

Chapter 51 - Submitting to My Best Friend's Dad by Scarlett Rossi

There is no time like the present to change the path of your future. For if we live in the past too long, we get caught up in what could have been instead of setting forth what can be.

I didn't think I would be able to get past what had happened, but as always, Allegra was able to get me through it all. She distracted my mind so I wasn't sitting around, thinking about how what I desired to have with James could never happen.

"What do you think about these sandals?" Allegra asked as I looked through an array of sunglasses in a shop near the beach. Turning to her, I tilted my head a bit as I stared down at her feet.

"Those are actually really cute."

"I thought so too," She muttered before pulling her wallet from her purse and handing the cashier money. "I'm getting them."

Looking around further, I tried to see if there was anything I could find I might enjoy. However, the more I looked, the more everything seemed to remind me of James.

"Becca, shall we all go get lunch?" Neal said, coming up beside me with a smile on his face. "Allegra said there is a cute beach place near here that has amazing fish tacos."

"Uh, yeah, that sounds good to me," I replied as my phone rang. "Let me just take this really quick."

He nodded his head, and I slowly moved past him and pulled out my phone. Once again, James was calling me, and I wasn't sure what to say to him.

Taking a deep breath, I pushed the green button answering the call.

"Hello?" I whispered as my heart fluttered.

"Rebecca—" he replied breathlessly. "Where are you?"

"Out, why?"

There was an exaggerated sigh from his end that made me roll my eyes as I stared out at the ocean in front of me. "Please don't act like this..."

"Act like what, James? Don't call me telling me how I need to act when you are the one who caused all of this chaos."

"You know what I meant—" he replied quickly, and even though part of me knew what he meant, it changed nothing. Why did I have to be the one to submit?

"No, I don't James. Please explain to me what you meant because you keep saying that I know, but unfortunately, I don't. How am I supposed to know when you don't explain?"

There it was. My admission of truth to him.

I didn't know what he wanted or what he was thinking.

One moment, he was saying he wanted to be with me and was treating me like a queen, and then the next moment, he had me feeling like I was nothing but a complication.

"I mean, don't act like you're mad at me," he replied.

"Mad? Is that what you think I am?" I asked.

"It's obvious you're mad, and I don't understand why you're acting this way when I'm trying to fix things," he snapped with a sigh. "I'm trying to make things better."

"Do you really want to make things better?"

"Of course, I do, Becca." James replied with exhaustion. "I want you back with me."

Turning around, I looked towards Neal and Allegra, who were laughing over something I hadn't been privy to. Allegra's eyes met mine with a smile.

She had been right about something... I shouldn't let all the drama get to me.

"James, before you start worrying about things with me, you need to get your ex-wife under control. I won't allow her to ruin my life because she has a vendetta against you."

“Becca, I can sort her out, but you don’t need to worry about her.”

“James, she threatened to go to the f*cking media and ruin Yale for me. I won’t f*ck up my future because you can’t handle your ex-wife. How dare you tell me not to worry about her when she is threatening me?” I finally snapped.

It was a long time coming, but what did he expect?

I wouldn’t be sucked into the drama again.

“Okay,” James replied. “I will handle her. Will you please just come over to my place this week so we can talk about everything in person? I don’t like this phone shit.”

“Yeah, okay. I will keep you posted, but right now I have to go.”

Not bothering to give him room to keep talking, I hung up the phone and walked back towards Allegra and Neal.

“Everything okay?” Allegra asked with a curious smile.

“Yep, more than okay.” My words may have convinced them, but they were far from convincing me.

James.

Walking into my office at work, I tried to let my conversation with Becca go. I hadn’t expected her to act the way she did, but I was wrong to assume she would forgive easily.

She had every right to be mad, but in the end, I would fix it.

“Evette, Allison is coming in today. Make sure she isn’t stopped.”

Evette’s eyes met mine with confusion and small, parted lips. “Sir... are you sure?”

Raising my gaze to meet her, I smiled. “Yes, I’m sure. It will be okay.”

Nodding her head, she exited my office, and quickly, I fell into the pace of work. There was much I was behind on since I had started seeing Becca. It wasn't that big of an issue, but it wasn't good business.

An hour later, my office door opened, and Allison walked in with her head held high. Dressed up and not a spot of makeup out of place, she looked as if she was coming here for a reward, and not for a meeting.

"Allison, thank you for coming."

"Well, I couldn't very well say no when you asked so nicely. I am curious what the meeting is about," she replied demurely, her smile brightened by her red lipstick.

Taking a seat across from me, I watched as she crossed her legs to purposely show off the white tops of her garters as if trying to entice me.

"I'm pretty sure you know exactly what the meeting is for."

Taking a moment, she tapped her well-manicured nails on the desk and smiled. "I take it that you didn't like my behavior at the gala."

"That would be one reason. The second would be the way you showed up at my apartment harassing my guest," I countered, watching as her smile fell and was quickly replaced with a sneer.

"Don't you mean our apartment, James?"

"No," I snapped. "It isn't our apartment, Allison. It's mine and had one of my business members been there that night instead of her, you could have cost me money. I want to make it very clear to you that if you show up there again, I will have you arrested."

Anger burned within the depths of her eyes as she stared at me.

She knew I was serious because it wouldn't be the first time I had called the police on her. Allison had a tendency to be very dramatic, and it was typically because she had been drinking.

"What is it you see in that girl? She has nothing to offer you, and she isn't part of our world. I know you saw at the gala how everyone looked at her. She didn't belong among us and never will," Allison replied with disdain.

I had noticed what she was talking about, but then I wasn't exactly someone who cared too much about what people said. Even if I didn't do anything about Allison that night.

The only thing I wanted was for us to have an enjoyable evening, and instead, it had been ruined. Everything was ruined—because of Allison.

“I want to clarify—this is the last time I have to speak to you about this. If you continue to harass her, I will have her press charges against you. To hear you verbally threatened her at the apartment was disgusting and beneath you.”

“Disgusting?” she yelled, standing. “What’s disgusting is knowing that I was married to a man who was sleeping with a woman the same age as his daughter. That’s disgusting.”

This was something I was growing tired of hearing. Repeatedly, she brought this up, and so did Tally. I was a loving father to my daughter, but over the years, she was growing more and more like her mother.

I had done everything for my family, and just because a woman I was interested in now was the same age as my daughter, that doesn't mean I had an interest in young girls.

“That is beyond disgusting, and if you don't stop making those comments, we're going to have a problem, Allison. I may be a lot of things, but sleeping with underage girls isn't something I'm about. So stop making those suggestions.”

“It's a pity, James,” she sighed as she moved from my desk. “If I had known you were this possessive and aggressive back then, I would have tried harder for you.”

Laughter escaped me, halting her in her steps towards me. “There is no way. You have to deserve that kind of aggression, Allison. It isn't freely given when you act the way you do.”

I had been a dark man for a very long time and taking women of a certain breed was something I enjoyed. I couldn't have a woman like Allison anymore.

She didn't listen, and she was selfish.

Becca, though, she was submissive and willing. It was a joint effort with her. She made me feel like we were a team in a way. Someone I could spend my life with if I wanted too. I wasn't going to be treated the way Allison had treated me for years.

"How dare you say something like that to me!" she snapped. "I was the perfect wife!"

"Perfect? Hardly," I snorted. "I'm done with entertaining you, Allison. What I have said is what I have said. I don't want you near my apartment, and if you don't leave Becca alone, I will come after you full force."

"James, you aren't being serious." She stared at me as if looking for me to give way to some amusing jester that would suggest I was kidding.

"I'm very serious, Allison. Honestly, I think you need to go back to rehab and look at how to get your life back on track. You have never been this bad before, and lately, you aren't someone I even recognize. Now please... you may excuse yourself."

Tears built in her eyes at my words, but there was no way I would allow myself to give in to her emotions, no matter how long we had spent together. She may have been the mother of my child, but I wouldn't allow her to act this way.

Even if it wasn't Becca, and it was another woman... they didn't deserve that from her.

Hopefully, this time, she would heed my warning.

Otherwise, god help her the next time she acted out.

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Becca.

Four days passed without another word from James.

Our conversation weighed on my mind a lot, but I found myself busy doing other things to keep myself preoccupied, whether it was enjoying drinks and dinner with Allegra and Neal or simply even just taking time for myself.

I had wondered if Miami was going to leave a nasty taste in my mouth, but in reality, it wasn't. I simply had been too caught up in bullshit to have fun.

Walking down to the cafe near the apartment building, I looked forward to the breakfast tea latte they offered and a blueberry muffin. I was an addict for caffeine, and considering I had been so preoccupied lately, my recurring headaches ended up resulting from no caffeine.

Something I would make up for by the cup full—or twenty.

As the door chimed, I walked in to spot the usual bright, cheerful barista. “Becca... your usual sweetie?” she asked with a smile.

“Yes,” I laughed. “Am I that obvious?”

“Oh, sweetie, you are the only person I know that orders that drink.”

Raising my brows I gave a tight smile. “Well, people just don't have good taste then.”

“Becca!” A familiar voice called out, and turning, I spotted Neal walking towards me.

“What are you doing here?” He had left yesterday for some business, and I hadn't expected that he would be back so soon.

I had honestly thought he was going back to New York and not sticking around Miami.

“Just got back an hour ago and needed a ‘pick me up,’” he chuckled. “You too?”

Furrowing my brow in confusion, he gestured to the latte now sitting on the counter.

“Oh! Yes,” I giggled. “Sorry, not fully with it yet.”

“No problem. I know how that is. I'm exhausted and ready to go home soon.”

“Yeah, I didn't think you were coming back to Miami.” I took my muffin and latte and watched him follow me to a small cafe table.

“I wasn’t going to, but I only had to go over to Tampa, so I drove. I will head out tomorrow night back to New York. Don’t worry though, I have a flight for you if you want?”

“Neal...” I laughed. “You don’t have to take care of me, but thank you for the offer.”

Since everything with the gala, Neal had been very sweet. Always paying the bill and being more than helpful in giving me information on places to live when I got back to school.

He was a really nice guy, and I was appreciative, but he confused me.

There was something about him that was conflicting, but I tried to overlook it as him just simply being a very busy man with a good heart.

“I know I don’t have to, Rebecca. I just want to make sure you’re okay. What kind of man would I be if I didn’t help to look out for a pretty woman?”

“You’re sweet,” I replied, rolling my eyes.

A flash of light out of the corner of my eye caught my attention, and looking down, I noticed a text message came through and frowned.

“What’s wrong?” he asked as my eyes met his briefly, and I forced a smile, shaking my head.

“Nothing, just a text from someone.”

“Are you not going to open it?” he asked. “I can leave if you want me to.”

“Don’t be silly. It’s from Tally.”

His eyes widened as his lips formed an ‘O.’ “The she-devil herself. I have to say... she was very persistent at the gala to gain my favor.”

Having taken a sip of my drink when he said that, I snorted, and caused myself to choke as laughter escaped me. “Oh, my god, yes. Too bad for her you bat for the other team.”

“Becca...” Neal smirked. “I’m not just into men.”

Speechless was something I never thought I would find myself with Neal. He was a straightforward person, and to hear him say this now surprised me.

“What do you mean? Allegra said you were gay.”

Laughter escaped him as he nodded, “Yes, I’m sure she did. However, that’s because I want her to think that. I like both men and women. I just don’t want her trying to throw women at me so that I can settle down.”

“I’m sorry, I know this may be personal, but... don’t you want to settle down? Have kids and a huge family?” I asked him out of curiosity.

“Of course I do, one day. Right now, though, it wouldn’t be good because I’m always traveling for work. Partners don’t want someone who is always gone, and I refuse to put that burden on someone. So, if it happens one day, then it does. If not, then so be it.”

“That’s very considerate of you,” I replied after a moment of staring at him.

I had never heard a man say something sweet like that. He was taking his future spouse into consideration without ever knowing them.

“Considerate seems to be my middle name lately,” he chuckled as his eyes gazed at my phone again, watching it light up.

As much as I wanted to be drama free, I was very curious to know what Tally was saying, and rolling his eyes, he snatched my phone and opened it.

“Neal, what are you doing?” I said, trying to take my phone back, only to have him hold it out of reach.

“Look, you are obviously too nervous to see what she has to say, and the suspense is killing me, so I will read it for you.”

“Oh, Jesus,” I laughed. “You’re just like your sister. I hope you know that.”

He was silent for a moment as he scrolled through the text, and then his eyes lifted to meet mine. I wasn’t sure what the look was that he was giving me, but slowly the corner of his lips turned up into a smirk.

“Seems the she-devil wants to meet up with you to talk.” He held my phone out to me.

“What?” I said with shock. “No way... what the hell would she want to talk about?”

Sure enough, looking at my phone, I couldn't believe my eyes at the message.

‘Becca, I know things have been bad between us lately, but I want to meet up and talk. My mom was out of line with how she acted, and I'm done with her bullshit. I'm sorry for flipping out, but it was a lot. I want us to be the way we were before. Will you meet me to talk?’

Reading the message a few times, I sat there hesitant to believe what she was saying was honest. Tally was not the type of person to apologize, and even though she and I had once been close, we weren't anymore.

“What are you going to do?” Neal asked with a concerned look upon his face.

“Honestly, I have no idea. I'm curious, but I know she tends to be full of shit, as well,” I replied, setting my phone down.

How was I supposed to even consider meeting her with everything that had happened?

“You could always just go to see if she is being honest.... Either way, it can help you get closer. Of course, that is completely up to you.”

Neal had a point.

I was curious, and if I went, that meant I could gain closure on this issue between us. Even if I wasn't entirely in the wrong. “Maybe I should.”

Picking up my phone, I took a deep breath and typed.

‘I'm surprised to hear from you. How do I know this isn't a trap?’

It was the one thing I wasn't certain of, and to be honest, I wouldn't put it past her to do something like that. After a moment, the message turned from delivered to read.

‘Things changed, Becca, and I see now how f*cked up all this has been. My mom is crazy, and when she told me about threatening you, I was done with her. It's one thing to make comments, but to ruin someone's life over a man who doesn't want you... it's pathetic.’

“What’s she saying?” Neal said, causing me to look up at him with a smile.

“She’s trying to convince me that this isn’t a trap, and she thinks her mother’s messed up,” I replied, causing him to smirk.

“She isn’t wrong about that. That woman is nuts.”

‘Fine. Where am I meeting you? You’re home?’

I was out of my mind for agreeing to this, and deep down, my stomach turned with anticipation. It was going to end badly. I just had that gut feeling, but if I was going to accept everything that had happened here this summer, I had to do this.

I had to confront her and hash this out. At least then I wouldn’t have regrets.

‘No. I’m staying at the beach house. Dad and I needed time apart. Will you meet me here tomorrow? We can have drinks and talk about everything.’

Drinks. When was there a time when Tally didn’t drink?

Sighing, I replied. ‘See you then.’

“Well, that’s that. Guess I’m walking into hell tomorrow.”

I stood, and Neal joined me as we grabbed our things and made our way outside of the cafe. “You’re doing the right thing,” he said, nudging me with his shoulder.

“I’m glad you think so.” Before smiling, I chuckled, “I hope I don’t regret this.”

“At least this way you won’t regret not doing it,” he replied with a pointed look.

I loved the analogy he used to try and see the bright side of things. He may have had a point, but I was literally walking into what I said I wouldn’t.

“As much as I want to think positively about this, I can’t. I have known this girl since I was eleven, and she is anything but nice. Granted, we always had an understanding, but it still isn’t in her character to act like this.”

The last time I had seen her act like this was our freshman year of college, and that was when Melissa Ray had stolen Tally’s favorite dress and cut it up

at a sorority party. That same party, Tally screwed Melissa's long time boyfriend in the pool in front of everyone.

Just to make a point that she can take anything from anyone.

Tally didn't care what people thought about her, and she didn't have many true friends.

I was the only one.... The others just wanted her for her money and connections.

"Life has a way of making things happen for a reason. Have some faith," Neal said, glancing at me. "If things get rough, you can leave with me tomorrow night."

"Oh, how romantic?" I said, rolling my eyes, causing us both to laugh.

However, I may just take him up on that offer if shit hits the fan.

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Waking up early, I set out to take care of the only thing I had planned for the day. Tally said she wanted to talk, and I was determined to suck it up and go with the flow. Who knows, maybe it would be a positive thing?

"Alright guys, I'm heading out," I called out to Allegra and Neal who stood in the kitchen.

"Oh, are we going to war already?" Neal laughed, causing Allegra to smack his shoulder, shaking her head at him.

"Sometimes I wonder what he is on. Have fun, sweetie. If you need me, just call."

"Thanks." I smiled and waved to them.

It was funny how motherly she could be, and it did warm my heart to know that she cared the way she did. Even after everything we had been through.

Heading out onto the street, I looked down the way for a passing taxi and held up my hand to flag it. Its yellow color quickly pulled up in front of me, and without hesitation, I climbed in.

I told him, "Take me to 3204 Sunset Boulevard please."

The driver didn't bother to say anything as he stepped on the gas and headed down the street towards Tally's father's beach house. It was at least a good forty-five minutes away, and if I wanted to get this conversation done with, it was better to get there as soon as possible.

In the back of my mind, I kept thinking about James and what he had said. Perhaps the way I acted was completely out of line. James was in a bad position that night to really defend me without drawing negative attention to himself.

When Neal and Allegra explained the lifestyle they lived in full description, a lot of things made sense. When you have more money than most, there are always eyes on you. People waiting for you to slip up, and make a mistake so they can shame you to the rest of the world.

It honestly made sense now what he meant by 'don't act like that' and 'I didn't mean it like that.' He was trying to explain things to me in a way I would understand, and I didn't really give him the chance to do so.

As the driver came to a stop, I paid him and climbed from the car. The white and blue beach house stood out against the coast, and standing amongst the palm trees, I hesitated with what was to come.

This was a break it or make it moment. Could things really change between us?

Step by step, I made my way inside the house and glanced around for Tally. "Tally?" I called out as I tried to spot where she could be. "Where are you?"

Sounds from upstairs drew my attention, and furrowing my brow, I made my way up the stairs towards the bedrooms. "Tally?"

It wasn't until I got to the top of the stairs that I realized what I was hearing was moaning, and to my surprise, it was coming from the room Tally was in. Spinning around, I moved to wait downstairs until I heard something I wasn't expecting.

“Yes, Chad! Please harder—”

What the f*ck did she just say?

Turning back, I pushed open the bedroom door hard, not even flinching as it hit the wall and the two of them jumped up in surprise.

“Why am I not surprised?” I laughed.

“Becca! What the f*ck?!” she screamed at me. “What are you doing here?”

“Uh—you told me to come over, remember?” I snapped, crossing my arms over my chest.

“Yeah, I meant f*cking later,” she countered. “Well, at least you know now—”

“Know what? That you’re f*cking my ex?” I laughed. “You can have him. I do not care.”

“Of course you care. He was the love of your life, remember?”

I was suddenly able to make sense of what was going on. Tally thought sleeping with my ex was going to upset me, but unfortunately for her, it wasn’t going to work.

“I hate to break it to you, but I don’t care if you sleep with him.”

Chad quickly stood from the bed, completely naked with his cock hard, and stared at me. “You could always join us, Becca.”

“What? I’m not f*cking sharing you,” Tally yelled at him. “You’re mine now.”

“Of course, babe. I was only joking,” he replied as he walked towards the bathroom.

I wasn’t sure what soap opera I had walked into, but from the looks of it, that’s what she was hoping for. “So, how long has this been going on? I mean, I’m guessing that was why he came down here?”

Laughter escaped her as she shook her head. “Not exactly.”

“What do you mean, ‘Not exactly’?” I asked her in confusion.

The look on Tally's face spoke to the amount of evil that was actually within her. It took a moment for me to process everything, but then slowly I understood.

"I can see the wheels in your head turning, Becca," Tally taunted as Chad came out of the bathroom, walking towards her.

"You were cheating on me with her?" I asked him in disbelief. The girl who was supposed to be my best friend was the same girl my long-time boyfriend had been sleeping with that led to our breakup.

As much as I didn't want to believe she could do something like that, I wasn't honestly surprised. The initial shock of them sleeping together hadn't hurt me, but after finding this out, I could feel the knot in my stomach from her betrayal.

"Of course, I was," Chad laughed. "She was the only reason I started dating you, Becca. Did you seriously think someone like me was interested in you?"

Laughter escaped him, but as I looked at Tally, I was met with a sadistic and twisted amused expression that let me know she was waiting for me to break.

"So you dated me to get to her?" I scoffed. "This honestly makes so much sense."

"Yes, he did, and it should. I mean, how romantic is it to know that he would go to any length to be with me? And now, we are engaged!" Tally cooed as she turned her gaze to Chad.

"Romantic? Wait what? You're engaged?" I said, bursting into laughter.

Chad was anything but romantic. The only thing he was partially decent at was f*cking, and even then, it was hit or miss, considering a girl never knew how long he would last.

"What the f*ck is so funny?" Tally snapped at me. "Don't be jealous because we are going to be getting married."

"Oh, trust me, I'm not jealous. I just think it's funny that you think your dad is going to allow this to happen." I smirked. "He can't stand Chad."

"That's because you have brainwashed him by lying about Chad—"

“Yeah. Don’t act like I never did anything for you,” Chad snapped at me. “I tried to make you a part of something, and even introduced you to my friends, but you were nothing but a prude bitch.”

“Go f*ck yourself, Chad. You are not as great as you think you are,” I replied, rolling my eyes. “I’m actually glad to know that both of you are this low. It makes things so much better for me.”

“What the f*ck are you talking about?” Tally asked as she stood and took a couple of steps toward me, a sheet wrapped around her.

“I mean, at least now, I don’t feel bad about f*cking your dad, Tally. You were betraying me long before I climbed into bed with him, and he is much better in bed than Chad ever was,” I said with a smirk.

There was shock in her eyes at my words, and as I stared at her, I ignored the ramble coming from Chad. They were both dead to me now, and I was glad that I came.

“You f*cking bitch!” Tally screamed as she came running at me.

Never had I expected Tally to lash out at me, but she raised her hand to slap me. Before she could, I did the one thing I never expected to do.

Pulling back my fist, I punched her straight in her face and watched as she stumbled back, holding her nose before falling to the ground. Chad yelled, coming at me, and before he could get hold of me, I turned and ran down the stairs.

He was relentless, though, as he pursued me, and as his fingers grabbed the back of my hair, I realized he didn’t learn the first time.

Reaching into my purse, I grabbed my tazer as he pulled me back and gripped my throat. Without hesitation, I jabbed him with it and watched as he cried out in pain, letting me go.

Falling down the last few steps of the stairs seemed to happen in slow motion, and when I hit the floor, I felt the air escape my lungs before pushing myself to get up and get out of the house.

There was no telling what Chad would do to me, and with Tally being as twisted as she was, I was a fool for coming.

Stepping out into the warm Florida air, I gasped in relief, taking the steps two at a time before I heard the door open behind me with Tally screaming my name.

“That’s right, you better f*cking run, you stupid bitch!”

Turning I looked at her laughing, shouted, “Have fun with that abusive, cheating, asshole, Tally.”

“Yeah, well, he is going to be my husband and the father to my unborn child!”

Tally’s words made me freeze in my spot.

She was pregnant by Chad, and now so many things made sense. I had no doubt in my mind that it was something they had been planning. They were both trust fund babies, and neither of them had worked for anything in their lives.

As she disappeared behind closed doors, I pulled my phone out of my pocket and scrolled to James’ name. He’d said that he wanted to meet me, and I wish it had been on better terms, but I had to tell him.

If Tally was pregnant by Chad, he needed to know sooner rather than later, and I wouldn’t have him upset at me for not telling him when I found out.

‘I need to see you. It’s important.’

Waiting for him to reply, I ordered myself an Uber and waited. I wasn’t sure where I was going, but within a matter of moments, he replied to me.

‘I have a meeting, but I’ll be free at the house in forty minutes.’

That was perfect considering it would take me that long to get to him. Messaging him back, I pushed my phone into my pocket and took a deep breath.

It was so hard to breathe with everything that had been going on, and as the realization of Tally and Chad’s betrayal hit me, I felt the tears welling within my eyes.

The tears weren’t there because I was sad they had hurt me. I was actually more relieved than anything. However, they were there because I finally no longer felt the guilt for having the feelings for James that I had.

I was in love with him, no matter how much he pissed me off, and now that I knew I wasn't in the wrong for being with James, I didn't care about holding back those feelings anymore. I was going to tell him everything.

Perhaps he and I could start over.

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James.

The moment I received the text from Becca, my chest squeezed with the idea that something was wrong. We hadn't spoken in a few days, but that didn't change the fact that I cared for her. I had been doing exactly what she asked me to do.

I was sorting out the issues with Allison.

Becca had been right when she told me I needed to sort my ex out. Allison had been nothing but a complication for Becca and I. I couldn't believe it took me being on the verge of losing Becca for good to realize I didn't want to.

I couldn't lose her. The thought of it was too much to bear.

Pulling up to the house, I made my way inside and to my office. I had a virtual meeting I was to attend, and only a few minutes to prepare for it.

That was, until I got the text from Evette that the client was going to have to cancel.

"Shit. Of course, they are."

The client was more than annoying, and if I couldn't get them to agree to the deal I had provided, it was going to complicate things further for me. This was the only way I could get out from having to do business with the Russian.

"Mr. Valentino..." my housekeeper said from my open office doorway.

Looking up at her, I thought she seemed very uncomfortable and fidgeted as if she had done something wrong. "What's the matter, Maria?"

“Sir, your ex-wife is at the front door,” she replied, biting her bottom lip, completely unsure of what she was supposed to do.

I wasn't sure why Allison was at my home, but the last thing I wanted to do was to entertain her. I had thought I made it clear the other day when we met I wanted her to disappear and sort her shit out.

Yet, she was here for some ungodly reason.

Nodding my head, I stood and made my way down the hall towards the front door. As soon as I opened it, I took in the state of her and furrowed my brow.

“Allison. What are you doing here?”

Her hair was unkempt, and her mascara was running. There was a distinct smell of alcohol coming off her breath, and I was waiting for her to completely lose her mind.

“Tally hates me, and I think I finally have hit bottom. Can we talk?” she said with tears in her eyes.

Letting out a heavy sigh, I looked at my watch and noted the time. Becca would be here in thirty minutes, and I didn't want her to see Allison. “You have fifteen minutes.”

Stepping through the threshold, she made her way towards the kitchen as I followed behind her. “The house looks so different since we were married.”

“Yes, I had it changed after you left. Now, what do you want to talk about because I doubt the decor options I chose are the reason you're here?”

Her eyes fell on me for a moment before she sighed and nodded her head.

“I know that I have been horrible for a long time, and over the last few weeks, I caused a lot of issues for you, James. I'm sorry for all of it,” she whispered.

Allison wasn't the kind of person to apologize for anything, so since she was, this had my mind completely blown. Yet, I was also wary because this was far from normal.

“I appreciate you apologizing, but I still don't understand why you're here,” I repeated, trying to make it clear apologizing wasn't a good enough reason for

her to be here. There must have been something else she was up to, and I wasn't sure what it was.

She never did anything without a specific reason.

"I need help, James. I want to go back to rehab and try to get on the path I should have been on for the past few years. Tally won't even talk to me right now, let alone look at me. She has been staying at the beach house and blames me for messing her life up."

Hearing Tally was at the beach house made no sense to me. Usually, she told me when she was going there, but considering how things had been lately, I could see why she hadn't.

"I think that you going to get help would be good for you. You're not the same woman I used to know, and perhaps Tally being angry at you is a good thing. Getting help will make your relationship with our daughter stronger," I explained to her as I grabbed her a bottle of water from the fridge.

"I know, but will it be enough to fix things with us?" she asked, looking at me with hopeful eyes.

I knew she was up to something, and that question was the anchor for a lot of shit to unleash. Things that I wasn't prepared to discuss.

"No, Allison. There is no fixing us. I told you that when we got divorced."

"James, please," she begged. "Please, just let me get help, and we can fix things."

I wasn't sure what she didn't understand about me telling her no, but I was certain it had something to do with the fact that, before, she wasn't broke, but now, her money was almost gone.

There was nothing this woman could say to change my mind, and now was the time to make her go. Becca was going to be here any moment, and I didn't want Allison here when she got here.

"No, Allison. I'm sorry, but there is no way that I would give us a chance again. You didn't just cheat on me, Allison. Your betrayal broke me because you, at one point, were the only woman I ever could imagine loving."

She was silent for a moment as she took in what I was telling her, but just as the waterworks had been there, I saw the small spark of anger deep in her eyes.

“You don’t think that anymore, do you?” she said in a more hostile tone than she had spoken moments ago.

“No, I don’t.” I shook my head. “Now, please, I need you to leave. I have another meeting starting soon. I can’t be late for it.”

“Are you really going to throw everything away for her?”

I wasn’t sure how to respond to what she said, but it wasn’t any of her concern what I was about to do with my own time and freedom. If I didn’t end up with Becca, then that would be the choice Becca and I made.

It would have nothing to do with Allison.

As much as I had once loved this woman, I couldn’t allow her to be the one who dictated the outcome of my future.

“I’m not throwing anything away for anyone, Allison. I plan to create a fresh path and future with her, though. No matter who tries to stop it. It will happen.”

Disbelief and hatred filled her as she looked at me. “You can’t.... James, please, I love you.”

Her twisted words of love and desire meant nothing to me now. Perhaps once upon a time I would have cared, but now there was no way I could.

The only woman who made my heart beat with a notion of love was Rebecca, and if I had to spend a lifetime making it up to her after everything she had been put through, then so be it. I would spend a lifetime chasing after her if that was what she expected of me.

“Allison, enough. I need you to leave.”

Her eyes drifted from me to the door as soft, gentle knocking echoed down the hallway. “Is that her? She’s your meeting?”

Clearing my throat, I narrowed my eyes at her, “Don’t you dare.”

“Why can’t you see I’m trying to change, James?”

“Because, Allison, you have said you were changing many times, and after a while, one stops believing that shit could end up being true. I hope you do change and one day realize how much you have destroyed acting the way you do.”

My eyes cast down the hallway as I watched Maria walk towards the door. The only woman I wanted to love was just beyond the door, and I couldn't wait to see her.

“I'm sorry, James.” Allison said, catching my attention. Turning towards her, I was caught off guard by her actions, and before I could realize what was going on, her lips were on mine and a small gasp escaped the entryway to the kitchen.

Becca.

When I pulled up to James' house, I wasn't sure what I was expecting, but it definitely wasn't Allison's car parked in the driveway. Was this the meeting that he said he had?

As I knocked on the door, I hesitated, unsure of what to do. Should I leave and come back later, or maybe I should text him?

When the door opened, I had hoped to see him, but Maria, his housekeeper, greeted me. She smiled at me, but then it quickly fell as she looked over her shoulder with hesitation.

“What's wrong?” I whispered, stepping through the doorway.

“He's in the kitchen, miss,” she said before quickly disappearing.

Walking down the hall, I entered the kitchen, and the sight in front of me was one that I wasn't prepared to see. James and Allison stood in the kitchen kissing, and a gasp of shock escaped me as I stood frozen.

James quickly pushed her away, wiping his lips. “What the f*ck did you do that for?”

Her eyes met mine and filled with tears and hatred. “This is your fault. Why can’t you just leave us alone? We were fine before you got here and ruined everything!”

Looking between the two of them, I wasn’t sure what to say, but when his eyes fell on me I saw the remorse. “Becca, it wasn’t what it looked like. She planned this—”

“Stop,” I blurted. “Was this the meeting you had?”

“Meeting?!” she shrieked before laughing. “We may not be married anymore, but I will always be his wife, you little homewrecker.”

“Go f*ck yourself, Allison. You’re a delusional snide bitch, and you and your daughter deserve each other.”

“Wait—what?” James said, looking at me. “What happened?”

I was in disbelief at his question. Did he really not know, considering he was kissing her?

“Don’t act like this with me... I can’t do this shit. If you want Allison, then you can have her,” I scoffed.

“I don’t want her,” he said quickly before grabbing my arm. “I want you.”

Pulling my arm from his grasp, I looked at Allison again. “Then why is she here?”

“She came over unannounced—”

“Don’t f*cking lie to her, James. You asked me to come over so we could talk about Tally.” Allison mocked as she crossed her arms over her chest.

“No, the f*ck I didn’t,” he snapped at her. “Get out of my house, Allison.”

“No!” she screamed. “This bitch will never be able to replace me!”

For the second time in the day, I watched one of the Valentino women charge at me. Only this time, I was prepared for what was to come. Before she could do anything, I swung at her and knocked her to the ground.

There was no stopping because Allison had pissed me off enough.

Punch after punch, I hit her in her face as she clawed at me, screaming at me every name under the sun. James, though, had other plans and quickly wrapped his arms around my waist, pulling me off her.

Before she could stand, though, I kicked out and hit her chest with my foot, causing her to stumble back into the table. “You’re a spiteful bitch, Allison! I’m f*cking done with it all!”

The moment was quickly over. Allison tried to straighten herself as she wiped the blood from her nose and mouth. I never in my life had openly attacked someone before, but then again, I had never had someone push me the way she did.

“Becca, what the hell has gotten into you?!” James yelled as he pulled me aside. “Why would you do that?”

“Are you f*cking serious right now?!” I screamed at him. “You know what? I’m f*cking done with all of this. To think I came here tonight to tell you I loved you... what kind of fool was I?”

Turning on my feet, I made my way towards the front door. I was done with the bullshit, but James wasn’t ready to see that happen because I was quickly pulled back and held close to him. “Don’t walk away from me,” he said sternly.

Jerking myself from his grasp, I shook my head. “No... don’t do that. You have no right to tell me not to walk away when you won’t even fight to stay with me. When you won’t even—”

“Won’t what, Becca?” he yelled again, causing tears to flow down my cheeks.

“Goodbye, James.” I said without hesitation. “Oh, and by the way, your daughter is engaged to Chad... she was the girl he was cheating on me with, and she’s pregnant.”

Chapter 55 - Submitting to My Best Friend's Dad by Scarlett Rossi

Becca.

Leaving James’ house the way I did was harder than I had expected it to be. There was a point in my life when I would have done anything to keep the person I loved, and I realized with Chad it wasn’t a healthy place to be.

With all the twisted games these people had me playing, I had finally reached a breaking point, and no matter what shit they tried to tell me, I would not do it anymore.

Did I love him? I think I did, but is love a good enough reason to mentally exhaust myself to the point of seeking some falsified sense of security?

To me it wasn't, and as I found my way back to Allegra's, I knew what I had to do.

I had to get out of Miami and its toxic environment.

Nothing about this place screamed happy memories. Instead, it was nothing but utter chaos and great sex. Something I'm sure I could find anywhere else.

Opening Allegra's door, I walked in to find Neal standing in the entryway staring at me with wide eyes. I had forgotten he was leaving tonight, and honestly, it was kind of perfect.

"Holy shit, Becca!" Neal dropped his bag and cleared the space between us. He lifted my chin to get a better look at me. I winced when he ran his thumb gently across my cheek. "What the f*ck happened to you?"

"What's the commotion?" Allegra stopped in her tracks, mouth wide, as she stared at me.

"I'm fine," I sighed, looking at them both as I moved past Neal with a smile and headed towards the kitchen in search of something cold to put on my face.

"You're not fine," she replied, placing her hands on her hips. "What happened?"

Taking a moment, I contemplated how to explain it all. "Well, do you want the long drawn out version, or do you want the short version with CliffsNotes?"

She narrowed her eyes at me, raising a brow with an irritated look.

"CliffsNotes it is.... Let's see... Tally is f*cking Chad for starters, which, honestly, I had always wondered if that was the case. Um—oh, she's getting married to him, and she's pregnant," I said, watching as Neal's and Allegra's faces went from anger to shock.

"Holy shit. Are you serious?" Allegra asked.

“Yep, but I found that out after I punched her in the face, and Chad attacked me, so I had to taze him—again.” I went for nonchalant as I pulled the ice pack back and gently touched my face. I’m not sure the line delivered the way I expected.

“Wait, was he the one who did this to you?!” Neal all but roared in anger. “I’ll f*cking kill him.”

“Whoa, whoa. Calm down, killer. This isn’t from him,” I smirked. “I love the enthusiasm, though.”

“Well then, who the f*ck did that to you?” Allegra asked with sincere eyes.

“Allison did... but only because she was trying to defend herself since I was beating her ass.” I wore a victorious smile before the tears flowed down my face.

With the reactions from Allegra and Neal, I couldn’t help but laugh. They both stood speechless in front of me, as if trying to process it all. However, then Neal did the one thing I wasn’t expecting.

He walked over to me and wrapped his arms around, me pulling me into a hug. The comfort he was providing me was unexpected, but it felt right.

“Where was this at?” Neal asked in confusion. “I mean, was she where you went to meet Tally?”

“No,” I replied, shaking my head, thinking of James. “She was at James’ house.”

“Excuse me? Why was she at his house?” Allegra asked in confusion.

Remembering the kiss brought tears to my eyes. “It doesn’t matter. What’s done is done. Neal, are you still leaving tonight?”

“Yeah, why have you changed your mind?” he asked with a concerned glance as Allegra looked between the two of us.

“Changed your mind about what?”

“I’m leaving with Neal tonight for New York. I can’t stay here anymore, Allegra and I’m ready to get out of here.” Trying to make myself laugh, I pushed through my words.

“Oh, sweetie...” she replied before wrapping her arms around me. “You do what you think is best. I will support you no matter what. Can I please ask what happened with James, though, to make you want to leave?”

Nodding my head, I took a deep breath as she pulled back, staring at me.

“I walked in on him and Allison kissing. Then all hell broke loose.”

I didn’t have to explain further for her to know what I meant by that. She could see the state of me, and it was obvious after everything I had been through I was done with it all.

It was time for a change of scenery. The Valentinos could have their drama.

I just wouldn’t allow myself to be part of it.

James.

The moment Becca left, I was filled with rage. I stormed back into the house seeking blood, and when I found Allison, I lost it.

“Get the f*ck out of my house!” I screamed at her.

Never once had she seen this side of me, and when she didn’t move, I picked up the vase on the accent table and tossed it at the wall above her head. “I said get the f*ck out!”

She didn’t wait for me to tell her again as she bolted towards the door and disappeared from my sight. Becca had been trying to tell me the entire time what Allison was doing, but like an idiot, I didn’t listen to her at all.

Instead, I allowed Allison to hurt her again, and then asked her what was wrong. How could I be such a fool?

Grabbing my car keys, I ran out the front door and jumped into my car. I had not gone after her once, and there was no way I was going to make the same mistake twice.

Everything had fallen apart once more, and no way she was going to stay in Miami after this.

As I drove towards the apartment building I tried to think of what I could say or do to convince her to stay, but my mind was empty of thoughts, so I pulled into the parking lot completely unsure of what to do.

Moments passed, and eventually, I beat on Allegra's door.

"Becca!" I yelled loudly until the door opened, and Allegra stood there with narrowed eyes glaring at me.

"What are you doing here?" she asked as I pushed past her and made my way into the living room, looking around for Becca.

"Where is she?" I asked, as I turned to face her. "Where's Becca? I have to find her."

"Why... so you can break her heart some more?" she snapped, slamming the front door behind her.

"You have no idea what you're talking about, Allegra. It isn't like that."

Laughter escaped her as she shook her head looking at me. "Like what, James?"

"I didn't break her heart!" I yelled in frustration.

Before I knew what was happening, Allegra slapped me, and I stood wide-eyed at what had just happened. "Don't you dare take that tone with me, James Valentino! Do you hear me?"

Nodding my head slowly, I rubbed my face and sighed. "I can't lose her."

"Why was Allison at your house, James?"

"She showed up there. I didn't ask her to come over, and then she was talking about how she was going to go back to rehab and what not. Shit, Allegra, she f*cking apologized to me. Never in my life did I think I'd hear some shit like that."

She laughed at my comment and picked up her phone off the counter.

"You're an idiot, James. I bet you Allison and Tally set it all up."

“Tally? Why would you think that?” I asked, trying to understand why she would think Tally had something to do with it.

“Yesterday, Tally sent a text to Becca, asking her to talk. Said she wanted nothing to do with her mom and she wanted to fix things with them. Becca was hesitant, but in the end, she went to hear what Tally had to say. Tally lured her there so Becca would see her f*cking Chad.”

Everything slowly made sense, and I was at a loss for words over it.

My daughter and my ex-wife did the only thing they could to force Becca to leave. Their selfish desires made her jump ship and run away from me.

“That’s what she meant—” I said in realization.

Allegra sighed at my realization with a frown on her face. “Yeah, and supposedly you’re going to be a grandpa. Congratulations. Not sure how Tally is going to mature enough to take care of a baby.”

“Enough, Allegra. I will sort that out when the time comes.”

“I hope so, because Becca was pretty upset about everything. You need to fix things soon if there is even a chance to fix things,” Allegra replied, leaning against the wall. “She loves you, James.”

“I know... please tell me you know where she is...” I said, hoping Allegra would break.

There was an uneasiness in her before she shook her head and sighed, “It’s too late.”

“Nothing is ever too late. Please, I have to find her.”

“No, that’s not what I meant. I mean, it’s too late because she is on her way to catch a flight right now headed to New York. There is no way you will get there in time.”

“With who?” I asked, already knowing the answer to that question.

“Neal—”

Before she could continue her sentence, I was out the door and running for my car. I couldn’t let her leave like this, and not with him. It was nothing

against him, but I didn't want another man comforting the woman I cared about.

Thirty minutes later, I pulled up to the private airfield where his plane sat on the tarmac. The lights were flashing, and it was preparing for takeoff as I took off running towards it. "Wait! Stop the plane!" I yelled as it moved forward slowly, gaining speed.

There was nothing I could do to stop the plane now, and as I stood on the tarmac, I watched the plane lift off the ground and slowly gain altitude.

I was too late, and Becca was gone.... Sweet Rebecca headed to New York, and where she would go from there, I didn't know.

The pain that filled my chest in that moment was more than I wanted to bear, and as I ran my hand through my hair, I tried to understand where I had gone wrong.

On more than one occasion, I had failed to treat her right, and protect her.

I allowed all of this to happen, and I wasn't sure if there would ever be a way for her to forgive me.