

## Chapter 70 - Submitting to My Best Friend's Dad by Scarlett Rossi

Becca

A few days had passed, and the conversation between James and I hadn't been as much as I would have liked. In fact, he had been more busy than usual, and I didn't know what to do with myself.

Every day was just like the last. I got up. I did my morning workout. I walked down to the cafe and got breakfast and coffee and then went to class.

I would go through the day as if nothing in the world was wrong with me, and by the time I got done with classes, I would head back to my apartment to eat dinner and do homework.

Whoever said that life as a student in college was exciting was sadly mistaken. My life was full of nothing but getting my work done, passing my classes, and surviving to the weekend.

Then, usually on the weekends, I was way too exhausted and tired to even want to do anything. Not to mention I was not the kind of girl that enjoyed going out partying. I was the kind of girl who would rather stay home with a good book, a movie and a friend, and some pizza.

Perhaps that was a preference not many people my age enjoyed, but it was a preference I enjoyed.

Walking into my apartment after a long week of going to school, I was excited, thinking about James, who was supposed to come tomorrow. The idea of spending time with him made my heart race, and honestly, I couldn't wait to throw my arms around him the moment he stepped inside my apartment.

The idea of seeing him again was something that helped get me through the entire week, and as I pulled my phone out, I realized he had still not contacted me all day.

It was odd, but I didn't let it bother me too much.

Knowing him, he had been super busy all day.

Putting my bag down and kicking off my shoes, I dialed his number and called him instead. The phone rang a few times, and when his deep, sultry voice came through the other line, I couldn't help but smile.

"Hey, what's going on? I'm in the middle of something," he said quickly and that smile I had slowly fell.

"Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to bother you. I was just calling to check on you. Haven't really heard from you today, and I know you're going to be here tomorrow. So I just wanted to figure out what time so I can make plans."

"Oh, shit, Becca, I completely forgot." He forgot? What in the world did he mean? He forgot.

How could he have forgotten he was supposed to be coming to see me?

"I don't understand. What do you mean you forgot? Are you not coming?" I asked him as I fell to the sofa, sitting there in disbelief that after a week of thinking he was coming to spend time with me, in reality, he wasn't.

"I'm not going to be able to make it tomorrow. There are a lot of things going on that are just very complicated at the moment, and as much as I would love to be there with you, I honestly can't."

"It's okay. I completely understand. I guess I'll just figure something else out to do. Do you know when you might be coming up here?" I asked softly, hoping that it wasn't going to be a long time before I would get to see him again.

"No, I don't know when I'm going to make it up there, but I do really have to go. So can we pick up this conversation tomorrow morning? I have some free time I can schedule you in."

Schedule me in.

Hearing him say those words turned my moment from being completely fine to completely pissed off. "Yeah, no worries. Let me know what your schedule is when you have time. Better yet, have Evette message me. She does all your scheduling."

Hanging up the phone, I tossed it onto my coffee table and crossed my arms over my chest, sitting back, pouting. Perhaps the way I was acting was childish, but I had every right to be upset.

I wasn't some appointment he needed to schedule. I was supposed to be his girlfriend. The woman he wanted to be with, and yet, he spoke to me as if spending time with me was a task to complete.

Confliction filled me with how I was supposed to act towards this. I wanted to lash out and be cold to him, but something told me that there was more going on.

Shaking away the uneasy feeling of emptiness, I preoccupied myself. No longer was I hungry, like I had been thirty minutes before. Instead, I mindlessly wandered towards the kitchen and pulled a bottle of wine from my fridge, not bothering with a glass.

Had I done something wrong that made him not want to spend time with me?

The thoughts plagued me, and as my phone rang, I jumped in shock, hoping it was James.

However, as I looked down at my phone, I realized it wasn't.

It was Neal.

I hadn't talked to him lately, and I felt slightly bad. I knew the apartments were almost done, and he was going to want me to show them, but I just felt so guilty about how things ended between us before that the conversations were almost awkward.

"Hey, Neal, how are things going?" I said as soon as I picked up the phone.

"Things are going pretty good. I was just going to let you know that the first apartment will be available to lease probably by the end of next week. So, if you don't mind, I was going to see if I could drop the keys off to you and then possibly have you schedule with somebody who's interested in renting it out."

"Of course, it's no problem at all. When were you looking to come up?" I asked him with a smile on my face, even though he couldn't see me. Hearing his voice after everything that had been happening lately was refreshing in a way.

"I'll actually probably be up there tomorrow to drop those keys off. I've got to do a couple of things in town, but other than that, yeah. Why? You sound like you're a little upset. Is everything okay?"

"That is a loaded question, as always," I said as I let out a heavy breath, realizing this was my fate, and I was just another catastrophe waiting to happen.

A hearty laugh left his lips, and as it did, I felt a sense of familiarity through all the awkwardness I had once had. "Well, start from the top. What seems to be the problem?"

"Besides the fact that the entire campus knows I am screwing James and also they think I'm sleeping with you as well? Hmm... let's see. James was supposed to come and visit me this weekend, but he can't. I guess there's not much else that's actually going on. Oh, I did forget. I know have to be scheduled in order to have conversations with James because he's too busy to deal with me right now."

The exhaustion I felt after having all of that information flow from me was absolutely mentally draining. I had a sense of relief because I was able to vent to somebody about it, but actually hearing myself say it was just absolutely ridiculous.

"To me, it sounds like you definitely need a few stiff drinks and a night out. Have you not gone out with any of your friends or anything?"

"Friends?" I laughed, as if that was the most hysterical thing that I'd ever heard. "Neal, I don't have any real friends. I was part of Tally's group, so I always hung out with her. I never had the chance to make proper friends myself while being at school. It was always school work and hanging out with Tally."

"Jesus. Well, that does explain a lot, actually," he replied, causing a gasp to leave my lips as I laughed.

"What's that supposed to mean? I'm not that terrible, but I mean, I'm not like other people here. I don't really care to party. I may look like a party girl, but I'm actually a bookworm. That is my deep, dark secret. I am a bookworm who loves to wear fuzzy socks and curl up in bed and read a book or watch a movie and drink coffee or hot tea."

"You know, bookworms are actually pretty sexy," he added, causing me to laugh again as I shook my head, knowing full well that this was definitely the conversation that I needed.

Neal always had a way of making me laugh, making me forget I was upset, and it was the same trait that his sister Allegra had as well.

"Thanks for calling me. I really needed this conversation."

"You don't have to thank me, Becca. You need someone to talk to you. All you have to do is ask. Now, since I'm coming up there this weekend, why don't we hang out tomorrow night? We can go have drinks and that," he offered, and for a moment, I really wanted to take him up on his offer. But I was hesitant because of James.

James did not really care for me hanging around Neal, even though Neal had been nothing but kind to me, and I didn't want to do anything to further upset him because we were trying to make the long distance thing work.

If photographs got out and circulated with me hanging out with Neal without James being part of the picture, it would just cause all kinds of problems.

"I don't know if going out drinking in public right now is probably the best idea. The last thing I need is for people to get the wrong impression."

"Okay. Then we hang out at your place. You pick the movies. I will grab pizza on my way there and some alcohol, and we'll just hang out like we used to do back at the apartment. I mean, we used to have a lot of fun, and I know that you're with James, and I completely understand. I won't get in the way of it, but you deserve to be happy."

He wasn't wrong, but he wasn't right either.

Maybe I deserved to be happy, but I felt the happiest when I was with James. Maybe my thinking was clouded because he was like the rebound guy after Chad. In the end, there was just something about James that drew me in that I fell in love with, and as much as I knew I deserved to have more than what I currently did... I didn't want to let him go.

Never in my life had I felt so conflicted as I did in that moment.

James Valentino was everything I ever wanted in a man. Granted, he was a few years older than any man I'd ever seen myself with, but they do say with age comes experience, and he had enough experience to make his own porn movies.

"Alright then," I replied softly as I slowly caved in. "I'll see you tomorrow night. Make sure you don't forget the pineapple on my pizza."

"You do know that is absolutely disgusting? But I will do it just because it's you that's asking," he said, causing me to scoff playfully.

"Until tomorrow," I breathed with a smile as I hung up the phone.

Through everything James had put me through, I was glad I had an amazing friend like Neal.