

## Chapter 037|Baby steps

~ Love is friendship that has caught fire.

I waved Tristan over to me and Gloria's surprisingly no longer lonely cafeteria table.

He smiled at me, raised his finger for me to give him a minute, walked to the table he shared with a few of his friends, and with his tray in his hand, he pulled the chair beside me and sat down not at all acting like he was surprised at how much had changed in his absence or more like in a day.

Because my eyes had bulged out when I realized that not only was I and Gloria at the right table, most of the people were there to sit with me and they spoke to us like we have been friends for a while.

"So sorry about your brother. I heard about all that happened in my absence the minute I stepped into the school from Claire."

I rolled my eyes at the mention of Claire who was the school's press club president and had no issues with snooping around student's personal life as long as it gives her the specks of dirt she needed to publish and remain relevant here.

"Of course you did." I deadpanned, then beamed at him, "But how was Miami?"

He had gone to see his grandmother who just recovered from a heart attack, two days ago. I arched my brow at the wide goofy grin that appeared on his face since he had been reluctant to go at first, something about not wanting to have to put up with the picture-perfect family charade.

"Nicer than I expected, actually."

I nudged him slightly, "Don't tell me you found a girlie!"

He stuffed his face with mashed potatoes confirming my suspicions which made me laugh louder. He really looked cute when he was embarrassed, I thought even as I decide to rub it in by pinching his cheeks.

"So how is your brother now?" Tristan asked me after we were done clearing our plates and now heading back to our lockers.

"Fine. Though the doctor had made mention, that would not have been the case if not for the mysterious inmate who had dressed his wounds and also seemed to suddenly disappear into thin air when I had gone to thank him with my mother."

A crease was formed in between Tristan's eyes brow,  
"That's strange. Hope you reported your discovery to  
the prison officials."

I shrugged, "And why would I do that? I'm just glad  
my brother would be discharged tomorrow and\_\_"

"Back to prison." Someone completed from behind me  
and I smiled at Troy.

"I have told you countless times that you can make  
use of my lawyer to at least get a trial for your brother.  
He is the best at what he does and although now that  
your brother has spent quite a period of time in there  
and we can no longer remove him silently through  
underhanded means, my lawyer can reduce his  
sentence quite easily."

I smiled faintly at Tristan, "You have done so much

and honestly I'm too embarrassed to take you up on another offer." Although there remains the itty bitty problem that bugged me. Awaiting trial was bad enough for Rob, and although I knew he was wasting his time in there not serving his proper time, I didn't have the strength to watch him being located to a central prison which was more worst than the place he actually stayed now and after the knife incident, my fear had doubled thrice, especially with the numerous scary story I have heard about the kinds of criminals my brother would have to put up with there.

Rob was no criminal, he probably won't be able to survive there and since I was not prepared yet to just leave him in there by himself, I knew that was a path mandatory for him to thread as soon as possible.

"I know it'll be a lot thinking it through," Troy smiled at me almost like he could read my mind, "But once you are through, do ring me."

He nodded at Tristan and before I could snap out of whatever daze I currently was in to introduce the two he was already walking towards the basketball courtroom which made sense since they had a game in two weeks time.

"What?" I mumbled turning to meet Tristan somewhat amused yet suspicious brow raised.

"Look at you my little dear already learning way too fast how to ditch a star and get on with another." He ruffled my hair and I snorted at how wrong he was.

I and Troy are just platonic friends. Purely just friends. Something I have realized I have been saying a lot of times to Rob's friends who had come around to see Rob and ended up shooting me accusatory glares like I was the one who dumped Law's ass while the reverse was the case.

"Knock it off already, Trist. I didn't do any ditching and nothing is going on between me and Troy. We're just good friends and he gets me."

He wagged his brow, "But you do know what they say right? Love is friendship that has caught fire."

I scoffed, "We would just remember to have fire extinguishers in handy then." I quipped even as Tristan rested at the side of my locker, his hands in his pocket while I whipped my locker open and brought out my textbook.

"But seriously Prudence, you shouldn't let Law ruin the remaining days of Senior year for you because believe it or not, we ain't going to be this young again and every day that you accompany out with that sad pout is never coming back ever again. You should have a life because it only comes once anyway."

I chuckled, "It is crazy already that a few weeks ago all I wanted was to get past the nightmares of these walls but trust me it is even more surreal that I'm now supposed to try to enjoy what was once my nightmare."

"I'm not nearly as smart as you, but I know life is meant to be lived as it comes, so enough of the calculations inside and outside of the classroom because trust me as teenagers everything doesn't have to make sense else life would be a bore."

I slid my hands into his, as we descended the staircase biting back a snarky comment at how he was obviously shitting me since he fell on the list of the too good to be true triple power individuals in Evans high school.

Good looking.



Smart.

A good human being and recently I was finding out that he could also be a great friend.

Check. Check. Check.

"So what do you say?"

"Huh"

"About becoming a teenager again."

I smiled uneasily, "Look this is all still new to me. This life, you, people calling out my name and acknowledging me across the hallway," as if on cue my name is hollered across the halls by an afro American cute guy who I waved at.

"Then enjoy every single day while at it and I understand if you want to think about this. But while you're at that, how about we warm you up to I don't know, the path of irresponsibility?" He smirked and I shook my head at him amused.

"A beach party at my house. You know, drinks and just chilling, some dancing, chit chatting, perhaps truth or dare and everything lowscale. Nothing too overwhelming but enough to be a helluva good time for you." Our shoulders brushed even as he leaned into my ear, "Like a dip of your leg into the pool of reality and I promise that's all it'll be. Baby steps. Tomorrow at 8."

I met his gaze, "Just baby steps."

He nodded in agreement.

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