

Read Untouchable (Unstoppable 1) by Danielle Hill

Chapter 6

Six

Riley

"Did you hear Reno beat the shit out of Leon last night?"

My head whipped round to Liss, mouth agape. "What! Why?"

She shrugged, picking at her sandwich. "Not sure, babe. Happened outside of Beats'. There's a video circulating."

Beats' Burgers, owned by the most miserable old crank in Claremont, Mr. Beatty. Best shakes in town, though. Not that I got to taste them anymore. Beatty had barred school kids... because of all the fights. Thing was, though, it sat on the corner opposite Brett Renner's auto repair shop, not a smart choice of location for Ren to throw down. Especially with Leon. Must have been something big. The thought unsettled me.

I frowned, shifting my gaze around the room. Neither Reno nor Leon were anywhere in sight. I'd barely seen Leon in the days since our little... misunderstanding. He was avoiding me, and not even trying to be subtle about it.

A girl? The fries I'd already eaten settled into my stomach like lead, churning. Reno had sex with girls, used them, discarded them, rinse, repeat. He didn't fight over them. He didn't sacrifice lifelong friendships for them.

My breath hitched painfully, my hand going to my throat on instinct. Wide-eyed, I surveyed the room again, looking for any signs that someone had tamed Mr. Untouchable, that some girl had touched his black heart. The possibility pierced my regular colored heart and I grappled with my emotions, trying to keep them from spilling over. I didn't question what I felt for Reno, didn't poke at it too hard. There was... something there. Some dangerous urge I didn't want to think about, desires I needed to keep a lid on. I didn't name it.

Ever

Everything around me looked the same. Nobody stood on a table-top broadcasting their conquest through a megaphone, and believe me, if they'd nailed Reno's balls to a chair, they would be.

"This happened last night, Liss?"

“What I heard.”

“And you heard nothing else? No specifics about why?”

She shook her head slowly, the tips of her blonde pony sweeping her shoulders as she eyed me thoughtfully. “Nope.”

I nodded, getting to my feet. “Okay. I gotta go.”

“What? Where?” She uncrossed her legs, collecting her trash and dumping it on the tray with my uneaten fries.

I was already halfway to the doors by the time she stood, arms out, palms up, her face morphed in confusion.

“I’ll meet you in fifth period,” I called.

“Wait! Riley! What are you—”

I knew where he’d be, and so help me God, if he had a girl on his lap, I’d slap him six ways from Sunday.

“What the hell is going on?” I yelled, breaths panting. Man, it was a damn hike up here.

On the top level of the old auditorium, Reno sat with his knees braced, one hand dangling between them and the other holding a cig to his lips. He looked up, blowing a thin cloud of smoke before throwing me a smirk.

“Riley.” His eyes raked over me, his standard greeting. “You look pissed. Suits you.”

Dumping my bag by his feet, I plucked the cigarette from his fingers and launched it behind him.

He raised a brow.

“You hit Leon?”

I scowled at him, crossing my arms over my chest to stop them trembling. He was so damn cocky, so cool and confident. I was teetering between mad as hell and majorly turned on. And I hated that he could do that to me without even trying. More than that, I hated that he knew he could do that to me.

Leaning back on his elbows, legs stretched out in front of him, his eyes traveled my body again, lingering long enough to make sure he left goose bumps—demonstrating exactly what he was capable of doing to me. He removed another cigarette from the

pack and took his time lighting it, before blowing another cloud my way. Yeah, I was definitely mad as hell.

“Here to defend your boyfriend, Riley?”

I stopped, frowning. “What? No, I want to know what went down? Why'd you guys fight? It's not like you.” I lowered my head and looked down at the ground, exhaling slowly in a bid to calm my raging thoughts and roiling stomach. “No girl is worth your friendship, Reno.”

He was silent while another plume of grey smoke floated by. “You don't think so?”

I lifted my head. “No.”

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A muscle pulsed in his jaw as he dropped the cigarette, crushing it slowly with the heel of his sneaker. Something unreadable flashed in his expression when our eyes met, and my heart faltered. His eyes shuttered just as quickly though, erasing whatever it was I thought I'd seen.

“One might be.”

My lungs seized in my chest at his words, my whole body freezing as tears formed behind my lids. I looked away, blinking quickly. Rolling my lips together, I turned back, feigning mild interest. “Interesting. Who is she?”

I needed to know. I wanted to see her, know her name, her hair colour, hear her voice. The girl who mattered to Reno. I wanted to know what she had that I didn't.

What I should have wanted to know, was why the hell I cared enough that it felt like my heart was breaking open in the old auditorium in front of a guy who'd sooner toss it on the ground and snuff it out like a used cigarette before accepting any part of it. I shouldn't be feeling anything for him. I could never let him near me.

He smiled softly. “Nobody you know, Ri.”

I sucked in a breath. “So, a college girl? You guys fighting over an older woman, huh? That's pretty cliché.” The joke sounded feeble even to my ears. There was no lightening this situation, not for me, anyway.

He stood, rising to his full height and towering over me. His size should have been imposing, but it wasn't. He made me feel small in the best way, like he could pick me up, wrap me in those sturdy arms and keep me safe forever. Not that he would, and not that I'd let him. The line between us was laced with pheromones and arsenic. We skirted it, but neither of us was that crazy.

He reached out and tucked a hair behind my ear, his fingertips lingering on my bare skin. The surprisingly tender gesture caught me off guard, and I felt my head lean into his touch, my eyes drift closed. I snapped them right back open.

No! God, no.

These weren't feelings. It was lust. Pure, unfiltered, primal lust. Chemical, physical. It wouldn't be smart to go confusing myself. I didn't care for him, and he barely tolerated me. He knew he could twist me up in knots and I sort of enjoyed being twisted. But that was where it began and ended. It wasn't deep or meaningful. It was a game. One I wasn't sure I wanted to play anymore. I was losing whatever grip I might have had on this situation, and that was way more dangerous than I had prepared myself for. Forcing myself to take a step back, Reno's hand fell to his side and his darkened eyes flitted away.

"She's not older," he murmured, then brushed past me and left me standing staring after him until he was long gone.

Glancing down, my gaze landed on the almost full packet of cigarettes that sat discarded on the stone ledge.

All of this had to end. Yesterday.