

Chapter 41 - Submitting to My Best Friend's Dad by Scarlett Rossi

Seeing Allegra was a breath of fresh air. The walls seemed to close in on me among the members of high society, who seemed to judge me without knowing who I was. "Becca, are you okay?"

Shaking my head, I blinked away tears threatening to build and laughed, shaking my head. "It's already a shit show. I think coming here was a mistake."

"Oh, hell no," she replied. "You look like a goddess tonight, Becca. You're not going to let that two-faced, lying bitch make you feel out of place. Now, where's James?"

Sighing, I looked over my shoulder to where he was with Allison, "With her."

"I'm not surprised." Allegra smirked. "Why weren't you over there?"

"Because some guy named Charles James knows wanted to dance with me, and James just let him, even though I am supposed to be here with him."

I was angry, yes, but more annoyed than anything.

James was too busy talking to his friends, and it wasn't right of me to think he should spend all of his time with me. However, I thought this night was going to be special. Something he would share just with me, but I was wrong.

"Do you mean Charles, the pervy guy with brown hair who always looks like he is undressing you?" Allegra asked, placing her hand upon her hip.

"Yeah..." I said as I looked around. "That guy right there."

As I pointed him out, Allegra followed my gesture and laughed. "Oh, hell no. You know what, if he wants to act like that, then let him? You can come spend time with us."

Us... I looked over at Neal, and he smiled down at me with his deep blue eyes.

He was incredibly attractive, and something about him I found rather pleasing, but he wasn't James. It didn't mean I couldn't allow myself to have fun with them.

After all, Neal knew, in a way, I was with James.

"That sounds great," I said, letting a heavy breath escape me.

"Wonderful!" Allegra exclaimed, clapping her hands together. "Why don't you two go dance while I sort something out with someone quickly, and I will catch up with you after."

I wasn't sure what she had to do, but Allegra moved quickly and disappeared through the crowd before I could say anything.

Looking back at Neal, I smiled. "We don't have to dance."

"On the contrary. I would love to dance with you, Rebecca," he replied, and the way he said my name made my heart flutter, almost like it did when James said it.

Holding out his hand, he stared at me, and with slight hesitation, I took his hand and let him lead me out to the dance floor.

When Charles had taken me, I was incredibly uncomfortable. However, when Neal took me and twirled me into his arms, I couldn't help but smile and laugh.

I was grateful he was willing to take pity on someone like me. He didn't have to dance with me or entertain me at all, but instead of mingling with his kind of people, he spent his time with me on the dance floor.

James.

"As I was saying, it's a wonderful place to be."

Caught in conversation with a few of the Lancasters of Miami, I had lost sight of Becca and couldn't seem to place where she was at.

I had planned to finish a small conversation and then rescue her from Charles. Yet, Allison walked up with Tally and joined the conversation I was having. As much as I wanted to excuse myself, I couldn't exactly do that.

It would have been considered rude, and these were not the people you wanted to be rude with. Anyone within the circle we lived in knew this.

"James!" Allegra called, causing me to turn with a smile on my face. Allegra stood before me in a silver sequined dress dripping with diamonds. She was always glamorous, but tonight, it seemed like she had gone the extra mile.

"Allegra. You are looking lovely as ever," I replied as she leaned in, kissing either side of my face.

"So are you, James. It's quite the turnout tonight."

"Of course, it is. Who wouldn't come?" Allison said from over my shoulder, and without skipping a beat, Allegra smirked and looked over at her.

"Oh, my word. Allison, you came. I assume your daughter is here as well, then?" Allegra asked, keeping her smile as sweet as possible.

However, I knew this side of her, and she was up to something. An uneasiness swept over me. "Allegra, I think Becca is somewhere around here..."

Her eyes met mine briefly, and her grin widened. "I know, dear. I saw her just a moment ago, but I wanted to take the time to come and say hello to everyone here."

"Wise of you," Allison quickly said, rolling her eyes.

"Why is that wise of me?" Allegra replied. "Is there something wrong with Becca?"

Allison scoffed before laughter left her lips. "Oh, please. A girl like that isn't from our society. However, I suppose we can allow her a little taste of what it's like to live as we do. Granted she doesn't make a fool of herself."

"Enough, Allison," I snapped at her. "You're the last person who needs to be speaking ill of others. Not to mention, tonight is about celebrating, not belittling other individuals just because you don't like that they don't fit your agenda."

Allison stared at me with anger and shock because I had spoken to her that way. However, the others agreed with me, toasting to changing the event in the future, perhaps.

"So, this woman..." Mr. Lancaster said, "can we meet her?"

A smile lit my face as I nodded. "I'm sure she would be delighted. I just have to see where she has gone off to."

"Oh, she is dancing right now," Allegra spoke up with a grin.

"That's right... Charles took her to the dance floor. I probably should go rescue her."

My comment made the others chuckle, but before I could step away, Allegra grasped my arm. "There is no need. She isn't with Charles."

"Oh, already with someone else... isn't that something?" Allison replied slyly.

Letting out a deep sigh, I glared at Allison. Perhaps I was wrong for thinking I could bring Becca here. I should have known after the incident in the dress shop Allison would make tonight difficult.

Looking at Allegra, I raised a brow in confusion. "Who is she with?"

"Oh, my younger brother, Neal," Allegra replied as she looked at the others.

I knew very well who she was referring to. It was the same man Becca was with at Club Velvet. I had seen how he looked at her there, and I could only imagine what he was doing right now.

"Was I mistaken when you said he was heading home? I didn't realize he'd stayed," I replied, watching as the corner of Allegra's lips turned up into a smile.

"Oh, he decided to stay a bit longer. He closed another deal here with the Fanucci's. They're hoping to expand out in California, and of course, Neal has one of his offices there."

There was a gut wrenching feeling in my stomach as I listened to her that told me I would not like where this conversation was going. However, I didn't bother to interrupt her. Instead, I stood there listening to Allegra praise her younger brother.

"So his wife didn't come with him?" Allison asked, fishing for answers.

"Oh, he isn't married," Allegra grinned, "but it has crossed his mind recently that he needs to settle down. I mean, as the owner of Saville Golden Real Estate, it's probably best that he settles down, eventually."

"Wait... your brother is the owner of that company?" Allison said in shock. "That's a multi-million dollar company."

"Uh—yes, that's correct." Allegra preened. "Established it and made his first million by the time he was twenty-three. Now that he is closing in on twenty-eight, he is ready to start having a family."

"That's wonderful!" Mrs. Lancaster praised. "Well, perhaps he will find some lucky woman here tonight that would make him more than happy."

"Oh, Mrs. Lancaster... I think he may have already found that lucky person in Miami. We will just have to wait and see how things go."

I didn't miss a beat of what Allegra was saying. Her gaze landed on me as she said it, and the anger slowly simmered within me. Was she really referring to Becca?

There was no way that Becca would be with that man.

"I wonder who that woman is..." Allison cooed. "Good thing it wouldn't dare be your Becca, James."

Clearing my throat, I straightened myself, but before I could speak, Allegra spoke for me.

"Becca and James aren't officially together, Allison. They aren't dating, so I don't see why she couldn't be a candidate for my brother. After all, she is sweet, composed, graceful, and highly intelligent. She has the ability to bring a lot to the table whether or not she comes from money."

"Alright," I finally said, shaking my head. "Please excuse me. I'm going to go see where those two got off too. The auction will start soon, and I'm sure they will want to get their seats as well."

I had heard enough of their talk, and while I knew Allegra was purposely saying this kind of stuff to irritate me and get to Allison, I didn't want to hear it anymore.

I understood clearly what she was doing. She was making a point, and I would have to talk to her about it later. There was no need for her to act the way she had.

As I moved through the sea of people, I searched the crowds for the beautiful brunette in an emerald green dress. I wouldn't be able to calm my racing mind until I did because everything in me was screaming that maybe what Allegra had said was true.

The closer I got to the dance floor, the easier it was for me to make out her beautiful form swaying in time to the music with Neal.

Halting in my steps, I watched as she smiled and laughed with him. She seemed carefree and uninterested in anyone around her. Even though many people were watching them.

My chest tightened knowing I wasn't the one who had put that smile on her face. Everything Allegra said caused the jealousy inside me to grow, but then I couldn't be jealous.

She had come here with me, and I had allowed the conversation with other people to impede a night I had promised to spend with her.

I had no one to blame but myself.

As her eyes caught mine, her smile fell slightly, but it was still there. Just not as bright as before. She turned to Neal, whispering something softly, and his eyes met mine.

Whatever she had said I wanted to be privy to, but I knew that I wouldn't be.

"James," she said cheerfully. "Did your conversation go well?"

"Yes, it did. I was trying to see where you had disappeared to, and Allegra informed me Neal took you dancing." I tried to remain cool, but I could see in Neal's eyes he knew exactly how it was meant to come off.

"Yes, well, I didn't want her to feel left out, and I have no intentions of mingling with most of these people. They are too uptight for my liking," he chuckled, "I hope you don't mind."

Hesitating for a moment, I raised a brow and laughed to myself. "Not at all."

There was a look in his eyes that made me wonder if I was going to have to watch him around Becca. Looking at her now, she seemed oblivious to how he saw her.

I didn't know his intentions, but if he wasn't careful, he and I would have to discuss what he thinks he is trying to do. She belonged to me, and I had no intentions of letting her go.

