

Chapter 71 - Submitting to My Best Friend's Dad by Scarlett Rossi

Becca

The next morning, I awoke with a little pep in my step. It was Saturday, and I was excited. That was because it was the one day I didn't have to worry about school or studying, even though I probably should have been. It was the beginning of a weekend I was going to absolutely adore.

Throwing on my tennis shoes, I grabbed my purse and headed out of my apartment, ready to start the day of nothing but fun and excitement. First up was the grocery store, and then I was on to find a little bit of odds and ends to decorate up the spare room, just in case Neal wanted to stay.

There was no way I was going to let him drive home after he had been drinking, or across town for that matter.

Making my way towards my car, I climbed in and put it in drive, heading across town towards the local grocery store. Not even five minutes out from my destination, however, my phone lit up, and James's name crossed the screen.

Of course, he's calling.

"Good morning," I said with very little enthusiasm. I was still quite sore with him, and I had every right to be, considering how he had spoken to me.

"Hey, gorgeous. What are you up to?"

"Nothing much, heading to the grocery store to pick up some stuff. I've got some things that I'm taking care of this weekend, since you're not making it. What's going on with you?" I asked him, avoiding letting him know about Neal just yet. I wanted to hear what he had to say, and if he was going to apologize first.

"Some things to do?" he replied, and I wasn't honestly shocked he would start the conversation off that way. "Do you have a lot of studying or something to do this weekend?"

"No, not studying. I actually have a guest coming, so I'm just going to hang out at the apartment and eat some pizza, watch some movies, have a few drinks, and just kind of hang out. I mean, I wanted to spend the weekend with you, but you made it very clear yesterday you didn't have time to waste on me. So I'm making do with the best I can."

"Coming to stay with you, Becca?" James snapped through the phone as I put the car in park in a parking spot and sat there staring off into the distance, trying to wrap my head around the fact he had just used that tone with me.

"What's the matter? It's somebody that you would be perfectly fine with me seeing. So I don't understand.

"For one, if I was okay with you being around them, then you wouldn't have a reason not to tell me who it is. Now, I want a name." The stern sound of his voice made my skin slightly crawl. I wanted to obey him, submit to him in every way, and taking a deep breath, I did.

"It's just Neal. He has to drive up to drop the keys off because somebody's going to be renting the apartment that was just finished. I suggested we grab something to eat and hang out like we used to when I was staying with him."

I don't know why I thought James would be okay with it, because deep down I knew he wouldn't be. Sure enough, I heard the frustration in his tone as he took a deep breath and let out an uneasy groan.

"I'm not okay with that," he replied, catching me a little off guard, as if I had to ask for his permission.

"Why wouldn't you be okay with it? It's Neal. You already know that I'm living in an apartment he has here, and I'm going to be helping him with the others. I don't understand what the problem would be if I were to hang out with him."

"Are you kidding me right now?" he scoffed, causing my frown to deepen. "He wants to get into your pants, and you're actually going to let him stay with you, knowing that you're with me. I shouldn't even have to comment on this."

"First of all, it isn't even like that. He actually talks highly of you and respects your decision. So for you to act like this is completely unacceptable. After all, you were the one who was supposed to be here this weekend to spend an entire week with me, and instead, you're not."

"Because I really don't have a choice," he snapped again, raising his voice at me as if I was just some other person who he had to deal with.

"And what exactly would keep you from wanting to spend time with me? You yourself said that you were closing the deal that you had yesterday," I replied, reminding him of the conversation we had had prior.

"Yeah, and then I turned around and found out I have issues with another client I have to take care of because of Allison. And on top of that, Tally has gone missing."

Shock filled me hearing that Allison was part of some issue that he had, and Tally, the girl who had once been my best friend, was also missing. She was pregnant, and to find that she was missing made me a little uneasy.

"Did you check with Chad's family? I mean, maybe they went there."

"Yeah, I checked there," he snapped at me for a third time.

I was growing very impatient with him. If he was going to keep talking to me like this, I was done with it all. I didn't deserve this.

"Look, I understand that you have a lot going on and that you're not happy right now because of the situation with Neal, but you need to let that go and learn to trust me that nothing is going to happen. Now, as for Tally, I can give you suggestions where to look, but you need to change your tone because you will not speak to me that way."

I was very clear how I felt about the matter.

Yes, I was worried for Tally because if James didn't know where she was, then I needed to do everything I could possibly do to help him, even though I didn't get along with her. It didn't mean that I didn't care enough to help James.

That was his daughter, and she wasn't always the brightest crayon in the box. Therefore, making sure she didn't do anything stupid was something to be take care of.

"Look, you have other plans tonight, so why don't you just worry about that, and I will figure out the situation with my daughter on my own."

"Stop being a complete asshole, right now. I don't understand this, and I'm sick and tired of the fighting and arguing. Neal is a friend. You need to let that go. I am trying to help you. I know Tally better than you do." He was acting in a way that I was not happy with.

He should have told me this yesterday when I had spoken to him, and I would have been more understanding of the situation. Hell, I would have dedicated my weekend to helping him find her.

Even if that meant going to New York and confronting Chad's family just to see if she was there.

Instead, though, he had kept it from me. Waited an entire twenty-four hours to say anything at all, and he made me feel like I was completely nothing to him instead of being open and honest with me about the situations that were going on.

"Why would you want to help her? You don't even like her."

"Are you kidding me right now? Will you for once be mature and act your age? You are a grown man, and you're being a d*ck to me because I'm hanging out with a friend later that you don't approve of. I don't sit there and question everybody that you hang out with."

Silence filled the phone, and for a moment, I thought he had hung up.

"I'm sorry. You're right. Right now, I am acting ridiculous. I just have so much on my mind, and I'll be honest, I don't entirely trust him because he has feelings for you. Whether you choose to believe it or not, he has told me that himself."

Hearing Neal had feelings for me was not what I was expecting. I knew he liked me to an extent because of prior conversations, but I thought that might have just been a simple infatuation.

Pushing those concerns aside, I moved forward with the Tally issue.

"If she's not at his family's house, he has an apartment in New York City. I don't have the exact address, but I do know where it is. There's a possibility she could be there, and if she's not there... then there's a good possibility she could be here in town. Regardless, I'll text you the generalized directions on how to get there.

"I don't understand how you put up with me, Becca," James said after a moment as I typed in the directions.

"What are you talking about?"

"I'm not exactly the best person for you, and as much as I wish I could be, I find it hard. I'm a man stuck in my ways, and I'm just wondering if you really understand what you're getting yourself into."

James was a man of very few words, typically. However, right now he had my mind completely blown because the way it sounded was as if he was reconsidering our current situation and that wasn't something that I had expected.

"Are you having second thoughts about us?" I asked with hesitation and shock in my tone.

"I don't know what I'm thinking. I just know I can't be there for you right now, the way you need me to be, and yet... I don't know. Maybe we're overthinking everything because it's hard to be with somebody when they're not next to you every day."

"No. You're not doing this," I replied, refusing to let him go down this road with me. We would not have this conversation over the phone.

"Becca—" he said, trying to cut me off.

"No!" I exclaimed. "You are not doing this right now. You're not thinking clearly, and I'm not going down this road with you. So what I want you to do is take a deep breath and stop worrying about me. I want you to worry about finding Tally, and I want you to keep me updated on everything. If you want to call me later tonight or in the morning, that choice is yours. Regardless, you are not ending this relationship over the phone."

Putting my foot down, I quickly hung up the phone, not giving him a chance to say anything else. That would mean that our relationship was over.

We had just picked back up the pieces, and I could tell he was hesitant and simply stressed. There was no way I was going to allow him to decide when he was in that kind of state.

If James Valentino wanted to leave me, he was going to do it in person, not over the phone like some high school prick.