

You' re Mine by Penny Brooks Chapter 25

Chapter 25

Harper

I can't stop staring at Easton's lips. They're complete perfection, and my skin grows warm when I remember what they feel like pressed against my own.

As if he can read my mind, he does exactly that, his mouth landing on mine before I can protest, before I can do anything but kiss him back. I grab hold of the front of his shirt, pulling him in closer versus pushing him away and he wraps his arms around me, crushing me to him as he deepens the kiss.

We're out in public. On campus. Anyone could see us. He's taking a risk to his reputation, being seen kissing me.

But it doesn't seem to matter to him. He's too busy stroking my tongue with his. Deepening the kiss, his hand coming up to touch my face, his fingers stroking my cheek. My heart flutters at his gentle touch and I have to remind myself this means nothing. He's just-I don't know.

Kissing me. For no apparent reason.

"Meet me after school," he says once we end the kiss. His forehead is pressed against mine, our harsh breaths mingling together. "We can figure out who did this to your locker."

"Why do you want to help me?" I swallow hard when his thumb streaks across my bottom lip.

"You're my best friend's sister. Why wouldn't I want to help you?" His hand drops from my face and he pulls away from me, taking a big step backwards. Like he needs the space. "I'll drive you home."

I shake my head. "I'm riding with Ryan, like I always do."

"Not today. You're riding with me."

"How am I supposed to explain that to my brother?" Ryan is currently pissed at Easton too since I brought up his name this morning to Mr. Rose.

"I'll take care of him," Easton says with all that confidence I can't help but admire. "Just say yes, Harper. Let me help you."

Slowly I nod, dropping my gaze so I stare at my feet. This is so weird. And confusing. Exhilarating.

Wonderful.

Having Easton's unwavering attention is something I'm not used to. Him wanting to help me?

Not used to that either.

"I'll talk to Ryan," he says. "But I need you to vouch for me too. Tell him I didn't do it."

He starts walking and I follow beside him, my heart racing, but not

from his nearness. No, now I'm nervous over convincing my brother Easton is innocent. "I told him I thought it was you."

Easton comes to a stop and so do I, the both of us facing each other. "Tell him you were wrong."

"You really didn't do it?" I have to ask again and I don't know why. Reassurance maybe?

He slowly shakes his head. "I didn't do it. I don't know who did either. Have you pissed anyone off lately?"

"Just you," I say, which actually makes him crack a smile.

And it's the most beautiful smile I've ever seen, I swear.

"Vandalizing school property isn't my style." We start walking again, and as we get closer to the cafeteria, I can tell he's scanning the clusters of people sitting outside, his gaze assessing.

Like he's trying to figure out who looks the guiltiest.

"Besides, that's a fast way to get yourself expelled," Easton continues. "I'm not that stupid. We're only seven months away from leaving this hell hole. I'm not about to risk it."

"You think it's a hell hole too?" I hate school. I know some people love high school-Sadie for one-but I find it the ultimate misery. I've never had an easy time making friends. I'm too quiet. Too into reading and homework and whatever else. I want to get good grades so I can go to a good college and get out of here. I wouldn't

mind forgetting the last four years. They weren't memorable.

Until now.

"I'm over it," Easton says, and that's all he offers. "Hey, there's Ryan."

We both glance over to see my brother standing just outside the cafeteria with Sadie by his side. By the firm set of his jaw, I'd say he's mad. When is he not?

Ryan spots us and makes his way over to where we're standing, going right up to Easton and shoving at his chest. "You better tell me you had nothing to do with Harper's locker this morning."

"You saw me leave the cafeteria with her and now you're mad?" Easton is totally taunting him. Something I would never have the guts to do.

"Sadie told me Harper needs to fight her own battles." My brother flicks a glance in my direction. But I can't take it anymore. You better tell us the truth, E. Did you fuck with my sister's locker? Call her a slut?"

"No," Easton says. "I had nothing to do with it. But I'm going to help Harper figure out who did."

Ryan steps away from him with a frown. "Why the hell are you bothering?"

Easton's gaze never wavers from mine as he says, "It's the least 1

can do. She needs help."

"I'll help her."

I roll my eyes. "I don't want your help, Ryan."

"Then let Sadie help you. Not this guy." Ryan points at Easton.

"What's your problem with Easton?" The words explode out of me, loud and shrill, and from the shocked look on my brother's face, I can tell he didn't expect it. "Seriously, why are you always on his case? Or my case? Why can't we be friends?"

Ryan laughs. "Easton is friends with no girls. He fucks them and discards them because he doesn't give a shit about anyone else but himself. If you want to put yourself through that kind of pain, then be my guest. Just don't come crying to me after he fucks you and tosses you aside like yesterday's garbage."

With those cryptic words, Ryan stomps away, Sadie approaching him but he just shakes her off. I chance a look in Easton's direction, shocked to see the anger and the sadness in his gaze. As if what my brother just said offended him. Maybe it did.

Hmmm. Maybe Easton has a heart after all.

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Chapter 26

Harper

I can't believe my idiot brother said that in front of Easton, or that Easton took it for that matter.

My cheeks burn with embarrassment, because he's not wrong is he? That's exactly Easton's MO and yet here I stand, right next to him, suddenly accepting his help along with a ride home when anyone who knows us or knows him, would find it suspicious.

Clearly Ryan's pissed and I know it's because he's being protective which just makes me even more nervous over the fact that a few minutes ago Easton had his tongue in my mouth.

And I didn't push him away.

I pulled him closer

And accepted his help despite his asshole tendencies.

"Let's go," Easton gently grabs my arm and pulls me towards his car. I have no other option but to follow him especially since my punk ass brother aka my normal ride is currently trying to find a tampon since it's clearly his time of the month.

Ugh.

Boys.

I tuck my hair behind my ears, keep my head down, and follow Easton out into the parking lot. I know people are watching us. I can feel their stares burning through my back as me and Easton for the first time, like, ever, get in his Jeep without my brother.

I've always loved his Jeep, I've had several fantasies where he stops by my house, picks me up, and asks to see me, not my brother-me. I never imagined that this would be how senior year would go, and my head is going to explode if any other surprises happen today-or if Easton attempts to kiss me again.

"Get in." Easton opens the white door and it feels like he's letting me into his life despite my brother being a crazy idiot.

I'm getting in

And it's not Ryan who's helping me but Easton.

The boy who kisses me one minute, then looks ready to trip me the next.

I gulp and crawl up into the seat, then put on my seatbelt.

It smells like coffee and spearmint gum which just reminds of the way he tastes and how much Ryan will lose his shit if he finds out.

I don't have time to be nervous, soon enough Easton's in the Jeep, and it's roaring to life as he backs up out of his parking spot, wordless, jaw clenched, looking beautiful and pissed at the same

time.

I glance out the window and frown as Blake watches us from the parking lot, his expression unreadable.

What's he staring at?

The Jeep?

Me?

Or is he just curious like everyone else at our school?

Ugh what a crappy day. If it wasn't Easton, who did it? Who has that much time on their hands in the first place? Embarrassment hits me fast and hard as I remember how everything fell out of my locker and how everyone saw.

Andddd I still have seven months of the school year left, which means this could happen again and again unless we figure out who did it

"You hungry?" Easton asks once we're on the street.

"Huh? What?" I frown.

His smile is more of a smirk, devastating as he bites down on the bottom of his lip before taking a right towards downtown. "It's a simple question."

"I don't know if I can eat right now." I sigh. "I want to just "

My voice trails off.

I feel anxious.

Off balance.

Everything seems so out of focus right now that it's hard to breathe, it's hard to even inhale because with every single breath I smell him, I feel him, and I want him.

And I shouldn't.

My brother would kill both of us.

Plus he's an asshole, both my brother and Easton and yet I can't stop the way my heart races every single time I glance over at him.

Easton curses under his breath and turns on the music. Great my not being hungry somehow pissed him off. How could I ever think that this could be anything but madness between us?

He passes my street. "What are you doing?"

"You're shaking."

"Am I?" I looked down at my hands, he's right, I had no idea. Is that why he asked if I was hungry? I'm still staring at my shaking hands and my black chipped nail polish when the Jeep turns off and he turns to face me, seatbelt off.

"Who hates you?" His question catches me off guard.

"You mean other than you?" I look around. We're not at my house, we're also not at a fast food restaurant.

We're at his house.

In his driveway

I stare up at the giant home.

Where everything came crumbling down, where he upped his meanness past what had been normal in the past..

"I don't hate you." He says it quietly and then he's opening his door and slamming it like his actions can't help but show annoyance and hate despite what words are tumbling out of his mouth.

Was he really not taking me home?

Without any other choices, I get out of the Jeep and follow him inside, rolling my eyes because he doesn't even turn around to see if I'm following, he just assumes that any girl with eyes and a pulse would dumbly jump off a cliff for him if he asked.

I hate that I don't even hesitate as I go through the front door and continue to follow him into his massive kitchen.

I don't ask if his parents are home-I assume they rarely are from what Ryan's said in the past.

It looks different without everyone partying.

Emptier.

Sadder.

"It was probably one of the girls -" He pulls out a bar stool and hops onto the white granite countertop. "Bitches be crazy.

I crack a smile. "Did you really just say bitches be crazy?"

"Made you laugh." He winks.

"You're an idiot."

"Thank you." He presses a hand to his chest and stares at me, it's the sort of stare I always wanted from him, it's also terrifying. I don't have time to dissect it, just like I don't have time to manage my feelings as he crooks his finger towards me.

I obey

I hate myself and him in that moment.

I hate my weakness.

I stop walking when I'm between his legs pressed up against the counter, he cups my face with both hands, his thumb brushes my top lip. "He was right you know."

"W-who?"

"Ryan." His eyes flash. "I don't date. I fuck."

I flinch. "Oh."

"You've had a bad day. I've had a bad day...since someone

accused me of being a sociopath.." He continues rubbing my lower lip and then he dips his thumb inside. I bite down,

His eyes flair to life. "Harder."

So I bite harder, I bite into his skin, I inflict pain and realize that his body's confusing it with pleasure.

"You're not leaving until I make you feel better." His voice is low, almost a growl before his mouth descends.

And I'm lost again to my enemy.

My brother's best friend.

His taste.

My downfall.