

Chapter 46 - Submitting to My Best Friend's Dad by Scarlett Rossi

When James said we were going to a Gala, I had imagined a hotel with a bunch of politicians. However, when the limo pulled up to the front of the massive white building that reminded me so much of the White House, my jaw dropped.

"Holy shit..." I gasped, causing James to laugh.

"It's nice, huh? Wait until you see the inside. For a man with that kind of money, he had big inspirations while building it."

Looking over my shoulder at him, I paused. "What is this place?"

"The Trump National Doral," James replied as a chauffeur opened my door in tails with white gloves. I was taken aback by his words.

This was only a glimpse of what was to come. I could only hope high society was ready for me, because tonight was surely going to be a night I would never forget.

A red carpet and lights came down from the front doors and stretched for what seemed forever. I took James' arm as we walked up the path. My long emerald green dress flowed behind me as my gold buckled heels moved across the red carpet.

I felt like high society, but I couldn't help but notice the looks some women gave me as I passed with James. They were shocked, but also some held disdain.

"Don't pay them any mind, Becca," James whispered in my ear. "You're dripping with elegance, and they are jealous of you."

I couldn't help but roll my eyes and laugh at his comment. "I highly doubt that."

"It's true," he teased. "No one has seen me come with a woman in many years. I'm technically an eligible bachelor and instead of them being with me..."

"You're with a woman half your age," I smirked, glancing up at him, watching his lips curl up into a smile.

"Essentially."

I had thought the outside was lavish, but as soon as I stepped through the doorway, I felt my breath leave again. Crystal chandeliers were dripping from the ceiling's accent with sheer white cloth and high vaulted ceilings.

There had to have been a thousand people here tonight, and each one of them were dressed to impress. Diamonds, designer clothing, and so much more.

I wanted more than anything to fit in with the people here. To blend into the mix and enjoy my evening with James, but as soon as we stepped further into the room, he was flocked by people coming to greet him.

I wasn't sure who half of them were, but when one man glanced down at me, his eyes were swirling with lust, and the way he stared at me felt like he was undressing me slowly with his eyes.

"James, who is this lovely creature on your arm?"

James went rigid for a moment before glancing down at me and smiling. "This is Rebecca Woods. She is lovely, isn't she?"

The fact that he called me by my entire first name was a complete first for me. I have never heard him call me anything but Becca. However, when he said it—I felt myself clench with desire as I glanced at him.

"It's a pleasure to meet you, Rebecca. My name is Charles Hyatt."

When Charles said my name, it didn't make me feel the same way, but regardless of the notion, I took his hand and watched as he kissed the back of it while smiling at me.

"It's lovely to meet you, Charles. Please, call me Becca," I replied with a smile.

I didn't want him to think he could call me Rebecca. Not even my father called me that, and if James saying it made me feel that way, I didn't want anyone else to ever call me Rebecca but him.

"So how did the two of you meet?" Charles asked with a smirk that made me feel rather uncomfortable.

"Through family," James replied, causing me to inwardly laugh, but keep my composure. It wasn't a lie. We had, indeed, met through family, but just not in the sense everyone else was going to take it.

Before anything else could be said, laughter echoed from behind us, and I already knew who it was before I turned around. Tally and her mother had arrived, and even though James had told me not to worry about them tonight—I was.

"Oh, look Tally. There's your father," Allison said, causing James and I to turn slightly to look at them as they walked up.

Charles seemed all too familiar with who Allison was, and he greeted her in the same way he had greeted me. Except the hello was more familiar and the smiles more relaxed.

"Allison... Tally," James said with a straight face. "You both look lovely tonight."

I knew he was being polite, but when Allison's eyes gazed in my direction, there was no doubt in my mind there were going to be issues. She had a glint in her eye that spoke volumes to whatever she was planning.

"James, I see you brought Becca tonight," she said as if she hadn't already known that was going to happen.

"Oh, you know Becca?" Charles grinned as his gaze turned back to me. "It's refreshing to see that you both are cordial when it comes to who you're seeing."

"I wouldn't say that," Allison softly scoffed with a smile. "Didn't he tell you how they met?"

"Allison," James replied firmly, glancing at her which made her smile. "I already explained that we met through family."

His emphasis on family made Allison smile wider. "Yes, family indeed. Tally introduced them. Isn't that right, Taliana?"

"Yes, that's correct," Tally replied, giving me a sly glance of hatred.

The glance didn't go unnoticed, and one of the other men with Charles laughed. "It seems the two don't like each other... that is a story I would love to hear."

"No," James firmly said. "Unfortunately, the events are about to start, and there just isn't time for that at the moment. Shall we convene in the ballroom?"

I was glad for James' interruption. Curious glances were being passed my way, and it did more than make me uncomfortable. I was slowly reconsidering my reason for being here. These weren't my people.

Thankfully, no one continued on, and James began to slowly lead me towards the ballroom. It was beautiful, but before I could admire it, Tally grabbed my other arm.

"The least you can do is let my father walk me in there," she whispered through clenched teeth.

Furrowing my brows in confusion, I looked to James, who quickly grabbed her hand and removed it from my arm. "You're grown, Taliana. Walk in by yourself and stop acting out."

She stood, mouth parted in shock, as she stammered to find words that were quickly lost to me as James continued on. Grand chandeliers hung from the ceilings with an elegance that was far superior to the entrance to this building.

"This is beautiful," I said, as I took it all in.

"Yes, it is," he replied, pulling me to face him. "I'm sorry about what happened before, Becca. I won't let them bother you again, okay?"

"It's okay, James. I have realized the kind of people they are, and at the end of the day, it's only words. They aren't physically hurting me." My comment made him chuckle, and as he pulled me close, he leaned down, kissing me.

I knew there were eyes on me, and at the moment, I didn't care. It was James and I... no one else mattered.

The evening flowed with drinks and delicious food. Throughout the night, I became acquainted with many faces, and amongst them were the faces of Velvet. I learned quickly Andrew was an architect and Marianna was the owner of four different restaurants, as well as the co-owner of a beach hotel.

It was amazing to see these people outside of the dark and ominous vibe of Club Velvet. For a moment, it made everything seem normal, and as if my happiness was building, a cloud slowly started to come near me.

That cloud's name was Charles, and the look in his eye made me cautious.

"James, you can't just have this gorgeous woman standing around all night. How about I take her for a spin on the dance floor while you finish your conversation?"

Wide-eyed, I looked towards James, trying to remain calm. There was no way he was actually going to let this guy touch me. That would be ridiculous, right?

"If she would like to dance, I see no problem with that," James replied, looking towards me. "Go have some fun. I'm almost done here."

I was speechless. Was he being serious right now?

Not wanting to be rude, I reluctantly took Charles' hand and let him lead me towards the dance floor. I didn't want to be alone with this man, but there were many people out here, so I wasn't actually alone.

"You are ravishing, Becca." Charles said as we danced. "How is it that a man like James Valentino was able to capture such a beauty as yourself?"

"As he said... we met through family. Tally, to be exact," I quickly explained, trying to keep the conversation away from the subject. Yet, Charles was persistent.

"Yes, so he said. However, from the look on his daughter's face, I would say it wasn't a willing invitation. So let me guess, you were friends?" His words made me quickly catch his gaze with a tight-lipped smile.

"It's complicated."

Laughter flowed from his lips as he nodded. "Oh, I bet it was. The look on her face says she saw more than she wanted."

"Charles, you don't know what you're talking about," I replied, rolling my eyes.

"Oh, I think I do. You see, Allison informed me of your and James' situation. Nothing like a woman scorned... makes me wonder how long this was going on."

My heart dropped into my stomach at his comment. What in the hell was Allison telling people? That was beyond ridiculous to even consider he was that type of person.

"Allison says a lot of things that make no sense. Being a compulsive liar is something she is good at, and considering the fact she is desperate and broke, well, that causes her to say what she needs to get a rich man's money."

I didn't consider what I said before I said it, and as soon as the words left my lips, I regretted it.

"I had a feeling she was trying to scheme her way into someone's pocket here," he chuckled. "Aren't you after James for the same thing?"

Narrowing my brows, I shook my head. "No, but someone like you would assume that, wouldn't you?"

"Someone like me?" he replied with a grin. "You mean someone with money?"

I couldn't take anymore of what he was doing. Stopping in my tracks, I removed my hands from his and took a step back.

"Look, I don't know what you think you know, but no one here knows the real me but James. I don't want anyone's money because I can get my own. If you want someone to get information from, I would suggest speaking to Allison or her daughter. They are quick to do... just about anything for a buck."

The suggestion in my words was clear, and Charles' eyes got big as he laughed.

"You are a fascinating creature, Becca. I can see why James is so taken with you."

Not bothering to say another word to him, I turned, making my way back to where James was, but quickly found he was still talking, and Allison was at his side laughing at whatever he was saying.

Perhaps coming here tonight wasn't for the best.

Turning around, I made my way towards the door only to be stopped by two smiling faces I wasn't expecting to see. Neal and Allegra.