

## Chapter 114 - Submitting to My Best Friend's Dad by Scarlett Rossi

Becca.

When I left James's office, millions of thoughts ran through my head about what was going to happen. But one thing was for sure, I needed to take my father's advice and change scenery. For too long, I had struggled and fought with everything that was going on, my emotions completely messed up and everything else in my life going a little haywire.

I had to get myself together. I had to put my big girl panties on and take initiative for what was going on in my life. And I had to do it soon because before I knew it, a child would be born, and I would be responsible for that child.

The soft knock at the front door let me know that Neal and Allegra had arrived, and as the door opened, I turned, looking over my shoulder to see their smiling faces enter through the doorway. "Hey, guys. I'm glad to see you could make it."

"Well, of course, we would make it silly." Allegra laughed as she took off her coat and hung it on a nearby hook. Fluffing her blonde hair out, she stepped forward and made her way towards the dining room, where I was currently finishing the table.

"What's all of this?" I gestured to the flowers that were in Neal's hand and a bottle of sparkling cider. Nonalcoholic, of course.

"Well, I figured that we could take a toast to getting one more thing knocked off the list of things that you need done. I know it's the last thing that you want to discuss, and I'm not here to discuss details, but I figured a small toast of something non-alcoholic might make you smile."

The gesture was kind enough, and I was pleased that he would go out of his way to make something so small become so sentimental. "I appreciate that, Neal. You're absolutely wonderful."

Taking the bottle from him, I made my way towards the kitchen, where I searched for the opener, and as I did, I felt Neal's presence behind me as he followed.

"How are you doing? I know the last few days you've wanted time to yourself, and I will admit that I've been slightly worried because of your absence."

Glancing at him, I could see the concern on his face as if perhaps he had maybe thought he had done something wrong for me to become as silent as I was. I'd leaned on him for the past few weeks, and even the past few months, really, and through everything, I never pushed him away like I was doing lately.

"Neal..." I said softly as I pushed a smile across my lips to try and show him that I was okay. "You have done nothing wrong whatsoever. I just needed space to be by myself to kind of get my thoughts together."

"I know that's what she said. But part of me just can't help that you regret being with me and leaving James." He replied as his eyes cast downward towards his hands. As if the thought had reeled over his mind a million times.

Stepping forward, I set the bottle on the counter and stopped what I was doing. My hands lay against his as I put the distance between us to a minimum.

"I don't regret anything with you, Neal. What happened between James and I was. Not meant to be, obviously, and as much as I wish she hadn't lost his life, he did. But one thing I do know for sure about James is he wouldn't want me to be unhappy."

"You're right," he replied softly as his hand brushed the hair from the side of my face. My cheek cupped within his palm as he leaned forward, pressing his forehead against mine. "How are you so wonderful?"

The laughter that escaped me was unexpected. But as he pulled away with an amused look in his eyes, I shook my head, smiling even brighter. "I don't know about wonderful, but I try my best."

"As touching as the moment that you two are having is..." Allegra called from the dining room, causing us both to turn and look at her with sheepish grins. "I'm very curious to know exactly why you called us here."

The excitement and the news that I planned on sharing with them were eating at me. I had never really gone overseas, except for when James had taken me out and the one time that Neal and I ventured somewhere. But to think about going somewhere exotic, somewhere that most people only dreamed of, had piqued my attention.

"As you both know, a lot of things have gone on lately that neither of us could have ever imagined happening. With all of it, I think that we all deserve a well, long happy break away from reality to where we can refresh our minds and also possibly have some fun."

"Wanting to go abroad?" Allegra questioned as her eyes scanned down to my stomach and back to my face. "Don't you think you're a little too far along for that?"

Shaking my head, I scoffed with laughter. "Goodness, I'm only in my second trimester. You're acting as if I'm about to pop any day."

"Well, I know that, but I'm just saying, did you clear it with a doctor?"

Their eyes were on me, and I knew that they wouldn't let this go until I gave them the assurance they needed stating that I was okay to travel, which of course, I was.

"Actually, I did speak with the doctor a couple of days ago about the possibility of me being able to fly in my current state. Simply because I might have to move, and he did say that it would be perfectly fine as long as I did it before my eighth month mark."

The words I spoke seemed to be exactly what Allegra and Neal were hoping for. And as their faces perked up a little with happiness, I continued explaining exactly what it is that I wanted to do.

"I want for us to go to New Zealand," I said quickly, hurrying up and pushing out exactly what I wanted to do before I got cold feet and wasn't able to explain to them where I wanted to go.

New Zealand was a beautiful country with Four Seasons, Immaculate in every way, and all of the people just seemed so laid back and happy with their lives. It was somewhere that I wanted to go to be able to recharge myself.

I was just hoping that Allegra and Neal would be down for that.

"New Zealand?" Neal said hesitantly. As his cheeks puffed out while he exhaled, and his eyes grew a little wide, slowly nodding as he thought over the idea. "I mean, I haven't been there in a very long time, and it was only once for a business event, but I suppose it wouldn't be a bad place to go.

"That's a really long flight back. Are you sure that you're going to be up for the challenge? I mean, that is a lot of hours in a plane. You're looking at two days of traveling."

She wasn't wrong. It was going to be a very long flight, and as much as a private plane could take me to certain areas, I didn't have a big enough plane to be able to take me all the way there, but I did have a way to make it work.

"I understand. I actually had that all figured out. We'll take the plane to Hawaii. We're going to spend a day and a half in Hawaii resting and relaxing after the first long bit of flight, and then we will get on a large passenger plane and take that plane to New Zealand." I replied confidently, having thought about this very long and hard.

"And you definitely seem to have everything planned out." Allegra chuckled, as she picked up the glass of wine that I had given her and took a long sip. "I guess we're going on vacation then."

I was excited with the notion of being able to travel, and I had Allegra's support. I had only hoped that I had Neal's as well.

He would just have to understand that this is what I needed to do for me, and for once, doing something for me was what I needed instead of constantly doing whatever a man wanted me to do. "Neal, is everything okay?"

He hesitated for a moment before his beautiful eyes met mine once more, and he nodded his head with a smile. "If this is what you want, then I'm by all means I have your back one hundred percent."

His words were comforting, and I knew that he was being sincere with them. He would be there to support me no matter what, and part of me felt guilty because part of me believed that he had hoped for more than what he was currently getting.

Perhaps if James hadn't passed away and everything else had happened, things would be better between Neal and I progressing further. But with both Tally and James's sudden death, and the complications of having to inherit everything that was James's, I was just too overwhelmed to consider a proper relationship.

Not to mention I terribly missed James, and my heart ached for him every day.

As the night continued on and laughter filled the air, Allegra excused herself from us to go and attend another friend's event, leaving Neal and I alone on the sofa in the living room before a roaring fire, watching television like we used to do.

"Can I ask you something?" he whispered softly as he wrapped his arms around me, pulling me close against him.

"As you once told me, you need not ask for permission to ask me a question, just simply ask it." I laughed as my eyes slowly looked up to meet him.

"I know you have said that you don't regret the things that have happened. But I can't help but wonder if your love for him was far too great for you to ever be able to love me."

I was taken aback by his statement, unsure of what exactly he wanted me to say. My love for James was there. It was huge, vibrant and full of life, and no matter how much he pissed me off regularly. At times I still wanted him there with me.

Yet there was something about Neal that was more than James could ever be. He was happiness, he was safety. I didn't have to worry about anybody hurting me because I knew that Neal would always be there, protect me. I knew that I could trust Neal, that I could talk to him about anything, and he wouldn't judge me.

I couldn't do that with James.

"My mind is complicated right now, and I am grieving the loss of my child's father. But what do we have, Neal... it can never be broken. Even if down the road you find someone new and decide that you don't want us to be together, I will always love you, and you will always be in my heart."

He was quiet for a moment as he thought over what I said. And then, slowly, he leaned down, pressing his lips against mine in a slow, passionate kiss.

"No matter where the future takes us, Becca, my love for you can never be replaced by anyone else. Even if we do go our separate ways, you will always be the woman that I wanted to be with, no matter the circumstances. I could never let you go."