

## Chapter 17 - Submitting to My Best Friend's Dad by Scarlett Rossi

James.

The moment Becca told me Tally took her to see her mother, I knew what she was going to say. Allison had never been very kind to Becca when she used to come visit, and it often caused us to argue when she was here.

The one thing I hated above all else was people picking on children by judging their appearance. Becca may have been bigger than Tally back then, but it wasn't Allison's place to say something. It just showed how cruel she was.

"Your car is waiting out front, Mr. Valentino," Evette said from my door, causing me to nod.

"Thank you, Evette. Please go ahead and enjoy your day."

The woman worked hard for me, and I was grateful. But even with the minor distraction, I couldn't stop thinking about Becca and Allison.

The fire in Becca's eyes was clear, and I knew without a doubt she gave Allison hell.

Making my way down towards the front of the building, my eye caught Katrine arguing with the girls at the front desk. Her voice raised and her brow narrowed before she quickly caught sight of me and smiled.

"James!" she purred in her thick Russian accent. "I want these girls fired. They wouldn't let me see you."

Stepping from her grasp with disgust rolling through my expressions, I furrowed my brow. "What are you doing here, Katrine? I told you not to come back."

Hesitating, she rolled her eyes. "I know you didn't mean it, my love. I missed you, and I'm tired of fighting."

"There is no fighting. You need to leave and not come back. I don't want you harassing my employees," I replied as I brushed past her towards the front doors.

As soon as I stepped outside, though, she had hold of my arm and was pulling me back.

"Who was that girl?" she snapped. "Is that your new f\*ck toy?"

"What?" I asked with confusion.

Shaking her head, she crossed her arms over her chest. "Don't act stupid. The girl who just came down like ten minutes ago."

I knew right away she was talking about Becca. However, I couldn't let her know I knew that. "Do you know how many women work in this building, Katrine? I have no clue who you are referring to, but even if I was seeing someone, it isn't your business. So leave."

Done with her pettiness, I moved towards my car parked by the curb. My security guard stood watch with his eyes locked onto Katrine.

He knew the process of needy women I rid myself of, and he wouldn't hesitate to take her down—her father be damned.

As the car started moving, I looked down at my phone and started flipping through photos. There was one picture, in particular, I had become fond of lately, and that was the one I snuck while Becca was sleeping in my bed on the yacht.

Her hair haloed around her head as her lashes kissed her cheeks. There was something about her in this photo that was beyond mesmerizing. Almost angelic.

And thinking like that about her was doing things to me I didn't need.

Maybe she was right in considering ending this. It could never be more than it was, and I was done with relationships when it came to women.

All they wanted, in the end, was money.

Lost in my thoughts, I wasn't paying attention when the car pulled up to my house. That was until my eyes glanced up and took in the sight of my ex-wife Allison leaning against a Mercedes in the drive with a smug smile on her face.

"F\*cking great," I groaned.

"Would you like me to remove her, sir?" my security guy asked, looking over his shoulder.

He was all too familiar with Allison and the drunk rants the woman would have.

"No, it's fine. I will handle this, Frank."

As I grabbed my things, the driver opened the door, and I stepped out into the Miami sun. I knew right away whatever was going to happen, she was going to make it spectacular, as always.

"Allison, what are you doing here?" I sighed with a tight smile as I stared at her from behind dark sunglasses. "You know you're not welcome on my property anymore."

"James—" she cooed with a smile as she stepped towards me in her all white designer dress and matching Louis shoes. "Don't act like that. Come on now—"

"No, Allison," I sneered with disgust as I looked towards the house and then back at her. "I'm being serious. Why are you here?"

Sighing in a huff, she fidgeted with her hand and relaxed with a smirk. "To get our daughter. She is coming to stay with me for the week in Orlando. We are going to a fashion event there."

Taking a moment to let it sink in, irritation filled me. Tally hadn't bothered to call me and tell me what she was doing, and of course, she is an adult and didn't have to tell me, but it was a common courtesy thing.

"Okay, so Becca and Tally are getting ready then?" I asked with curiosity, wondering if Becca was going as well. After the conversation she had with me only a little while ago, it would surprise me she would agree.

However, Allison scoffed before laughter left her throat.

"Are you f\*cking kidding me? That little bitch isn't going anywhere with me."

"Watch your mouth, Allison," I snapped. "She grew up with our daughter in this house and is Tally's guest. I don't understand what your issue is with her."

Crossing her arms over her chest, she smirked. "She is a freeloader who doesn't deserve our daughter's attention. For once, do your daughter a

kindness and get rid of the girl before Tally comes home. It would be better for everyone."

Looking at Allison right now, I had no idea how I had fallen in love with her. Once upon a time, she had been the light of my eyes and the air I breathed. Yet, with money and age, she had turned into a woman who thought she deserved everything given to her.

Something I no longer tolerated.

"You're a real piece of work, Allison. You need to get a grip on yourself and wake up to reality. Otherwise, you will die alone one day."

"F\*ck you, James," she sneered. "Why don't you watch how you speak to me? After all, I heard about your little f\*ck toy from the trip to the Keys. Perhaps it's time we go back to court. You owe me way more money than you have given me."

It was my turn to laugh as I shook my head, watching her. She was the same person she had always been, and it did nothing but amuse me. I was thankful that Becca was nothing like her.

"I don't owe you shit. You got everything you wanted in the divorce agreement, and it's over. You can't get anything else."

"You are making way more now!" she screamed at me, the realization she got an awful deal finally showing its face. She had gotten way more than anyone should have, but at the end of the day, I made ten times more now than I did a few years ago.

"Tell you what," I smiled, "take me back to court. I would love for them to see your true colors, Allison. Cause you won't get a damn thing from me."

"I am the only woman who will ever make you happy, James, and you know it," she replied as a viper stalking her prey. Her body moved closer to mine as she gently ran her hand over my chest. "I know you miss me."

"I used to enjoy skipping school when I was sick as a kid, too, but it doesn't mean I would want to suffer through that again."

Her facial features changed as shock and disgust ran across her face. I had no doubt it was easy for me to push her buttons and piss her off, but that had become my favorite pastime over the years.

"You're an asshole, James."

Laughing, I nodded. "Yeah, that may be true, but I'm a rich asshole, Allison. You're just a middle-aged wrinkling has-been with a drinking problem slowing going into debt. You can thank... what was his name again? Pablo... for that."

Pablo had been the pool boy she had an affair with four months before I actually had walked in to see her f\*cking him in the pool house. That day I had thought to be one of the worst days of my life, but now, looking back, it wasn't.

The day I married Allison had been the worst.

I should have known then she was no good. I should have known then she was only with me for the money. Yet, we had gotten pregnant with Tally young, and I wasn't going to be like my father. I wasn't going to leave them.

I wasn't going to leave my child.

So instead, I worked my ass off for years to make sure she had everything she ever wanted and so much more. I made sure she would never go through the things I went through, and in the end; it paid off.

I had built an empire, and Allison... well, she had fallen into a hole she couldn't escape.

All of which had nothing to do with me.