

Chapter 80 - Submitting to My Best Friend's Dad by Scarlett Rossi

Becca

Two weeks went by before I was actually able to find myself in some kind of contentment. The moment I broke it off with James, I went upstairs and cried my eyes out, unable to focus on anything, and even when Monday came around, and my classes fell back into session, I just couldn't get myself together.

Everything, instead, went by in a blur. I felt trapped within my mind, trying to pay attention but doing so numbly because I had ended things with the man I loved. I couldn't deal with the complications. I couldn't keep dealing with the unassured way my life was going, the chaos constantly consuming me.

That was no way for any woman or man to live.

And though he wanted to keep a hold of me, I couldn't do that.

Looking at my phone, I stared at my missed calls from the day. Every day he called me, he would call twice or three times, trying to get me to pick up.

Sending me text messages telling me not to do this, and I at first replied. But now?

Every time my phone rang or chimed with a new notification, my heart clenched, on the verge of breaking again because I relived the pain every time he messaged me.

I tried to move past my stage of grief and into one of anger. I had not expected my life to turn this way, and everything went to shit because I had a relationship with him.

The fun, exciting moments did nothing when it came to my own sanity.

Shoving my phone back into my back pocket, I made my way across the quad, heading for my apartment. I needed to get away, and I had been looking at plane tickets all day long, thinking about going to my dad's for the fall break. But at the same time, I wasn't quite sure if I wanted to bring this chaos to his home.

As soon as I made my way into my apartment building and up the elevator to my floor, I opened the door and closed it behind me, letting out the heaviest breaths as I tried to wrap my head around what it was I could do.

While others were planning vacations to islands and Caribbean coasts, I was trying to survive. Even if I didn't go to my dad's, I couldn't just stay holed up here for weeks.

In a few months, I would be done with school. I would be moving on to bigger and better things, and taking time for myself was something that needed to happen.

After taking the two weeks to mourn a relationship that really should never have happened to begin with, I was starting to think with a clearer mind. Life didn't feel as complicated anymore, and I didn't really have this many issues. It was honestly peaceful.

Taking a moment to ponder over everything, I walked upstairs, picking up the basket of dirty clothes so I could take them downstairs to wash them, when something inside the basket caught my eye.

Inside the basket was a band shirt, and not just any band shirt. It was one I had Neal wear while he was here, so he was more comfortable when he had stayed the night.

I hadn't heard from Neal in about a week and a half. He had business outside of the country and had been very busy. Not to mention, I wasn't exactly the best person to speak with after everything that happened with James. But perhaps hanging out with him would make me feel better.

Of course, it would be just as friends. I was not planning to get into any kind of relationship with anybody anytime soon. Lord knows that would be nothing but a disaster, and Neal was too nice of a guy. I would never allow him to put himself in the rebound lane.

Dropping the basket at my feet, I pulled my phone from my pocket, scrolling through until I found his number.

It didn't take long for the phone to ring before his happy and bright voice came through the phone, causing an infectious smile to spread across my face.

"Well, hello, good-looking," he said cheerfully, causing a small laugh to escape me.

"I don't know about good-looking."

"Oh, please, you know, you're absolutely gorgeous. Now, what is it that I can do for you?" He caused me to grin as I grabbed the basket once more and headed down the stairs towards my laundry room.

"I was trying to see if you were still out of the country."

"Me out of the country? I wish. I'm actually back in New York, sitting in my living room at the moment with a glass of whiskey, trying to debate if I want to go deal with these idiots at the main office or simply stay here and allow my assistant to rip them apart," he countered with a snort.

"Oh, are they being that delightful?" I set the basket on my washing machine, trying to figure out exactly where I had put the brand-new box of soap I had bought.

Opening the cabinets, I looked through, listening to him tell me about how the people in his office had done nothing but cause more damage than good.

"Perhaps you just need to find somebody else to manage them. I mean, your assistant has to go with you to these meetings overseas. So it stands to reason that the office manager just isn't doing their job."

He was quiet for a moment, and I heard him hum over what I had just said. "Perhaps you're right. Maybe I need to look at hiring somebody new."

"Would stand to reason doing so," I teased playfully.

"Besides that, enough with me. What's going on with you? I know that you were calling for more than just to find out if I'm in town."

Neal was always vigilant, and he knew me very well. "Well, as you know, things haven't been that brilliant over the past two weeks, and I'm trying to figure out what I'm doing for fall break. I considered going down to my dad's, but I don't know if I want to bring all this mess down there to him. I was going to see if you had suggestions."

"Hmm... are you feeling better after everything?"

I was quiet for a moment. I wasn't really feeling better, but rolling my eyes, I let off a soft sigh. "I'm better than I was. I'm trying to find something fun to do to preoccupy myself with."

"I get it. I've been there before myself, but as far as doing something fun, why don't you just come here? I mean, your fall breaks for what... like a week or two?"

"It's two weeks, but I don't want to impose on you. I'm sure you've got tons of work to do." Neal began to laugh at my comment, and as he did, I knew what he would say.

"I have not had any fun in two weeks, and if you think that I am going to pass up the opportunity to have your lovely ass grace my presence so that we can actually enjoy ourselves, you are sadly mistaken."

"Are you sure? I really don't want to impose."

"If you don't get your sweet ass here so we can go enjoy ourselves, whether it be sitting in the house, eating pizza and watching movies, or actually going to have drinks, I will come up there and drag you down here myself."

It was clear he was serious. I knew Neal pretty well by now, and there was no way he would allow me to back out of coming down. My plans were set, and even though I'd hoped to see my father, I could always visit him during Christmas time. After all, that was a special time I spent with my family.

"Sounds good. I will be heading down there on the weekend, then?"

"That sounds perfect. I'll have everything done, and we can ensure that we're brilliantly enjoying our weekend and your next two weeks here." He was enthusiastic about me coming, and I wasn't quite sure why, but he always made me smile, no matter the situation, so I was grateful for his acceptance and for letting me come.

"Hey, maybe you can actually talk to your sister and see if she wants to come up. I haven't seen her in so long, and I miss her so much," I replied, hoping that Allegra coming could divert anything serious from happening between him and me.

"Allegra... sure, why not? I'll give her a call as soon as I get off the phone with you. And tell her to get her ass up here, too. I've got two spare bedrooms, so there's plenty of room."

As soon as I hung up the phone with Neal, I felt ten times better about my situation. Yes, I was still sad about James, but at least I wouldn't be sitting in my house the entire fall break wallowing in self-misery because the man I loved was more complicated than a horse's ass.

Instead, I would be having fun with Neal and Allegra, enjoying New York City. There was still so much there I hadn't properly enjoyed before. Which was crazy because I had been going to school here for years and never took the opportunity to go.

Closing the washing machine, listening to it fill, I flicked open my phone once more and glanced through my photos of James and I. There weren't many pictures, but the few I had made my heart stop. I was happy with him, and even though I associated a lot of our relationship with hurt, I couldn't forget how he made me feel.

I did love him... more than anything. The problem was that he lived a life I couldn't.

No matter how much I tried to find right in it all, I couldn't overlook the danger. I couldn't overlook the complications, and I couldn't overlook how he belittled me when all I did was try to help him.

It was time to try and put this behind me and look forward to the future I had planned.

Who knew, maybe my time with Allegra and Neal would allow me to reflect on it all and realize that there was no way I could have continued down a path with James.

My place was to be independent... even if it hurt.