

Chapter 58 – Submitting to My Best Friend's Dad by Scarlett Rossi

As night settled in the city, Neal and I found ourselves curled up on his sofa laughing at a sitcom he found on one of the movie platforms, a box of pizza in front of us. We enjoyed each other's company, and even FaceTime'd Allegra to check in with her.

Spending time like this was amazing, and I was pleased with how quickly things changed by simply removing myself from a complicated and nerve-wracking situation.

"I can't believe you have me watching this!" I laughed as I glanced over at Neal.

He sat on the other side of the sofa with a slice of pizza in his hand, shrugging his shoulders. "This is a classic. I don't see what your problem is."

Rolling my eyes, I stood from the sofa and made my way towards the kitchen to make myself another drink. "Do you want another whiskey?"

Neal looked over his shoulder at me and nodded. "Yeah, just bring the bottle with you."

"The bottle?" I replied, raising my brow. "What are we getting drunk?"

"Maybe," he shrugged as he continued to eat.

It was different seeing him like this. Before, he had been so serious, back when I'd first met him, but with a laid back personality. Then I saw him carefree and fun loving when we went to Club Velvet. Then more serious when I was hurt.

In the end, though, he was always worrying about me being okay.

Walking back towards the sofa, I sat down next to him, and put the bottle of whiskey on the table with his glass, then brought my wineglass to my lips.

I wasn't much of a drinker, but Neal had gotten me hooked on a brand of Zin I couldn't get enough of. It wasn't too sweet, but it was just strong enough to take the edge off.

"Thanks," he said as he sipped on his fourth glass.

The blackened sky outside made for a scenic background outside the large floor to ceiling windows. One movie after another, we laughed amongst each other as we talked about how poor Neal's movie choices were and also what I was going to do for accommodations.

"You can't live in that neighborhood, Becca. It's horrible."

Rolling my eyes for the hundredth time, I sighed. "I don't have much of a choice. That's what I can afford."

"Don't be ridiculous. I will find you something."

Neal's comment was very nonchalant, and even though I appreciated him wanting to help, there was no way I could allow him to do something like that.

"Absolutely not," I said, giving him a pointed look. "I'm not letting you help."

"You don't have a choice," he replied, giving me a stern glare as he grabbed his phone off the coffee table. "Let me make a call."

Before he pushed any buttons and called anyone, I snatched his phone and jumped up from the sofa. "No way!"

"Damit, Becca!" he yelled, laughing. "Give me back my phone."

Turning, I stood on the other side of the sofa, staring at him. "No way. I'm not letting you get me a place. I will figure it out."

"It's just money. I need more investment properties, anyway. Now give me your phone."

I stood wide eyed, looking at him in shock. He wasn't talking about helping me find one. He was going to buy me a property to use because he wanted a future investment.

"I'm definitely not giving you your phone back now. There is no way I'm letting you buy a property just for me."

"It's not just for you," he said, as he took another bite of his food. "It's also an investment."

"Still not giving it back," I replied, stuffing it in my back pocket.

"You know I can take it away from you if I want to."

I knew he could, but I wouldn't let him. There would be no way I could pay him back for taking care of me in that way. Not to mention it just seemed so much more personal between us.

Placing down his plate, he chased his food with the rest of his drink and slowly stood to his feet as he wiped off his mouth. "You have two seconds to hand over my phone, or I will take it from you, Becca."

The stern warning was meant to be serious, but he couldn't keep a straight face with how much he had been drinking. Taking a step back, I smiled at him.

"Careful, Neal. With the amount you have drank, I would hate for you to hurt yourself."

As soon as the last word left my lips, he bolted towards me, causing me to squeal as I took off running. Round and round the kitchen island, he chased me. "Give it back!"

"Never!" I replied with laughter as I bolted for the nearest bedroom door. The only problem was that with the lights mainly on in the living room, the rest of the house was dark, and I quickly stumbled over things. "Ow, shit."

"What are you doing?" Neal laughed as he came charging right behind me.

Quickly, I tried to close the bedroom door, but he was right there pushing it open, causing me to stumble backwards as he wrapped his arm around my waist. My hands instantly went to his phone as he tried to grab it from me.

"Let me go. You're not getting it back," I laughed as I tried to turn around, wriggling out of his arms. My back pressed to his chest, he held me tight against him as I kept a firm grip on his phone.

It took me a moment to realize the position we were in, and when I felt his lips against my neck, I froze. Gently, he kissed me, and as he did, the sensation sent pleasure straight to my core.

"Neal—" I whispered breathlessly as I turned to look at him, only to have his lips crash upon mine as my heart beat as if it was going to burst out of my chest.

The wine induced fog crossing my mind had my body betraying me. I wanted this, but I didn't. My heart, still broken by James, left my mind conflicted.

As his hands slowly trailed down between my thighs, I moaned into him, only to have him spin me around to face him again, and have his lips once more upon mine.

The heated frenzy between us had me begging for more.

Grasping the backs of my thighs, he lifted me up and carried me towards his bed, laying me down. "Neal, we shouldn't," I gasped as my eyes rolled back, loving the feeling of his mouth trailing from my lips down to my neck.

"You have no idea how much I want you, Becca."

His admission took me by surprise as I hadn't expected it, and when his fingers slid beneath my cotton shorts, slipping between my folds, I cried out in pleasure as he stimulated me.

"We shouldn't though—" The reasoning I was trying to find was helpless, and the more he teased my body, the more I craved him. "Neal."

Stopping his movements, he looked up at me with hesitation in his eyes. "If you want me to stop, I will. I would never force you to do something you don't want to, Becca."

Guilt filled me at making him stop, but it filled me more when I thought of James.

"I don't know what I want. Even with everything bad that happened to me, I'm still in love with James. I can't just let that go, and it wouldn't be fair to you to think that I could."

It was the truth. I really liked Neal a lot, but I loved James, and even though James hurt me the way he did, I didn't want to betray what I had with him.

Not yet, at least. It was too soon for me to move on.

Slipping his hands from me, he rolled onto his side and reached up, brushing a strand of my hair from my face with a smile. "It's okay. I understand."

"Don't think that I don't want you, because trust me, I do. I just can't help what my heart wants, and maybe with time as I get over losing him, things will get less complicated with me. If you still want me then—"

"Becca, you don't have to explain yourself," he smiled softly. "You're an amazing woman, and I would love nothing more than to be your man. However, I also respect you, and I won't ever do anything to make you uncomfortable. I'm sorry I did this." I watched as his smile disappeared.

"You did nothing wrong. Trust me, I want it, but I'm not thinking straight right now."

Leaning forward, I pressed my lips against his in a soft and sensual kiss. Our lips caressed each other in a slow dance of passion.

As I pulled my lips away, he pulled me close, allowing me to lay my head on his chest. His eyes staring up at the ceiling as he held me.

"I am a complicated man as well, Becca. So I know how things can be for James. If you love him, then you should follow your heart. However, if you decide you don't want him, then I am here for you."

His words brought tears to my eyes, and I wasn't sure why, considering everything. Laying with him I felt safe, and protected, but it didn't feel like it did when I was with James.

I wasn't sure what I was going to do with myself, and as I slipped from his embrace, I sat up straightening myself trying to understand what I was doing. I was blowing off the chance to be with a man like Neal because I was so wrapped up with James.

I must have been the stupidest woman in New York City right now, passing up a man like Neal. He was one of New York's most eligible bachelors, and I was nothing but an ignorant woman still too wrapped up in her ex to see something good when it's in front of her.

Without saying a word, I moved from his room and made my way to my own.

How would I face what happened tonight in the morning when I refused to accept the one thing I wanted is to be out of reach?