

Chapter 12 - Submitting to My Best Friend's Dad by Scarlett Rossi

The weekend arrived faster than I had expected, and with it, the trip to the Keys loomed ahead of me. I had kept my distance from James as much as possible, and I was thankful the only thing I really ever got from him was a stray look.

Lugging my weekend bag over my shoulder, I moved towards the ramp of the boat and boarded the white two-hundred-seventy-foot-yacht that was a mansion on the water. Its multi-tier level was equipped with a helicopter pad and a pool.

It was a new venture for me. Never had I been on the yacht before, but according to Tally, it was a treasure James had bought the year before and only used less than a handful of times.

Moving across the deck, I followed the crew leader, who took us towards the room areas. My eyes scanned the elegant decor of lavish seating and ornate furniture until they landed on one figure I hadn't expected to see at all.

Chad.

What the f*ck!

Stopping dead in my tracks, I took in his sandy blond hair and dark sunglasses. He smiled at a few of the other people who Tally had invited and even went as far as giving Tally a hug.

The gesture itself was one that took me by surprise, and when her eyes caught mine, she quickly pulled away from him and headed towards me. "You okay?"

Was she being f*cking serious?

"What is he doing here?" I asked her, trying to wrap my head around how he could be here, of all places. "Why did you invite him?"

Looking over her shoulder, she glanced at him with a smile on his face, slowly shrugging her shoulders. "He is staying with Dallas. I can't just expect Dallas to leave Chad out and come without him when Chad is his guest."

"Tally, are you being serious right now? I wouldn't have bothered coming had I known he was going to be here. You, of all people, should know the complications of this."

Tally sighed, shaking her head as her arms crossed over her shoulders. "We are all adults, Becca. Just ignore him, and don't let it ruin the weekend."

I was half tempted to take my ass back to her house and let them enjoy their weekend, but as I looked towards the docks, I realized it was too late as the crew was quickly preparing the boat for departure.

"Is everything alright?" James' voice asked from behind me. Tally's smile fell as she raised a brow in my direction, waiting for me to address her father's question.

"Yeah," I sighed. "Everything's fine."

Turning on my feet, I pushed back the pain in my chest and made my way through the main living area, trying to pretend Tally hadn't just stabbed me in the back once more by inviting him.

"Becca?"

A younger, light brown-haired man called out, catching my attention as I walked down the hallway looking for a room. His white-collared shirt was tucked into the khaki shorts he was wearing adorned with a name tag that said Jason.

"Yes?" I replied with curiosity.

A smile fell across his lips as he clasped his hands together. "Mr. Valentino asked me to show you to your room."

I was taken aback by his words. He took my bag from me and headed towards the front passage that led to the master bedroom and one other room. I found myself confused as to why I was staying in this area and not with the others.

However, as my eyes set upon the room, I was impressed with its modern decor and beauty. The lavish queen size bed sat in the center of the room on the far side, and everything was silver and white decor with a sliding glass door that seemed to connect with a private deck near the master suite.

I had a feeling why he had wanted me to stay in this room, but I couldn't think about it. It wasn't right, and I would not allow myself to succumb to what he wanted.

"Is there anything you need, Becca?" Jason asked with a smile as he set my bag on the bed and turned towards the door.

"Uh—no," I replied with hesitation. "Thank you."

Jason didn't bother to hang around anymore than was needed of him, and with him gone, I was once again left in my thoughts, trying to come to terms with the fact I had to share a boat with a lover and an ex.

I couldn't allow my wonderful weekend to be destroyed because I was upset about some douchebag. I had to think positive thoughts. Chad wasn't worth my time anyway.

A few hours, and a few drinks, later, I curled up on a sofa inside the main living area in a long cashmere sweater, shorts, and my favorite book. The sound of everyone else partying up stairs echoed down to where I was, and James was nowhere in sight.

The boat was huge, and I was thankful for that.

It meant I could hide better from everyone else, and I wouldn't have to worry so much about running into Chad.

As luck may have it, though, I wasn't that fortunate. Because a familiar voice trickled down the hall to where I was, and I knew that voice from anywhere.

It was Chad, and he was headed straight for me.

Grabbing my things, I made my way towards my room, trying to escape having to see him, but as fast as I was, I heard him call my name, and his footsteps followed behind me. "Becca, would you wait?"

His firm grip on my arm stopped me outside my door, spinning me around to face him, and once again I was staring into the deep green eyes I used to love. My fists clenched at my side as I tried to rip myself from his grasp.

"Let me go," I said through gritted teeth.

Laughter escaped him as he smiled at me. "Don't act like this. I told you I was sorry. I came here for you, Becca."

"Bullshit," I snapped. "You came here for yourself, and I don't want anything to do with you. Now, let me go."

Finally freeing myself from him, I tried to push him out of the way and close my door, but he quickly blocked it and stopped me from doing so, pushing his way into my room.

"We need to talk, and I hate it when you act hysterical like this."

"Hysterical?!" I yelled. "Get the f*ck away from me, Chad. I don't even know why Tally let you come. I don't want anything to do with you."

"Enough," he said firmly as his eyes stared at me with more than hatred. "You are going to listen to me. What we had was a good thing, and you and I are going to be a happy couple again. I know you miss me."

Stepping towards me, he brushed his hand over my arm, and nothing but disgust filled my stomach, making me feel sick. "Get the f*ck away from me."

I couldn't believe that, after everything, he was acting like this. There was no way he was actually this delusional to think I wanted anything to do with him.

"What is going on here?" a voice called from the doorway, and I looked over to see James standing there, glaring at Chad.

"Nothing, my girl and I are just having a chat," Chad replied with a laugh. "You know how women can be when they are upset at you."

"I am not your girl!" I screamed at him. "Leave me alone."

James' eyes met mine and softened a little before they turned cold once more and landed on Chad. "You need to leave this area of the boat right now, and I better not catch you back here again."

Chad stared at James in disbelief before shaking his head with a smile. "Whatever, pops. She wasn't worth it anyways."

Pushing past James, Chad headed from my room and out of sight. My body sagged in relief at his departure as tears filled my eyes. Once again, I had

allowed myself to be subjected to this ridiculousness instead of putting a stop to it.

And James... he had saved me once again.

"Are you okay?" he asked softly as he stepped into the room and closed the door behind him. His warm, inviting eyes took in every aspect of my body, making me want to be closer to him.

Sighing, I force a smile onto my face. "Yeah. Just an unwanted guest."

"Unwanted? Was that your ex, Becca?" he asked as he followed me across my room, watching me pull out a fresh shirt to put on.

"I mean. Yeah, he is," I scoffed while shaking my head, trying to understand how my life could be so cynical right now. "Not that it honestly matters to anyone."

"It matters to me, Becca." His fingers grasped my arm and turned me to face him. "Why is he here?"

"Because your daughter allowed him to come and gave some bullshit excuse about him having to because he was staying with someone else." I snapped.

His lips formed a tight, thin line as he let out a heavy breath. "I take it she is well aware of everything that happened between you and this man?"

"Uh, yeah," I laughed. "So aware that after years of friendship, she doesn't care. I'm honestly wondering what the point is, and also that I should probably consider leaving when we get back."

His body went rigid at my comment as he seemed to think about what I was saying. "No."

"No? What do you mean, no?" I asked in confusion.

"I mean no, you're not leaving. You shouldn't have to, and I will sort this out."

Stepping forward, he wrapped his arms around my body and pulled me close to him. The smell of his cologne wrapped around me tightly, and I couldn't help but melt into his embrace as I nestled my head against his chest.

"Thank you, but it doesn't seem anyone honestly wants me here, James. I'm just getting in the way of whatever fun they are trying to have." My admission was something that brought small tears to my eyes which I quickly blinked away.

"I want you here," he whispered, looking down at me, his lips slowly lowering, and captivating mine in a soft and gentle kiss before he pulled back. "I will handle, Tally. Get some rest."

I was left speechless by his remark. James was out of the door and down the hall before I could say anything. My mind left, trying to understand what had just happened.

He wanted me here... and not just that... the kiss had been softer and more gentle than any kiss he had given me before. Was this the true side of him?

Or was it possible he cared more for me than he was willing to admit?

My entire stay here was becoming complicated.

Perhaps it was time I cut my losses and ran.