

Chapter 47 - 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.

Chapter 48 - Submitting to My Best Friend's Dad by Scarlett Rossi

Becca.

When James came to find me, I was rather pleased. I was enjoying my time with Neal, but I had come with James, and he had promised an evening with me, even though the current conversation between Neal and James seemed anything but pleasant.

"The auction is about to start, so I think we should take our seats," James said, holding his arm out for me, which I slowly took.

"That's wonderful. What's the charity this year?" Neal asked as he followed behind us.

"The money goes to the breast cancer society to help with treatments," James said hesitantly as his eyes met mine.

I wasn't sure if he had remembered my mother, but if he did, then he would have known my mother died from breast cancer. I hadn't realized this was what the charity gala was for, but now that I knew, it brought back memories.

Holding myself together, I let James lead me to the table where we would be sitting. I had imagined the rest of the evening would go well, but instead, I found that Allison and Tally were sitting at our table, as well as Allegra and Charles.

"Oh, wonderful. Becca, you're joining us," Allison replied with a fake smile as she rolled her eyes.

"Cut it out, Allison," James bit out as we took our seats.

"I was being nice," Allison gasped. "Jesus, James. Maybe you need a drink."

Of course, this would be Allison's reaction. The way she flaunted herself, as if she was the poor ex-wife being thrust into the presence of her husband's new lover. It was pathetic, and I was over her and Tally's bullshit.

Taliana, though, had her eyes set on Neal, and he didn't seem to notice her.

"So, how have you been enjoying yourself?" Charles asked me, breaking me from my train of thought.

"Oh—it's lovely," I said softly as James slid his hand under the table to rest on my thigh. Looking up at him, I could see the twinkle in his eye, but I couldn't help but feel like I was nothing but a distraction to him this evening.

People kept looking at us, and Allison kept making her snide comments.

It was horrendous, and as much as I was saying my evening was lovely, it only really had been when I was dancing with Neal. With James, it had been nothing but drama until this point.

As the auctioning began, I found many people were very generous with their donation amounts. Not to mention the people sitting at my table.

"The next piece is an original painting by Lesslie Pachelli. Starting bid twenty-thousand."

The painting was beautiful, and James nudged me slowly. "Do you like it?"

"Like what?" I asked, with confusion.

"That painting," he whispered with a smile.

"Yes, it's beautiful," I replied. "The painter has talent."

James nodded before holding up the white card in his hand. "Twenty-thousand."

"James, what are you doing?" I gasped, looking at the others at the table.

"You said you like it. So I'm buying it for you." He shrugged his shoulders.

"Are you serious right now?" Allison scoffed. "You're wasting money on that?"

Sighing, I shook my head as others started bidding on the painting as well. There was no way I was going to let James waste that kind of money on a painting. I didn't even have a place to put it if I did get it.

"Fifty-thousand," Neal's voice caught my attention, and looking at him, I gasped.

A smile crossed his lips as he looked at me, and Allegra shrugged her shoulders as if him betting on the item was no big deal.

"Sixty-thousand," James countered.

"Eighty-thousand," Neal responded.

It took a minute for me to realize what was going on, and before I could reply again, James responded. "One hundred-thousand."

"James, enough," I said, looking at him. "What are you doing?"

"I'm getting the painting for you."

"I don't need it," I replied, shaking my head. "That's a lot of money. Please stop."

"The money goes to charity, Becca. It's my donation."

"Sold, for one-hundred and fifty thousand to Mr. Neal Saville," the auctioneer said, catching both mine and James' attention.

We had been so caught up in our argument, we hadn't noticed Neal had rebid on the painting and won it. For a moment, I thought James was going to lose it, but instead, he stared at Neal with a tight-lipped smile. "Congratulations."

"Thank you, James. It feels good to buy the item knowing that the money is going to a good cause. It's something close to my heart."

Looking at Neal and Allegra, I watched her take his hand in a comforting notion, her eyes slowly meeting mine, giving me a small smile. "Our mother passed away from breast cancer."

Nodding my head, I tried to hold back my emotions. "I know how you feel. So did mine."

There was an awkward silence at the table for a moment as James took my hand and squeezed it lightly. I wasn't sure how to feel, but knowing someone else understood the pain I felt over losing my mother made me feel not so alone in the moment.

"Enough with this grimness. We need more drinks," Allison interjected, breaking the silence.

"Mom, enough," Tally finally said after a moment. "Can you just stop talking for now? You're embarrassing me with the way you're acting. They lost their mother to this disease."

Shock filled me as my eyes widened in surprise at what she said. Even her own mother looked at her, trying to see if she had just heard her correctly.

"Excuse me—" Allison gasped.

"You're excused," Tally interrupted before her eyes turned back to Neal. "I'm so sorry about that. She forgets sometimes how reality can be. Perhaps, we can have coffee sometime. I'd love to know more about your business."

Tally was something else. One moment she is eye-f*cking Neal from across the table, and the next, she is rudely shutting down her mother—which I was proud of her for—but then she was also trying to hook up with Neal.

She never ceases to amaze me. There is always a form of desperation in her eyes.

She sought attention from any rich man who would give it to her.

Neal, however, chuckled and shook his head. "As lovely as I am sure that sounds, I think I will have to pass on that."

"What—" Tally said softly, looking at her mother, who narrowed her eyes at Neal.

"So, how is everyone enjoying the night?" I blurted, not wanting the conversation to get any more tense than it was.

"Oh, it's been interesting," Allegra replied, sipping on her wine.

"That's for sure," James commented, drinking his whiskey.

Shaking my head, I placed my napkin down upon the table. I was done with the evening. I came to enjoy myself, and with the way everyone was acting, I couldn't do it.

All I wanted to do was go back to the apartment, grab a glass of wine, and get into my pajamas. "I think I should go."

"What?" James said, looking at me confused. "Becca—"

"No, she's right. She should go," Allison snapped. "At least for once she is paying attention. She isn't where she is meant to be. Perhaps you need to go back up north."

I was done with her attitude. Anger boiled inside me at her words.

"F*ck you, Allison. You think you're hot shit, and you don't even belong here. You're broke, and trying to get your daughter to hook up with Neal for his money. Every man here should be wary of the two of you. Why can't you leave me the f*ck alone?"

Standing, she seethed in anger, her fists clenched and eyes bulging.

"How dare you?" she screamed. "You have no right to speak to me like that, you little home-wrecker. He was a married man."

"What are you talking about?" James looked at her with confusion. "We aren't married and my seeing her was recent—"

James paused for a moment and scoffed before laughter escaped him. "Have you been telling people I was sleeping with her while we were married?"

I should have known she would tell people that. There were rumors, and I had hoped they weren't true, but now that James mentioned it, I couldn't believe it.

"You're pathetic, Allison. James hates you because you were a horrible mother and a horrible wife. You deserve the life you have created for yourself, and you will die alone one day because of it."

Turning on my heels, I stormed away from the table. Allegra's voice called to me as I passed through the ballroom again and made my way towards the front door.

The thought of spending another moment in there with them was exhausting. To think I had actually thought this night would be memorable. The kind of memories this night would bring were not ones I wanted to remember.

“Becca—” James’ voice called as the sound of his footsteps quickly came up behind me. “Rebecca! Would you stop?”

Spinning around, I stared at him, shaking my head. “Why? I’m not staying here for another moment. I thought tonight was going to be amazing for us, and instead it turned into a shit show.”

Running his hand over his face, he sighed at me. “Can we not act like this here?”

“Seriously? That’s your comment? I’m sorry if you don’t want to be embarrassed by me being upset. Perhaps you shouldn’t have brought me here then.”

“Perhaps I shouldn’t have.” His words were like a slap in the face, and as I stared at him, I saw the guilt quickly build. “Becca, that’s not what I meant.”

“No, that’s exactly what you meant, James,” I said, feeling the strain at the back of my throat. I didn’t want to cry, but I had every right to.

“Becca—” he said again, stepping closer to me. “Don’t be like this.”

“No, please. It’s okay I get it.”

Turning away from him, I headed down the steps and kept walking until I arrived at the valet and asked them to call a car for me.

It didn’t take a genius to figure out that my situation was anything but great, and as the car pulled away, I watched James turn around and go back into the building.

I wasn’t sure why I thought he would chase after me, but I was also glad he hadn’t. What I needed was a break from everything, and in reality, I just wanted time to consider what I was really doing.

I was in too far over my head, and even though it felt great to put Allison in her place, I had made a fool of myself in front of everyone close to her. Their

lifestyle wasn't something made for me. I was nothing but an outsider, and I don't know why I thought I could fit in.

Perhaps it was time for me to go home and stop pretending.

Chapter 49 - Submitting to My Best Friend's Dad by Scarlett Rossi

"Becca!" The sound of banging woke me up in the middle of the night, and with much reluctance, I climbed from my bed and made my way towards the front door. At 2:00 in the morning, there had better be a good reason for someone to wake me, but when I looked through the peephole, I was shocked.

Allison stood on the other side, beating her fist against the door as if she owned the place and wanted in. I was done with her bullshit, and more than anything, I just wanted to be left alone.

Yanking the door open, I stared at her with narrowed brows and clenched fists. "What the f*ck do you want?"

"What do I want?! What the f*ck are you doing in my apartment?" she scoffed, trying to push past me.

The feeling of anger boiled over in me, and I had finally had enough.

Shoving her back, I watched her stumble. "You assaulted me!" she shrieked. "I'm—"

"Shut the f*ck up, Allison. I want you to think about this for a moment because you're really getting on my last f*cking nerve. This isn't your apartment. It's James' apartment, and you are not married and haven't been in years... you're trespassing. Want to continue?"

She stood, opening and closing her mouth before stomping her foot. "You're ruining everything. I don't understand why you won't just f*cking leave. You're not welcome here."

"Leave?!" I screamed at her. "I f*cking tried, and he made me stay! So if you have a f*cking problem, take it up with him, and leave me alone, damnit."

My outburst seemed to catch her off guard because there was nothing but a stunned expression on her face as she seemed to take everything I said into account.

“That’s not true—”

“Just stop it,” I said, cutting her off. “How you’re acting is pathetic, and honestly, you need to take shit up with him because none of this, from the beginning, was me. It was all him.”

“I don’t believe you—” she laughed. “There is no way..”

“You don’t have to believe it, but it’s still the truth. You need to leave me alone.”

She stepped towards me, but I held my grip on the door, prepared for whatever she was about to do. I wasn’t a fighter; I had only been in one physical fight in my entire life, but if this woman wanted to go, then we could go.

“I’m going to let you in on something, Becca,” she spat with a smirk on her face. “If you don’t stay away from him, and find yourself on the next flight home, I will destroy your entire future... starting with Yale.”

Fear ran through me with her words. It was the one thing I was worried about her doing from the beginning, and James had kept reassuring me that nothing like that would happen. He told me I had nothing to worry about.

“F*ck you, Allison. You can’t scare me,” I replied through gritted teeth.

“Oh, no? The thing is, I can... especially with all the information I recently found out about you. Do you think they would want to be affiliated with a student who was caught in such a scandal if it made the news?” she said, crossing her arms over her chest.

She was right, though. They wouldn’t want to be part of anything like this, and if she wanted to, she could ruin my life. Just as I told James could happen.

“If that is something you want, then perhaps you should convince your ex-husband to stay away from me because he is the one who is chasing me. Not the other way around.”

With my grip on the door, I slammed it in her face and locked it.

The tears that poured down my face were uncontrollable as I slid to the floor and cried. There was no way I could allow myself to lose everything I had worked so hard for because of a man. Even if I was in love with him, was all of this honestly worth it?

“Becca...” A soft voice said from the other side of the door. “It’s Allegra, sweetie. Please open up.”

As much as I didn’t want to, I didn’t want to be left alone. Slowly moving aside, I reached up, unlocking the door so she could come inside.

“Oh, sweetie—” she said when she took in the sight of me.

“What are you doing here?” I asked her. “Don’t you have a full night of fun?”

“What?” she laughed. “No, girl. I left not long after you, and the neighbor called me to tell me about the commotion. I ran into Allison on her way out, and she got a taste of what I had to say.”

The look on Allegra’s face made me chuckle through my tears.

“I don’t know what I’m doing. That’s so wrong. They have been divorced for years. I don’t understand it,” I replied, wiping my face with the back of my sleeve.

“You did nothing wrong, Becca. Honestly, I was surprised by how James acted at the event. He is a strong-willed man and usually puts his foot down with things.”

“Yeah, well, I guess I’m not enough to stick up for,” I scoffed, shaking my head.

“No, I don’t think it was that. I think it was the fact there were so many eyes upon him, and he didn’t want to cause a scene at the event. He is one of the top contributors every year,” Allegra sighed, shrugging her shoulders.

Perhaps that was the truth, but at the end of the day, he should have said something last night and he didn’t. Instead, he agreed he shouldn’t have brought me there.

“Well, according to James, he agreed with the notion he shouldn’t have taken me there last night, and instead of coming here after the event... you can see he went home.”

Standing, I made my way towards my room, with Allegra following behind me. I wasn’t sure what to do, but now that Allison knew I was in this apartment, I didn’t want to stay here.

I didn’t want to have her constantly harassing me and following me around. It was a complete invasion of privacy, and I knew she would keep to her word and try to ruin things with Yale for me.

She was just that kind of person. A sadistic, twisted individual who took pleasure in tormenting others even if she won’t get anything from it.

Pulling out my suitcases, I started going around the room, collecting my things. There was no way I was staying here, and considering James hadn’t arrived yet and it was almost 3:00, I doubted he would be.

“What are you doing?” Allegra asked as she watched me pack.

“I’m leaving. Allegra, I am not playing these games with him. I care about him, yes, but I don’t have time for this drama. This wasn’t what I signed up for when I came to Miami.”

It wasn’t what I signed up for. I didn’t ask for him to want me.

Even if I didn’t stop it from happening.

“Becca—” she said again as she grabbed my wrist to stop me. “Don’t do this.”

“Why, Allegra? Is he here right now comforting me? No, he isn’t. You are, and I’m grateful for it, but this is just too much for me. I should have enough money to book a ticket back home,” I replied, zipping up my bag, and pulling it off the bed past Allegra and towards the door.

“Don’t be silly. You don’t need to book a ticket,” she said again as I collected a few things from the living room.

“So you’re expecting me to keep putting up with all of this, then?”

Rolling her eyes, she smirked. “No, smartass. I’m suggesting that instead of letting them ruin the rest of your summer, you just come stay with me until the

day you leave. You can ignore him if you want, and me, you, and Neal can have fun instead.”

“The last time we tried to do that, he followed me to Velvet,” I sighed, remembering the night he showed up in Velvet and told me I was his.

Just thinking about that night made me want to cry. Everything about the way he treated me and possessed me broke my heart because it was one thing about him I fell in love with.

Who was I kidding, though? How could I honestly talk about love with him when I had only been here a few weeks?

“I don’t know. He will know that I am there.” I sagged my shoulders in defeat. “Why can’t my life just be easy?”

“Life isn’t meant to be easy, Becca. Now come on. We can take your stuff up to my place, and the good thing is... I have the room still ready for you,” she said with a smile.

“Isn’t Neal using it?” I asked, with confusion.

“No, he is in another room. I do have more than two rooms, Becca,” she replied teasingly, causing me to smile.

Of course, she did. I suppose part of me just wasn’t thinking straight.

“Okay, let’s go then,” I said, forcing a smile to my face. “You’re right. I shouldn’t let this drama get to me, and I only have like two weeks left, anyway. So I should make the most of it.”

With excitement, she took my large bag and began walking down the hall. However, I found it hard to take the step I needed to pass the threshold to the apartment.

Turning around, I let my eyes cast over the place, and the enjoyment I had experienced being here with James came back to me. He had done nothing but treat me like a princess, even though I never asked him to.

The idea of having to let go of him tore at me. The conflict weighed heavily on my mind as I tried to understand what the hell I had gotten myself into.

Was I really going to be one of those girls that clung to a man who had more drama than a TV sitcom, or was I going to stand up for myself and remind people I knew my worth.

Taking a deep breath, I pushed through my feelings and closed the door behind me. When I turned, I found Allegra was waiting patiently for me at the end of the hall, and while I never would understand why she was so kind to me, I was grateful.

Without having her around, I don't think I would have been able to handle all of this. Dealing with the drama from Tally and Allison was mentally exhausting, but every time something happened, Allegra was there to pick me up when I fell.

She was becoming the friend I had always needed, and I was grateful for that.

Perhaps, with her by my side, I could get through everything after all.

Chapter 50 - Submitting to My Best Friend's Dad by Scarlett Rossi

James.

The night was supposed to be perfect, but once again, my ignorant ex-wife ruined it. It seemed, no matter what I tried to do with Becca, Allison couldn't get it through her head that I was happy and didn't want her.

After years of not dealing with her, the first time I take an interest in a woman like this, she acts out. Sitting in my office at my house, I chased back another glass of whiskey and looked at the clock.

It was close to 6:00 in the morning, and I still hadn't found the courage to go see Becca. I should have followed her last night, but I couldn't.

Becca was angry, and she had every right to be. One thing I had learned, though, is when a woman is angry, it's better to give her space to calm down instead of constantly giving her something to be pissed off about.

So here I sat. Staring at this stupid f*cking photo on the wall in my office. I wasn't sure why I bought it. It was gloomy and depressing, or at least I thought so.

Everything about its dark shadowed trees and lonely streets under the moon screamed exactly how I felt. Unsure and conflicted.

Did I walk down a street like this and do so alone?

Or did I allow myself to walk with another and brighten up the street with her smile?

Again, complications and conflicts weighed upon my shoulders, making it impossible to think straight. How was I supposed to be of use to her when I wasn't sure about what I wanted myself?

Letting out a heavy sigh, I stood and proceeded upstairs.

Sleep was calling me, and it was the only place I needed to be. However, my phone ringing had me jumping to answer it, hoping that it was the brown-haired, blue-eyed beauty who had captivated me, but to my surprise, it wasn't.

"Allegra," I said with a sigh as I continued my venture towards my room. "What can I do for you?"

For her to be calling me, she had something on her mind, and considering how the evening had gone, I could only imagine what it was going to be about.

"Good morning to you as well. I take it you haven't gone to sleep yet?" Her voice was filled with amusement, as if she was going to tell me something I would not be happy about.

"No, I haven't. Why?"

"Oh, just curious," Allegra teased happily.

"Allegra..." I sighed again before running my hand over my face, trying to keep calm. "You called for a reason. Can you please just tell me what it is so I can go to sleep?"

There was a moment of silence on the phone before I heard her sigh. Whatever she was going to tell me, I had a feeling I wouldn't like it, but being as patient as possible, I waited.

"Well, I know a current beautiful brunette who isn't sleeping where she should be sleeping," she said, causing my heart to race.

“What the hell are you talking about? Becca’s not at the apartment?” I asked with panic setting into me. Where the hell was she, and why wasn’t she in the apartment?

“Allison showed up at the apartment, James.”

F*ck. Of course that bitch did. “Shit. Is Becca okay?”

“Do you seriously have to ask that question? Allison and Becca got into it, and the neighbor told me, so I went to check on Becca. She was pretty upset.”

This was the kind of news I wasn’t expecting.

Allegra’s words were like a knife to my gut.

Things had already been bad at the gala so to hear this had happened as well was not good.

I had expected Allegra would call and berate me after the way I acted tonight and perhaps tell me I was a selfish asshole for not putting Allison in her place at the gala.

If only they knew I was in a place where I couldn’t just act out. All eyes were on me because I brought Becca, and also because Allison and Tally were there.

They probably expected a shit show to happen, but of course, I kept my composure.

Yet, I find out Allison had other plans and had just made things worse.

“You’re serious?” I gasped, looking around my room in disbelief. “Is she—you know what? I’m on my way. I will be there in a minute.”

“It’s too late,” she said quickly before I could hang up.

“What do you mean, it’s too late? Where is Becca, Allegra?” Gripping my phone tightly, I waited to hear her say what I expected.

“You know what that means, James. Please don’t make me explain this. Your ex has put her through shit and then shows up at that place. She doesn’t feel safe there. Not to mention the threats that were being thrown around—”

“Threats? What f*cking threats? Where the f*ck is she, Allegra?” I all but shouted into the phone. My frustration was growing, and the need to seek revenge for Becca came to the front of my mind.

How could anyone treat her like that?

Shit... how could I allow her to be treated like that.

“Don’t take that tone with me, James. You have no one to blame but yourself. You’re lucky she stayed around this long. I have said enough.... If you want more information, you will have to talk to her. When she is ready.”

Allegra didn’t wait for me to say anything else before she quickly hung up the phone, leaving me with questions that needed answers.

Allison had stooped to an all new low and confronted Becca after having already spoken down at her through the evening.

Left in a state of disbelief, I stood there with my car keys in my hand, holding my phone.

“Son of a bitch!” I screamed, chucking my keys across the room screaming in rage.

Allison was the bane of my existence, and no matter what I did to make things work with Becca, this stupid bitch wouldn’t learn to stop.

Frustration and hatred filled me knowing a woman I had grown up with and loved at one point in my life had so much selfishness and pride in her she couldn’t let me be happy.

I had given her everything, and for the first time in my life, I found someone else to make me happy, and she couldn’t let me have even that.

Instead, she wanted more. She felt entitled to everything I poured my heart, sweat, and tears into because she wanted to fill some void in her heart that grew black because of her own greed.

There was only so much someone could take, and if I lost Becca because of Allison, I would never forgive her.

Allegra was right. I had no one to blame but myself.

Becca didn't want Tally or anyone to find out about our little situation, but instead of listening to what she had to say, I was greedy and allowed Tally to find out.

I specifically went against what she had asked of me just so I could take her out and show her off as if she was something new I had bought.

How was I honestly ever going to fix that with her?

I was a grown man acting like a boy in high school instead of being the man she deserved to have. I could hope some other man could fill the place I was failing to keep. Yet, even the thought of that made my stomach turn.

I hadn't meant to care for in this way, but every moment with her was becoming more and more addicting every day.

Becca.

Sleep overtook me not long after I laid upon the bed in Allegra's spare bedroom. I didn't realize I was tired, but in the end, I was more tired than expected.

By the time I woke up, the sun was high in the sky, and the filtered voices of Neal and Allegra came from down the hall.

Rolling over, I stared at the clock with a sigh.

My phone dead, and my mind foggy, I forced myself to get up and move towards the living room. There was no reason for me to sit around and be mopey. I had to find the strength to put this all behind me.

As I stepped into the living room, I found them both sitting on the sofa talking. However, as soon as I came into view, they became quiet and turned to me with small smiles upon their faces.

"How are you doing?" Neal asked.

How was I doing? I wasn't even sure how I was doing.

Just lie Becca. After all, they won't know the difference. Disassociation at its best.

“I’m fine,” I replied, shrugging my shoulders. “It was never anything serious.”

“You both may not have made it official, but it sure as bloody hell looked that way.” Allegra added, causing me to laugh.

“I’m done with it all, guys. It’s too much to handle, and this was not what I signed up for with him. He is amazing, and god... in bed, he was incredible, but I will go back to school in a few weeks. So it’s better to just end it now,” I finally said, getting everything off my chest.

Every part of me wanted to cry, but I couldn’t let myself do that.

I couldn’t continue to get upset over a man who was going to act the way he was. It was beyond ridiculous, and all I was doing was making a fool out of myself.

“You deserve better,” Neal said quietly as I met his gaze.

“Thanks, but I think it’s best I stay away from men for a while. Maybe one day things will become less complicated, but as much as I wish that was true with James, I know it won’t be. Allison will never let it go.”

“Ain’t that the f*cking truth.” Allegra mumbled, sipping her drink.

The comment caused me to laugh as I poured my orange juice and made my way towards where they were sitting.

“Anyway... like I said, I’m fine. Shit happens. At the end of the day, life is only ten percent what happens to us, and ninety percent how we handle it.”

“Oh, words from the wise?” Neal chuckled. “I like that saying.”

“Thanks. It’s my dad’s favorite saying.”

Thinking about my father, I contemplated going to see him. It was moments like this when I wished I was with him so he could hug me and tell me everything was going to be okay.

Even if he would give James a piece of his mind, hearing him tell me it’s going to be okay meant the world to me at the moment.

“Well, that’s wonderful,” Allegra said cheerfully. “Go get your pretty ass dressed up. We are going to have lunch and do a bit of retail therapy.”

Laughing softly, I shook my head. "I can't... I just don't have it in me."

"Stop," she said quickly, holding her hand up. "I'm not going to let you sulk around down here. This is Miami, Becca, and women down here don't take shit from anyone. In a way, Allison is trying to get you to submit, and we are going to show her, and anyone else, for that matter, that you won't play their games. Now, go."

There was no arguing with this woman, and nodding my head, I rolled my eyes and headed back to my room to get ready. I wasn't entirely sure what she had planned, but I had no doubt in my mind that it was going to be more than interesting.

After all, interesting was this woman's love language.