

## Chapter 96 - Submitting to My Best Friend's Dad by Scarlett Rossi

Becca

I wasn't sure what I had expected when I took Neal up on his offer and leave that night. However, it definitely wasn't riding in his private plane all the way back to New York City, only to have a sleek black limousine pick us up from the airport. Nor did I expect him to proceed in taking me to a fancy dining restaurant I was completely underdressed for.

The moment we pulled up outside of Fratelli's, I completely lost it.

I had wanted to go to this place for quite some time, and when I was back in New York visiting during fall break, we couldn't get any availability, even with Neal's social status. Yet, here we were outside of a very high-class restaurant, and I was wearing leggings with a cute, flowy top and my hair pulled into a ponytail.

"Neal, are you serious...? We're eating here?" There was excitement and shock in my voice as I stared wide-eyed out the window.

"Yeah, last time we were here you were looking slightly disappointed that we didn't get to visit it, so I made reservations, had some strings pulled just for you."

It was incredibly sweet he would go through all of that trouble for me, but having a better heads up so I had time to change and actually look like I belonged in this place would have been nice.

"I'm so underdressed for this place, though. I'm wearing leggings, for heaven's sake, and my hair—it's a mess and in a ponytail!" Frantic, I felt myself slowly hyperventilating, knowing I wanted to go here, not wanting to disappoint him, but looking like complete shit.

Instead of getting angry at me though, for having my small mini meltdown, he slid over to the back of the limousine, pulled me close to him, grabbed my face and kissed my lips with such force it took my breath away.

"You are incredibly beautiful no matter what you wear, and as far as those rich snobs go, their opinion doesn't matter. If that is what you are comfortable in, that is what you are comfortable in. I don't care what you wear there. You could go naked for all I care. I would still take you in there on my arm to have dinner."

His words were romantic and sweet as usual, and of course, he melted my heart with his comment. But at the same time, it wasn't just about being seen with him like this. It was my confidence. I didn't feel comfortable in what I was wearing, but perhaps he had a point.

I shouldn't have to change who I am to blend in with society.

"Okay," I replied reluctantly as Neal looked towards the driver who was watching us in his rearview mirror and nodded his head. The driver, knowing exactly what Neal meant, stepped from the car, walked around to our door and opened it for me and Neal to step out.

The air was cool this time of year, and I wished more than anything I had brought a thicker jacket. But because there was only a few quick steps from the limousine to the front doors of the restaurant, I made the most of it. Pushing back how cold I was, I walked forward with Neal, his hand lacing through mine as we entered one of the most prestigious restaurants in New York.

As soon as we entered the restaurant, I was greeted by the sound of classical music, the clinking of crystal glasses and, of course, the dim lighting of a very royal affair. The woman behind the receptionist's desk stood there in pearls and a skin tight designer black dress I guaranteed probably cost more than I would make in a month working at a normal job.

"Welcome to Fratelli's. How can I help you?" the woman said with a very snobby tone as her nose turned up and her eyes refused to look at me, but only at Neal.

"It's under the name Neal. I have a seven o'clock reservation."

Glancing down at the book in front of her, she scanned through before stopping. Her eyes, looking back up to Neal, and then finally glancing towards me. She seemed to take in my appearance with a smug smile on her lips before she turned back to Neal, who stood at my side.

"I'm afraid that there is a dress code for our restaurant, and unfortunately, your companion isn't in the dress code."

The moment she spoke, my heart sank to my stomach, and I felt completely embarrassed to have even walked in here. Of course, there was a dress code, and of course, they would refuse me service because of the way I was dressed. I didn't quite understand why I would have thought otherwise, but regardless, I turned to Neal and shook my head.

"It's okay. Can we just go? I didn't really need to eat here, anyway." I said softly, trying to keep my voice low because I didn't want to draw any more attention to myself than I already had.

Neal, however, was not pleased with the woman's remark, and in fact, I saw an angry glare upon his face I had only seen once before. With a small smile he spread just towards me, he turned back to the woman. "I'm afraid that you're going to need to go and get Lola."

The woman in front of me seemed a little taken aback and shocked by what he had said. I wasn't sure who Lola was, but it was clear that whoever Lola was, this woman did not want her coming up here. "That won't be necessary. I suppose we can make an exception."

"I'm sorry. I don't think you heard me correctly. I would like you to go get Lola," Neal said once more, with a little more enthusiasm and venom in his tone.

Looking slightly nervous, the woman picked up the phone. She dialed a number and after a few short whispers, she hung up. "Lola will be here momentarily. Would you like me to take you to your table?"

Neal didn't respond to the woman as he turned to me. He pulled me closer. "It'll only take just a second, sweetheart, and Lola will make sure that we are taken care of."

A few moments later, a regal woman with long blonde hair and bright pink lipstick walked up to the hostess desk wearing a two-piece cream colored suit. She looked like a Barbie that had just stepped out of a package and as soon as her blue eyes landed on Neal, she squealed with delight.

"Neal, I'm so glad you finally made it," she said excitedly as she walked over and air kissed both sides of his cheeks before turning to me. "Oh, you must be Becca. It's a pleasure to finally meet you."

To say I was confused would be an understatement. I had not a single f\*cking clue who this woman was, but obviously, Neal had told her because she was overly excited to see me. "It's nice to meet you as well."

"What are you guys doing out here? Why haven't you been shown to your table?" Lola asked, knitting her brows together as she looked over at the receptionist, who looked a little faint.

"Well, it seems that your hostess seems to think that it's okay to turn away guests simply because of their appearance. I do understand that there is a dress code; however, she believes that within that dress code, it reserves the right for her to rudely refuse my other half who just stepped off a flight."

Lola's eyes widened in shock before she narrowed her gaze and turned towards the receptionist. The once happy woman who was overly excited to see me had turned into a vicious predator, ready to rip the girl's head from her shoulder.

"I am so sorry that happened, Neal. Let me take it upon myself to show you to your table and then I will deal with her appropriately afterward."

With a ghosted white face, the woman watched Lola take Neal and I around the corner into the restaurant, my heart absolutely frantic because I didn't think that for one minute I was going to pass through, and now that I was, the delicious aromas of every single food they offered hit me all at once.

I felt beyond exceptional, and even though high society life wasn't something I ever cared for, it was moments like this I really was glad I had friends who were part of that life. Otherwise, I would never have been able to strike off one of the things that I had on my bucket list.

As soon as we reached our tables and took our seats, Lola said her apologies once more and quickly disappeared, leaving us with menus and a meal completely on the house.

"Who is that woman?" I asked Neal as soon as Lola was completely out of earshot.

He glanced up at me from his menu with a wide grin on his face as he chuckled. "She was a yoga instructor who I helped end up getting into the restaurant business. Lola owns Fratelli's. She is a longtime friend, and the last time that we came by, unfortunately, she wasn't here."

"Are you serious? She actually owns this place?" I was completely shocked I had literally just met the most brilliant woman in the world.

"Yes, I do. And before you go thinking bad things, no, we had nothing together. Lola actually prefers more feminine tastes."

In not so many words, he clearly explained exactly the kind of person Lola was. She did not like men. She had an appetite for women, which I didn't have a problem with. But it made sense why when she looked over at me, I felt slightly overwhelmed by the gaze.

"That makes a lot of sense, honestly," I muttered to myself, only loud enough for Neal to hear who laughed at my comment.

"Outside of this restaurant, she's very laid back. I'll actually have to see if we can have a get together sometime. She throws the wildest of parties. Of course, with your condition, I know you can't drink, but they are social gatherings that you might be interested in."

He wasn't wrong about that. I would have loved to get to know her more and also socialize with people who might be clients of mine soon.

The more I thought about my future, the more I considered actually starting my own business. I didn't want to rely on a man for the rest of my life, no matter who it was I ended up with. I was going to be a mother, and because I was, I had to think about the long-term goals I wanted to achieve.

Those goals included possibly opening my own business and making a name for myself.

Not just that, but setting up a future for my child they would be proud of.