

Chapter 63 - Submitting to My Best Friend's Dad by Scarlett Rossi

"Give me a moment, and I'll grab my things," I called out to James as I made my way through the living room toward my bedroom. Neal wasn't home right now, but that was fine. He texted me to let me know he was heading up towards the university to sign off on the properties he purchased.

I wasn't sure how he could make things happen so quickly, but I knew, in the society of the rich, there were no timelines to getting what you wanted.

Packing my clothes into my suitcase, I moved around the room and stopped when I felt someone behind me. Turning, I spotted James leaning against the door frame with his arms crossed over his chest and an unsettling look on his face.

"What's wrong?"

Taking a moment, he shook his head and pushed a smile onto his face.

"Nothing. Almost done?"

I knew there was more to what he wasn't saying, but I chose not to press him for the information. If he really wanted me to know, he would tell me, and right now wasn't the place for it.

Zippering up the last of my bags, James took the large one, and I moved with the other, heading through the living room towards the front door. "Are you going to miss it?"

His question caught me off guard, but as he looked at me, I tried to understand what he meant. "Miss what?"

"Neal's place... It's nice here."

My eyes widened in realization. He was jealous, and now it was more than obvious.

That car ride to Yale was more uncomfortable than I thought it was going to be. James was quiet, and even though we had a small, casual conversation, I wasn't sure what had changed his mood from how he was that morning.

Ever since we went to Neal's, he had been acting incredibly weird. "Looks like it's that building right there." I said, pointing towards a large brick building with red and white finishes.

He pulled the sleek, black sedan into a parking spot, and we slowly piled out of the car. To my surprise, Neal came walking down the steps with a smile on his face. "You guys made it!"

"Neal!" I replied with a smile as I hugged him. "Did everything go okay with the signing?"

"Of course, it did," he replied smugly. "Come on now, it's me you're talking to."

"Very true—"

"What's going on?" James said, interrupting me. Turning to look at him, I hesitated in my words because the dark stormy look in his eyes was not one of happiness.

"I am giving Becca the keys to her apartment," Neal replied with a raised brow as he held up a pair of keys and held them out to me.

Gently taking them, I gave him a smile and mouthed the words thank you. I didn't understand what James' problem was. If he had been a woman, I would have asked if it was that time of the month for him, considering how he was acting.

"Why would you be giving her keys? Is the apartment yours?"

Tilting my head to the side, I glared at James while furrowing my brows. "Yes, it is. I am going to manage a few properties he just bought in this building for him, and in return, I get to stay in this apartment for free for my last year."

James' gaze slid from Neal to me, and for a moment, I thought he was going to burst with anger over the situation. Yet, instead, he managed to contain his emotions.

He unclenched his fist and forced a smile to his face. "That was kind of you."

James.

That f*cking prick. Neal really thought he was smooth by doing something like that for Becca. First, he called me and told me he loved her and he wanted her, and now this. It was crossing the line, but from the looks of it, Becca saw nothing wrong with it.

"Shall we go inside?" I gritted out, watching Becca's shoulders sag as she shook her head with a heavy breath and turned towards the door.

"Is there a problem?" Neal said softly so she couldn't hear as I passed him.

I didn't bother to acknowledge him, though. If I did, there was no telling what I would end up saying, and the last thing I wanted to do was to upset Becca over something like this.

I was working towards building trust with her, and that was what I needed to do. The last thing I needed to do was start a 'I'm better than you' match with Neal, just to put him in his place. At the end of the day, she was with me.

Walking through the lobby of the building, she headed towards the elevator and waited for Neal and I to catch up with her.

"All the way up," Neal said, pushing the buttons on the elevator as the doors closed.

"All the way up? But that's where—"

"The penthouses are... I know. Exciting isn't it?" Neal replied, finishing her sentence with a grin. "I wanted one that was really nice, and I figured you would rather stay in this one as opposed to one of the others."

"Neal, you didn't have to. I would have been fine with any of them," she stammered as the elevator doors opened, and we stepped out onto the wood flooring of the hallway.

"Don't be silly. Now, you're going to be number 107, and that is the one right here down at the end of the hall," Neal carried on from in front of us.

The man walked with a purpose, and being the remarkable salesman he was, he had swagger and meaning in every step he took. As if the apartment was a glorious showroom with million dollar cars.

It didn't matter. That was the demeanor and charm that flowed off him.

Becca walked by my side, speechless, as we approached the door, and I had a feeling that whatever Neal had picked for her was going to completely blow her mind away.

"Neal, what am I going to do with you?" Becca laughed softly as he turned the key within the doorknob and gently swung the door open.

"Well, it depends. I got you beautiful hardwood flooring with acoustics to die for. So what do I get in return?"

It was all playful banter, but none of it did I appreciate. The only thing that kept me from losing my mind was knowing Becca was mine, and her situation with Neal was nonexistent.

If his idea was to piss me off, he was doing a good job of it. Problem was, I could play the game better, and I wouldn't mind putting him in his place.

"Oh, my God!" Becca exclaimed as her eyes took in the sight before her. Long hardwood floors going down the hallway to a beautiful kitchen with granite countertops. The kitchen opened up into a spacious living room with tall floor-to-ceiling windows and a beautiful balcony overlooking the campus.

"Do you like it?" Neal asked with a sly grin as he moved forward and gestured to every little, small detail that the room had to provide.

"Like it? Neal, I absolutely love it. How in the world did this gem of a place happen to be up here in this building?"

The astonishment that I saw in her was something I hadn't ever witnessed before. She kept talking with Neal about the different things that she could do to this space, and later on, how he could even market it to others.

She may have been going to school for statistics and data analysis, but there were other secret talents and passions she held close as well. That was something I would speak to her about later, because if she was going to be with me, I wanted her to follow her heart.

Not worry about making a lot of money to take care of her father.

I would take care of him for her... even if she refused to let me.

"This is going to suit you very well, Becca," I finally said, speaking up, watching as both of them turned to face me. Becca blushed lightly as she made her way over and grabbed my hand. "Perhaps we need to find where the bedroom is."

I knew it was nothing but banter, but Neal seemed very tightlipped over the comment, and stepped forward with a smile. "Don't worry, Becca. I can show you where your bedroom is."

I didn't miss the emphasis on the word 'your' from Neal. He pivoted and headed towards the stairs, gesturing for Becca to follow him.

It was all very organized by him. He had planned all of this, including showing her off in front of me, as if I would be jealous. Well, okay, maybe I'm slightly jealous. Not that I would ever tell Becca.

Even so, this entire event was more than annoying.

As I walked up the stairs behind the two of them, their conversation continued, and I suddenly felt like the third wheel in the room. But once we reached the top floor, it was easy to see why he picked this space.

There was a massive space that opened up as if it was a second living room, and on the far back wall was nothing but windows that also overlooked the campus. When one looked in the opposite direction, though, two doors were visible.

One led to a fairly decent sized spare bedroom, and the other led to a massive master bedroom that held the biggest bathroom Becca had ever seen, according to her, of course. The bathroom had been recently renovated and was absolutely delightful.

"This bedroom is enormous. I don't even think I have furniture to fit into this."

"Don't worry about that, Becca. I'll take you shopping and help you pick out some nice things." Her eyes met mine, and a smile spread across her face.

"As amazing as that would sound, you have to get back in a couple of days, and I still have to go pack up my stuff from Tally's apartment. So for now, those belongings will be perfectly fine here. But if you're able to come back up in a couple of weeks, we'll have enough time for me to save up some money, and we can go then."

There was a twinkle of mischief within Neal's eyes at the words Becca had said, and it was enough to trigger me. My rigid stance and glare caught his attention as he tried to focus his gaze elsewhere.

If I had to leave a couple days later than planned, then so be it. There was no way in hell I was going to allow Neal to be the one that helped her decorate her apartment.

Friend, be damn.

She was my girl, and I was there to smooth things over with her. Why else would Neal suggest for me to come here and win her over?

"Very well. We can discuss that later."

"Thank you," Becca said, stepping forward wrapping her arm through mine. "The only other thing I have to say is, Neal... absolute perfection. Thank you so much for helping me out. I really appreciate it."

"Oh, please... you don't have to thank me. You're doing me a HUGE favor by helping me manage these other apartments in this building. We can go over those later, though, once I get them sorted," Neal replied. "I do have to get going, though. So I will catch up with you later?"

Nodding her head, Becca grinned, stepping from me as she wrapped her arms around Neal. "Yes, we can get coffee later this week if you're up here."

Coffee... there was no way.