couple of days. And I kind of said yes."

The next few seconds are awful for me. My heart keeps sinking as he remains silence. God, what's on his mind? What am I thinking? Of course he doesn't want me to stay. I'm such an idiot.

Just when I'm about to tell him that this is a joke and save myself from the embarrassment, suddenly—

"AH!"

He drags me directly into the pool, causing a huge splash. I choke on the water as I grab the nearest thing in my reach—his arms.

"What the fuck!" I yell between coughs, "I told you I don't want to swim!"

He bursts into laughter and holds my waist tight. Now I'm floating in the warm afternoon water with him, with both of my hands on his broad shoulders, gasping for breath, and look down at him only an inch far away.

His eyes are so beautiful, like a crystal-clear emerald, flickering with golden daylight. My mouth suddenly went dry as he raises his hand and runs his long fingers through my wet hairs.

"Hey Nat." his voice soft like a summer breeze, "I'm glad you can stay."

I can't pull myself away from his gaze. From the look in his eyes, I know he can't either. The way we lock eyes with each other, breath lingering, everything feels like a dream too good to be true.

His palm holds my cheek and slowly closes the gap between us. My mind went completely blank and right at this moment suddenly—

A thump comes from the door. Then large talking and laughing pour into the house.

Eason immediately pulls away from me. Something comes to his mind as he curses, "fuck. I forgot."

I'm still in trance. "What? What's that?"

He seems furious. "There's supposed to be a party here. I forgot to tell them...hang on."

He swims away, but someone slides the glass door before he gets to the curb.

"Wow look at the lovely couple." A red hair guy steps out and teases, "who's this? Now Val must be pissed."

A pretty blonde behind him hisses, "Shut up James."

Then she walks toward Eason, pulls him up from the water and wraps her arms around his waist. Her possessive gesture makes it clear that they are intimate. Then she shoots me a hostile glare.

"Enjoying your afternoon swim?" she chuckles, "you should have waited for me."

Eason remains silence. But he didn't push her away either.

Now I'm still standing in the water alone, and all of them are standing on the shore looking down at me. I seem like a complete idiot.

Eason has no intention of introducing me to these people. He grabs a towel from the bench and heads directly towards the house. The blonde follows him closely. My whole body went cold seeing him leave. I can't believe he just left me here, without a single word.

What's wrong with him? Is he embarrassed of me or anything? At least he can have the decency of pulling me up and introducing me, not ditch me in the water like this and make me like a fool.

The entire group loses interest in me and follows Eason inside. Only one guy in the back looks back at me, "you need a hand?"

“No.” I snap as I climb out of the pool.

I’m now furious at that jerk.