

## Chapter 73 - Submitting to My Best Friend's Dad by Scarlett Rossi

Becca

After the conversation with James, I pushed my feelings aside and continued my tasks for the day. I ended up having to go up to the school to drop off a last-minute paper to one of my teachers before I was supposed to meet up with Neal.

Through the week, things had been utterly strange considering everything that had happened, and the last thing I wanted to do was draw more attention to myself.

As soon as I had finished grocery shopping, I drove straight to the school and quickly took the paper from my bag and made my way inside in order to drop it off. Usually, on days like today, my professor wasn't in the office. But considering he had a lot of grading to do, he had made an exception for me.

Without wasting time, I scurried inside and straight to my professor's office. His smile was cheerful that I had made it on time, considering the noon deadline.

"Thank you, Miss Woods. I appreciate you being able to stick to our agreement."

"It's not a problem, Professor. I'm so sorry about having to be late on it to begin with. Things have been chaotic lately, but hopefully they will start improving. I'll see you in class on Tuesday."

Nodding his head, his eyes stared at me with a kind smile behind the thick frames of his glasses. He was a balding man in his mid-50s, but he had a joyous laugh when he taught that seemed to entrance everybody. He was by far one of my favorite teachers, and I was glad I had a professor this year I could actually relate to.

Scurrying from his class, I made my way down the hall only to bump into the one person I had hoped to avoid. The dean of students stood in the middle of the hall, tapping his foot with his arms crossed across his chest and a beady glare in his eyes, as if he was waiting to say something to me.

"Miss Woods, it's quite odd to see you on campus today, considering it's the weekend."

"I had to drop something off to one of my professors. Is everything okay? I'm kind of in a hurry," I replied to him, hoping he wasn't trying to have a full conversation considering the food I had sitting in my car I was waiting to take home.

"Actually, things aren't okay. I've heard of some whispers going around campus, and I have to admit I'm a little disappointed they bring your name up within them. I told you to not let me be disappointed this year. I do hope I find those rumors are not true."

Staring at him in disbelief, I couldn't understand where he had got the notion I was a part of some huge scandal. There wasn't actually a scandal. I had done nothing wrong.

Unless he was referring to the James situation that went public.

"I'm sorry, but I do not know what you're talking about. If you don't mind, though, I need to be excused. I have groceries waiting in the car I need to get home," I said, trying to detour the conversation.

As I made my way to pass him, he reached out, grabbing my arm, stopping me in my tracks. Never once had I had one of my teachers touch me in any way, and him gripping my arm like a vice made me feel extremely uncomfortable.

This man was crossing a line he had no way of coming back from if he wasn't careful.

"I would like to remind you that to be at this school is a privilege. You got in solely for academic purposes, and though your grades may keep up, you bring no financial gain to this school, so do not feel you can't be removed."

This warning twisted my stomach into a knot. I was in my last year, and if he really thought that he could dismiss me because of some rumor, that was completely unfair. I was tired of people treating me like shit, talking to me as if I was nothing.

Turning my glare to him, I narrowed my eyes, staring in disbelief as I yanked my arm from his grip. "And you will do well to remember to keep your hands to yourself, sir. I do hope that we don't have this misunderstanding again."

He seemed shocked by my outburst. Shit, I was shocked! I couldn't believe I had just spoken to the dean of students like that, but he was completely in the wrong for accosting me in the hallway.

Without another word, he scoffed and stalked off down the corridor, heading for God knows where, and I quickly made my departure, heading straight for my car. The last thing I wanted to do was to be stopped by anyone, and as the tears blurred my vision, I quickly pulled out my keys, hit the button to unlock my car, and climbed into the driver's seat.

My heart ached at times like this, where I wished James was here, because I had nobody here to talk to. I didn't have a single friend in this place. No family. Nobody to talk to, nobody to guide me. I was alone and facing issues like this by myself.

My heart broke, but as I pulled out my phone, I dialed James' number. His phone rang and rang and rang, but he didn't pick up.

Instead, the call went to voicemail, and as it did, I hung up, and a heart wrenching sob left my throat. "Of course, you don't answer."

Why had my life turned into something as chaotic as this?

Why was I subjected to all of this when the only thing I wanted was to have a normal life?

I never asked for any of it. I never asked for the issues, and yet I faced them daily. It was as if my life had become a game for some mystical entertainment.

Putting the car into reverse, I quickly backed out of my parking spot and made my way towards my apartment. I couldn't allow this situation to ruin the rest of my day. Neal was coming into town, and I was looking forward to seeing him.

Knowing my luck, though, I would get to the apartment, and he'd already be there.

Turn after turn, I made my way towards my apartment building. Sure enough, as I parked, I spotted Neal's car sitting outside.

I turned off the car and checked my face in the rearview mirror. There was no hiding the fact I had been crying. If he saw me, he would know it, and I would have to make up some lie about a sad song or something.

As soon as I stepped out, I heard his voice calling out to me. "Hey, you! I was just coming down to grab something from the car."

"Shit," I muttered to myself as I slowly turned around to face him.

As soon as he caught sight of me, I saw the emotions run through his face. I was a mess, and it was clear to see. "Becca, what happened? Why are you upset?"

"It's nothing. I'm fine. Just a little emotional today. Can you help me grab these bags?"

He stared at me for a moment in disbelief. "You know that I can clearly see that set, you know that set okay. Regardless of whatever emotions have gotten you upset, I wish you would talk to me."

"It's nothing. It's stupid. I just ran into somebody at the school and had a conversation that didn't settle well."

"Oh," he said, raising a brow with interest. "Who was the person you ran into?"

"It doesn't matter, Neal. Honestly, just help me grab the bags, please. We can talk more upstairs," I said, giving him a pleading glance.

Not to continue further with the conversation outside, he nodded his head and grabbed two bags while I grabbed the other and closed my trunk. Both of us made our way silently up to my apartment, but as soon as the door closed, and we set the groceries on the counter, he gently grasped my arm and turned me around to face him, staring down at me with the kindest expression I had ever seen.

"Now that we're inside... please tell me what is wrong? Who upset you at the school?"

I realized he would not let this go. I didn't want Neal to get involved, but I also didn't want to lie to him.

So instead, I sagged my shoulders in defeat, letting a heavy sigh escape my lips.

"I ran into the dean of students. He is the most unpleasant person I have ever met in my life," I said, as I mentally recalled the conversation. "I was dropping off a paper to one of my teachers, and on my way back to the car, he stopped me."

"And what exactly did the dean of students say to you to make you so upset? Are you falling behind in one of your classes?"

"No," I laughed. "But it would stand to reason you would think that would be something I would be upset about."

Rolling his eyes, he let go of me and stepped back, leaning against the counter. "So then tell me what exactly is it that has you upset? What did the dean say to you?"

"Nothing. He just made an idle conversation about rumors going around campus about me. That I am basically there for academic purposes, and I don't add any financial gain to the school, so I shouldn't think of myself as unremovable."

Neal stared at me with his mouth agape and his eyes wide in utter disbelief. "He said that to you?"

"Yeah, that's what he said. He is a complete asshole."

"Yeah, you're f\*cking right about that. He had no right to speak to you like that. Conversations of that magnitude are supposed to be done behind closed doors with two other people present to ensure that the conversations go over smoothly. Why the hell was he even there on the weekend?" Neal asked, with disbelief on his face.

"Honestly, I don't know, and I really don't care after he grabbed me—"

My conversation was cut short as I stopped talking, realizing what I had said. The once shocked expression across Neal's face turned into one of anger and fury.

"What the f\*ck do you mean he grabbed you, Becca? That prick put his hands on you?!"

"Neal, it's nothing. Honestly. It's really nothing. It was just that he stopped me. That was it."

I was stuttering over my words. Never once had I seen Neal angry, but right now, the way he looked slightly scared me. He was pissed beyond belief the dean had put his hands on me, and I feared the repercussions that would come because of the man's actions.

Nodding his head, Neal pulled out his phone and quickly sent a text message.

"What are you doing? Please tell me you're not doing anything."

"No, I'm not doing anything right now. I don't want you worrying about that man. But what we are going to do is cook some food and enjoy ourselves. You texted me and let me know you didn't want me to pick up pizza. So what is it you fancy making tonight?"

Laughter escaped me as I looked at the bags and then back at him. "I told you not to pick up pizza because I thought it'd be fun making it."

With a stoic gaze, Neal burst into laughter. It was moments like this that reminded me I could still feel normal, even when the weight of the world was hitting on my shoulders.