

Chapter 15: No Way Out

ELLIE

"What? You don't live here! I live here."

"You live here?"

"Yes, right there." I pointed to the door at the end of the hallway, against the side wall.

"So we're neighbors?"

"No! You can't be my neighbor. Tell me what you're doing here." I demanded.

"I already told you. I just moved in."

"No! You don't live here! You can't."

"My things are still on the way, but I've already rented the apartment."

"You're kidding?"

"No."

"You have to be."

"No, Ellie."

No! There was no way this could be happening. It had to be a misunderstanding.

"It must be a mistake."

"I don't think so," he said, lifting the apartment keys in his hand, shaking them.

No! No! No! Todd couldn't be my new neighbor. I tried to calm my breathing, almost feeling short of breath. The damn apartment had just been vacated, and now my fucking ex had rented it? What kind of nightmare was this?

I squeezed my eyes shut. This must be a nightmare. I pinched my arm, feeling the sharp pain, and then opened one eye. No! Damn it. He was still there.

"What are you doing?" he asked, confused.

"Nothing. Just checking if I'm awake."

"Is having me as your neighbor really that bad?"

"Are you seriously asking me that?"

"This could be an opportunity."

Opportunity?

"Excuse me." I started walking toward my apartment.

I didn't want to hear anything from him. I didn't want to see him. I wanted him to disappear and never show up again, just like he had before..

"Ellie..." he began, grabbing my arm as I walked past him.

"Don't touch me," I said through clenched teeth, pulling my arm away.

"You still hate me, don't you?"

"No. I don't hate you. I can't hate someone I've already forgotten."

I never wished so hard for something to be true.

"Well, at least one of us managed to do that, huh?"

Son of a bitch. How dare he say that? I wasn't going to stand there and listen to him spew a bunch of lies.

"Goodbye, Todd." I turned my back on him and kept walking until I reached my door.

"We should talk, El."

"Don't call me that," I growled, staring at the door as I fumbled with the key, feeling my blood boil.

"What are you doing tonight? We could..."

"I can't, I have plans," I said just as I finally managed to turn the key.

I stepped inside, slammed the door, and locked it from the inside. Leaning against it, I slid down until I was sitting on the floor, feeling like I wasn't safe even in my own home.

Todd brought all those feelings of abandonment rushing back, and seeing him was enough to make my chest ache. As if he had ripped a piece of my heart out.

Why did it still hurt so much? All the questions came flooding back when I saw him, consuming my mind.

Why did he leave me? Did he ever like me even a little? Why was I so stupid not to see that he was just a jerk? Why wasn't I enough for him?

Why did a part of me still like him even after everything? I didn't want him back, I hated him, but why did my stupid heart still have some hope?

Calm down, Ellie, it's just your neurotransmitters at work. Damn it! Todd Lockhart was my new neighbor, and I was going to have to deal with it. Which meant pretending he didn't exist and ignoring the fact that he shared a wall with me.

Wasn't having a date with that idiot Morgan enough? My energy was clashing with the universe's energy and triggering these events.

Go with the flow, Ellie, not against it. I took a deep breath. Everything was going to be fine. I was going to get rid of Ethan tonight. And then I'd figure out how to get rid of Todd.

I sent a message to Ethan, letting him know to pick me up at eight. All of this felt so strange. I never imagined I'd end up going out with him. Remember why you're doing this, Ellie. Resist and get rid of him.

All I wanted was to call Anna and tell her everything. But Ethan wanted to keep this between us. And it seemed like the most appropriate thing to do to avoid jeopardizing his work. On the other hand, Anna was my best friend, she would keep it a secret.

I stared at her name on the phone screen before dialing.

"Hi! *No! You're going to end up getting the furniture all dirty!*" she yelled at someone on the other end of the line. "Can you believe Will wants to change the wall colors? He says we need warmer tones."

"I think you two are already hot enough to set that apartment on fire."

She laughed.

"How are you? Is everything okay? Want to come over for lunch?" I took a deep breath.

"No, I'm not okay. I need to tell you something, but you have to promise not to tell anyone, including Will."

"Alright. Keeping a secret from my best friend probably doesn't violate the terms of the marriage contract."

"Are you sitting down?"

I heard the sound of her moving.

"Now I am."

"I have a date with Morgan tonight, and I just found out that Todd moved

into the apartment next door. Yes, my asshole ex is my new neighbor. Tell me how not to freak out?"

"What? Why the hell would he move right next to you?"

"Apparently, he didn't know I lived here."

"This is crazy! Do you really think he's not stalking you?"

"He seemed as surprised as I was when he saw me."

"This is unbelievable. You need to find a way to get rid of him. It could be dangerous to have him around."

"Are you implying we could have a relapse? Not in a million years."

"Ellie, it's me, your best friend. I know you still feel something for him."

"That doesn't mean I'm going to let him get close. That will never happen again."

"I really hope so. You know, I thought I heard you say you have a date with Ethan, but I must be hearing things."

"I really wish you were hearing things."

"Oh my God! You're going out with him? How did that happen? Why didn't you tell me?"

"Well, I guess last night I ended up agreeing to some stupid bet to get rid of him."

Commented [Ma1]:

"That doesn't make any sense. How are you going to get rid of him by going on a date?"

"He said if we went out and nothing happened, he'd leave me alone."

"You know that's not going to work, right?"

"Thanks for being a great friend and supporting me."

"You're being naive if you think he doesn't have some plan behind this."

"I have a plan too: resist him."

"Sure, that's going to be easy because we're not talking about the guy who's nearly six-foot-six, super ripped, with a model's face, who drives you crazy just by existing."

"You're not helping, Anna. I called because I needed my best friend to tell me that everything is going to turn out fine."

"If by fine you mean wild sex, then yes, Yes, I think that's going to end very well."

"I'm hanging up."

"Answer me honestly. Did you agree to this because you really want to get rid of him, or because there's a small part of you that wanted this?"

"Are you joking?"

"I just want you to think about it."

"I'm hanging up because you're doing the exact opposite of helping me."

"Stop trying to lie to yourself, Ellie. Enjoy this."

"Yes, I'll enjoy my peace once I get rid of him."

"Have you thought about just indulging in that body and then getting rid of him?"

"I think you're spending too much time with Zoe."

She laughed.

"Alright. What else do you need from me?"

"I think you've done enough."

"So, your plan is to go out with that hottie and do nothing?"

"Exactly."

"Good luck with that."

"Do you think wearing something ugly would help make him give up?"

"I think even if you wore a burqa, it wouldn't make a difference. Wear your sexiest dress and lingerie and show him what he's never going to have; that should also help you feel more confident. Have you taken a good look at him? You'll need it, trust me."

"Don't you think that would just provoke him?"

Go to next page

"He's going to do that anyway."

"You're right. Thanks."

"Try to have fun, at least, okay?"

"Sure, it'll be so much fun holding myself back from killing him."

"Bye, El, and enjoy the sex."

"Very funny." I hung up.

Calling her was a terrible idea. If she really thought I agreed to this because I had some interest beyond getting rid of him, she was crazy.

I spent two hours standing in front of my closet, trying to decide what to wear. I decided to follow Anna's advice. She was right about needing something extra to give me confidence.

I started searching for the lingerie that Zoe had given me as a gift; it would make me feel powerful underneath my clothes. And maybe a black dress, since I didn't know where we were going. A black dress always fits any occasion.

I found the lingerie in the drawer and grabbed the hanger with a black dress that reached mid-thigh, with long sleeves and a square neckline. It was tight but still elegant.

I looked at the black overcoat and picked it up. Mr. Morgan didn't need to

see anything; it was enough that I felt sexy and beautiful enough to walk all over him. I laughed to myself.

At eight, I got a message from him, letting me know he was waiting for me in front of my building. *Extremely punctual, Mr. Morgan.*

I felt a little nervous as I headed downstairs, not entirely sure why. It was just Morgan; I had dealt with him plenty of times before. *You've got this, Ellie. Get through it unscathed and be rid of him, it's simple.*

I took a deep breath as I stepped out of the building. My eyes found him, leaning against the car with his hands in his pockets, distracted by something on the street.

He was wearing black jeans and a black turtleneck sweater. He looked... Damn. He looked incredibly irresistible and completely sexy; I wanted to turn around and run. Agreeing to this was really a bad idea.

Carol Lopez

9 

very intriguing..keeps your interest and is charming and sexy

[View all Comments\(2\)](#) 

[Error correction of this chapter](#)