

Chapter 100 - Submitting to My Best Friend's Dad by Scarlett Rossi

Becca.

As soon as I got back to the apartment, Neal waited. His eyes looked at me with nothing but concern, and I knew right away things were not okay. It was obvious he knew something I didn't, and because of that, I was wary of what he would say.

"Are you going to start telling me the truth about what is going on? We promised each other that we would never hide secrets." I said softly, staring at him.

Neal's eyes cast from me down to the ground as he fiddled with his hands, trying his hardest to find answers that I obviously wanted. "It isn't that easy, Becca. I'm not trying to hide anything from you. James came to me not long ago asking if anything should happen to him to protect you. That's what I'm doing."

"He told you to protect me, and you didn't think that was something I needed to know?"

Guilt filled his expression as he sighed. "It was a conversation between James and me. It wasn't anything that you needed to know. He asked me to take care of you, and of course, I'm going to. I love you, Becca."

Hearing Neal say he loved me filled me with conflict. I already knew he did, but it wasn't an excuse not to tell me what was happening. If we were going to be together, he had to be honest with me.

"Is that why Katrine is in New York?"

"Katrine?" Neal snapped, his brows narrowing. "What do you know about her being here?"

"Uh.. she just cornered me on the street while I was shopping and sent me a warning."

Closing the space between us, he stared down at me with anger. "Why didn't you get away from her and call me? I could have been there for you."

"Are you kidding me right now?" I scoffed, shaking my head. "How was I supposed to just do that... or think to do that? It was a spur of the moment thing, Neal."

Neal went silent as he watched me. His body was rigid before he pulled his phone from his pocket and walked away. "Neal... what are you doing?"

I walked after him as he muttered commands into his phone as if he were a military general, and when I finally grabbed his arm and spun him to face me, he frowned.

"I have things to take care of, Becca. I don't have time for this right now."

Never once had he ever told me he didn't have time to speak with me. It was clear that what happened with Katrine had gotten to him, and it didn't matter what I said, he was in go mode, looking to make someone pay.

"I understand you're upset right now, but you need to talk to me. This has to do with me; I need to know what's happening. What are you doing?"

With a heavy sigh, he pulled his arm from my grasp, running his hand behind his neck as he looked anywhere but at me. "I'm upping security and trying to plan for us to get out of town for a bit."

"Out of town... we're already going out of town."

Turning to face me, it was clear he had changed his mind and our plans. The look in his eye was of a man on a mission, and he was determined not to allow Katrine and her family to do anything that would cause me harm.

"We've had a change of plans, and we're no longer going to Miami." Deep down in my stomach, I already knew he was going to say this, and shaking my head from side to side, I couldn't allow him to make that choice for me.

"No. We're going to Miami. I've already made plans to go down there. I'm not changing them just because Katrina and her father think they can push me around."

"You don't understand how dangerous this is." He said to me as he stepped closer. "They will kill you if they get the chance."

I couldn't act like what he said didn't scare me because it did. I knew Katrina and her father were more than capable of seeing me dead, and it was pretty obvious Katrina would love to see me laying beneath her feet, bloody and lifeless.

I was pregnant—by the man that she had been after for years, and even though he may be entertaining her now, it wasn't going to change the fact that I was carrying James's child. I wasn't a threat to her, though. James and I would never have a relationship like that again because he would never change who he was.

I just had to hope she would see that.

"I understand that, and we can be careful, but I'm not going to make myself look weak and avoid going down there like some scared little puppy running back home because the big dogs are walking the street."

Neal stood staring at me, mouth parted as he tried to digest what it was that I said. "Big dogs walking the street? Out of all of the analogies that you could have used, that's the one that came to mind."

Rolling my eyes, I groaned in frustration as I crossed my arms over my chest. "It's beside the point, Neal. Just go with it. I'm trying to say that we're going to Miami, and Katrina and her father are not going to stop me from enjoying the holidays with people I care about. Her problems with James are not my problem. Yes, I plan on telling James about the baby. Yes, I plan on making an

appearance, to do so in person and without you holding my hand. But at the end of the day, I'm leaving with you."

My statement seemed to take him back, and after a moment of falling silent, he nodded his head as he pulled me close to him. His hands on my hips as he inhaled the scent of my hair and kissed the top of my head.

"I'm sorry that I'm being overprotective. I just don't want anything to happen to you or the baby." Neal said softly. "I can't lose you."

Even though Neal and I had grown so much closer and talked about so many things, I knew there was a part of his past that he never went into detail about. I didn't pry either, because if it was a dark part of his past, he would tell me when he was ready to, and it wasn't my place to go crying.

Even if I did want to know more than anything what it was that hurt him so much.

"Why don't you just step up security detail? I'll take security with me everywhere down there. I'll try not to venture out too often alone, and we'll just be safe. We'll stay with your sister. Everything will be okay."

No one could actually guarantee if everything was going to be okay, but I was trying to be optimistic when he was being pessimistic. Taking a moment to consider what I said, he nodded in agreement, which I knew he would because when it came to me, he was a slight pushover.

"Promise me that you will not give me any issues about taking your security detail."

"I promise." I giggled as I leaned up on my tip, toes pressing my lips against his. "You know you're sexy when you're aggressive and demanding."

A deep chuckle reverberated from his throat, and as it did, he pushed his lips harder against mine. "There are many things that I could do to you that would turn you on."

As tempting as it was to take Neal up on his offer, I knew that I couldn't do that. The ache between my thighs groaned in protest as I quickly let out a small breath, ready to turn him down. "As amazing as that sounds, sweetie. I have presents that I need to wrap before we leave on Saturday."

"Seriously?" He asked, completely stunned, as a smile grew at the corner of his lips. "This is the first, I do have to admit, turning me down on my sexual advances. Well, well, well, the hormones must be kicking in."

"Excuse me? I will have you know that my sex drive has been higher pregnant than before I was pregnant. I simply have things that I want to get done. Now, if you're a good boy, perhaps I'll let you have dinner.....early tonight."

His eyes gazed from mine, down my chest towards my thighs. He knew exactly what I was talking about, and as he ran his tongue across his lips, I couldn't help but smirk at how my comment turned him on. "Well, I do love an all you can eat buffet."

Smacking him playfully, I laughed as the smile grew wider across his face. "Go make your call before you get yourself in trouble. I have things that I need to do, and the driver already has brought the bags into my room, they're not going to actually wrap themselves."

"Yeah, okay, okay." He replied, holding his hands up in defense as if trying to fight me back. "I'll go make my call, then we can leave early Saturday morning, get down there, spend a couple days, then leave and go see your dad before coming back home."

It wasn't exactly how I wanted things to go, but I wasn't going to argue with him. It was lucky that he would even allow me to fly down there to see everybody and spend time with James after what had happened with Katrine.

I would never openly show Neal I worried about Katrine and her father. He worried so much about me on a regular basis, and the last thing I wanted him to do was worry about making sure that I was okay twenty-four hours of the day.

Getting the extra protection would be a good thing in the end. It meant that I would be able to go places without having to constantly look over my shoulder and honestly.... I wasn't good to anybody dead, at least not yet.

So I didn't have to worry about someone just coming across me and shooting me.

A multitude of thoughts swirled through my mind as I walked towards my bedroom and closed the door. All of the gift bags sitting on my bed, as well as wrapping paper, tape, and anything else that I could possibly need were waiting.

It was supposed to be a merry time of year.

A time of year where people got excited to spend time together, but instead, I was falling into a ditch that I wasn't sure I would be able to get out of.