

Chapter 77 - Submitting to My Best Friend's Dad by Scarlett Rossi

At a loss for words, I stared down at Tally, who sat on the floor with a black eye, a busted lip, and a cut to her head. She literally looked like she went ten rounds with Mike Tyson and came out on the very bottom end of the pole.

"Oh, my god." I ran to her, quickly unlocking my door and helping her to her feet. As soon as the door opened, I helped her inside and realized by the look of her, she was far more pregnant than she initially had thought she was.

"Tally, we have to call the hospital. You need an ambulance."

Shaking her head, though, she took a seat on the sofa. "No, I can't go to the hospital. I'll be okay. This isn't the first time I've gone through this, and he never hurts the baby, so it's just me, my face."

Stepping back, I stared at her in complete shock, not understanding how she had found me and how she had even gotten up here, considering you needed a key card to get in. "How did you find me?"

Staring at me, her mouth opened and closed before a heavy sigh left her lips. "It's not that hard, considering the rumors trickling around."

That didn't surprise me.

Of course, my name still lingered on the tongues of people around me.

"You have to have a keycard to get up here." I walked towards the downstairs bathroom, grabbed a wet rag, and returned to her.

"The girl down the hall from you let me up," she whispered, taking the rag.

"I see," I replied, raising a brow as I pulled out my phone. "Do you mind explaining to me who did this to you?"

Her eyes darted to the phone in my hand. "What are you doing—who are you calling?"

She seemed panicked, and I didn't understand why as I hesitated before calling James. "Your father. Why?"

"You can't!" she snapped, standing to her feet. "Please, you can't tell him. I can't have him see me like this."

The last thing I wanted to do was lie to James or not tell him where his daughter was, but I was worried about her freaking out and leaving before he got here. Deciding lying to her was better, I sighed and shoved my phone back into my back pocket. "Okay."

"You won't tell him?"

Shaking my head, I smiled. "For now."

The look she gave me was uncertain, but after a moment, she nodded. "Thank you."

"No need to thank me. I haven't done anything yet, and this doesn't make us okay. However, I will not allow you to be out there in your condition. So consider my kindness towards the baby.... Speaking of that, how far along are you?"

Biting on the inside of her lip, she ran her hand instinctively over her stomach. "About six months. Turns out I was farther along than I thought. When I went to the doctor, though... they said it's a boy."

Hearing she was having a boy made me smile, and as I did, I looked down at her dirty attire and frowned again. "Come on, let's get you some clothes and a shower. You can stay in the spare bedroom."

Taking her upstairs, I showed her to the spare bedroom and got her a change of clothes. She had nothing with her, and I wasn't sure where her things were, but I chose not to ask. When she was fresh from the shower and changed into something more comfortable, she came out of the bathroom hesitantly.

"Thank you again for this. I don't deserve it."

Crossing my arms over my chest, I let out a heavy breath and rolled my eyes. As much as I wanted to be cruel to her for everything she put me through, I couldn't. I would not forgive her, but the girl looked like she had been served karma.

"Let's not think about that right now," I sighed. "Just get some sleep. I'll order some food and let you know when it's here."

Nodding slowly, she climbed into the bed and quickly fell asleep.

Stepping from her room, I bit my bottom lip as I quietly descended the stairs, my hands quickly going to my phone as I turned on the living room TV to drown out any noise and walked out onto the small balcony from the living room.

My fingers fumbled through the phone as I hit James' number and listened to the ringing, begging him to answer the call.

"Hello?" he answered, breathless.

"Hey... are you okay?"

"Uh—oh, yeah. Just getting on the plane now," he muttered as he passed a few words to someone near him. "I'll be there in a few hours. I need to find Tally."

It wasn't that he was ready to see me or anything of that sort. It was he needed to get here to find Tally. I felt like I was being petty, and pushing that aside I sighed. "That's why I'm calling you."

"What do you mean? Have you seen her?" he asked me with concern etched in his voice.

"Yeah, you can say that," I muttered with sarcasm.

"Becca... where is she?" he replied sternly as if he didn't care for his attitude.

"There is no need for the attitude, James."

"Well, don't act the way you are. You said that you had seen her now. Where is she?"

The subtle tone he took with me made my heart sink, and I felt tears threatening to fill my eyes. "Upstairs in my spare bedroom, sleeping," I snapped. "You're welcome."

Hanging up the phone, I pushed it back into my pocket and gripped the balcony railing, taking a deep breath of fresh air as I stared out at the slowly setting sun.

"He didn't mean to act like that," I told myself as I tried to push the thoughts away.

At least, I hoped.

A few hours later, my front door opened, and James stepped in with a small frown on his face. Jumping from where I sat, I walked over to him, but before I could say anything or even give him a hug and a kiss, he spoke. "Where is she?"

Opening and closing my mouth, I lowered my eyes and stepped away from him. "Upstairs, sleeping."

He didn't hesitate to move up the stairs two at a time towards her. Not a single word was directed at me, and I felt my heart absolutely breaking with the situation. He said we were going to talk. Said he was looking forward to seeing me, and now this.

I was growing tired of it all.

"What's the point?" I sighed as I turned towards the kitchen, making myself a cup of tea. My fingers scrolled through my phone as I waited for the kettle. Until I saw a photo of Neal and had the urge to call him.

Biting on the inside of my cheek, I hesitated and finished making my tea before heading towards the balcony to enjoy the cool evening air. I needed to get away. To clear my mind and figure out what I could do to fix things.

Shouting caught my attention, and looking towards the inside of my apartment, I saw Tally chasing after James, who was headed towards the front door. Bolting from where I sat, I burst through the apartment, looking frantic.

"What the hell is going on?"

Tally's teary eyes turned towards me with desperation. "You have to stop him. Don't let him leave."

James was already out the door, and thinking fast, I burst from the door, watching the elevator descend. I hated the stairs, but I wasn't sure what was happening. Busting through the stairwell, I took the stairs two at a time until I hit the bottom and pushed through the door, watching James exit the front door of the building.

I wasn't an athletic person, and the fact this man had me running was something else.

As I approached him, I grabbed his arm, jerking him back out of breath as his eyes met mine. He turned to me with a sharp glance, gritting his teeth. "Stay out of this, Becca."

"No. What the f*ck is going on?"

"It's none of your business."

"Seriously?!" I yelled at him, stopping him in his tracks as he tried to walk away. "You don't get to do this to me!"

"Do what? Why are you making this about you? It has nothing to do with you."

"I'm your girlfriend, James. We are supposed to be a team, and you involved me in this, so yes, it has to do with me. Your daughter is up there in my

clothing, in my apartment, and after everything she has done to me, I gave her a safe place to be. Yet, it doesn't concern me?"

He stared down at me with coldness, clenching and unclenching his fists. "Chad did that to her."

Taken aback by his comment, I nodded. "So, you plan to go and beat him up? Acting irrational about this, that's how you plan to handle it?"

"What do you expect me to do? Huh? Nothing?"

His aggravation showed clearly, and taking a moment, I laughed. "I expect you to act like a f*cking adult. Take your ass back upstairs and do the adult thing. Call the f*cking police instead of being some type of executioner."

Laughter erupted from him. My steps quickly backed up as he pinned me against the cold brick of the building outside. "I'm not a good person, Becca. I'm dangerous and do dangerous things. You would do well to remember this. My life isn't legal, and neither are my actions."

I was slightly frightened, never having seen him like this. "That doesn't mean you do shit without a clear mind. Right now, your judgment is clouded."

"How the f*ck would you know?" he grimaced.

Speechless for the moment, I stared at him in disbelief. I didn't understand how he was speaking to me the way he was. He loved me, I thought. We were a couple and meant to be together, but right now, he was acting as if I was some random girl bothering him.

"I know a lot more than you think," I said with a broken voice. "How dare you speak to me like you are? How dare you act like this to me after everything—"

"Again, this isn't about you," he snapped. "You always think it's about you."

For him to say that tore at me because it was the farthest from the truth. If he wanted to act like this, then I was done. I was trying to be understanding of

the situation. Knowing the anger he was showing towards me was because of what had happened to Tally, and not actually me.

So I changed my tactics.

"You're leaving your daughter upstairs right now when she needs you the most. That isn't what a father does, no matter how angry he is."

This seemed to make him pause, and as he did, his eyes scanned up at my apartment balcony, where Tally stood, watching the scene below unfold. She had seen how he acted towards me and had seen the argument unfold because it was anything but quiet.

Taking a moment, he let his shoulders sag, and I saw his age and stress weighing him down. Then he slowly made his way inside, leaving me barefoot outside in front of the building. I wanted to cry and let the sob that tore at me escape, but I couldn't.

I wouldn't allow anyone the pleasure of seeing me break.

Instead, I took a deep breath and turned towards the door, making my way inside. I wasn't sure what would happen, but the last thing I would do was let this go.

The way he spoke to me was the last straw. It was obvious he didn't love me as he thought.