

Bullied By The Badboy By Maramartha Chapter 11

The Old Man And The Sea

Everything changes after Ben's punch. I don't find the necklace and the pranks start.

It started with the itching powder sprinkled on my books. Goosebumps cover my skin at the reminder. I don't want to remember that episode or the serious swelling it caused. Mum panicked, Dad made me stay at home for a day. The jam on my locker came next. It took Maria dipping a finger into the thick, red mixture to convince me it wasn't blood. The tampons made it look real and I know a certain she-devil who might have had a hand in that. Maybe it is all in my head but Ben hitting me in front of everyone encouraged this, made it kind of okay for them to unleash their reserved hate.

Students are everywhere as I rush down the stairs, casting backward glances at intervals as if expecting someone to appear behind me. Someone named Maria. I am avoiding her and Daniel, they have made it their job to walk me to all my classes. I won't let them continue babysitting me at the expense of being late. I reach my locker without anyone noticing, their loud conversation makes it easier to be ignored.

The bell for sixth period rings, literature class is next. I need to get one of the two novels for the class but I am afraid to open my locker. What will be inside this time? I take a deep breath and yank it open.

Nothing happens.

I let out a relieved sigh, reaching for the novel: The Old Man And The Sea. That is when I feel it, the rough surface my fingers come in contact

with. I retract my hand to stare at my glitter covered palms, a frown drops to my lips and I stagger backwards. But it is too late. The small sized buckets of glitter held together by a string dips, I slip and fall to the floor in my hurry to escape.

Someone screams my name from the end of the hallway, I jerk my head in their direction to see Maria mouthing words and gesticulating to something above me. My eyes snap to the bucket dangling from the top of my locker, shock glues my butt to the floor and I squeeze my eyes tight as glitters rain down on me for the second time. Rising slowly to my feet, I toss the bucket hanging from my head like a helmet.

She will pay for this.

Giggles from behind have my head spinning with anger, I stalk towards the three girls in matching outfits crowded at a locker with their phones clutched in their hands as they record my embarrassment.

“What?” The shortest snorts. “You think it’s funny?” I bark at them. The one with dimples visibly shrinks, her phone slips to the floor and her friends lower the hands holding their phones. “Get out of here.”

An arm slips around my shoulder, my scowl fades when I realise it’s Maria and I relax slightly, tensing almost immediately at the murmurs that float around us. I can’t wait to be done with this school. “Easy tigress. Smile,” she says with a toothy grin. I roll my eyes, easier said than done. As if she will remember how to smile if someone empties buckets of glitter on her. “You look like a unicorn threw up on you.”

“Unicorns don’t exist,” I reply with a frown. Hiking my bag up my shoulder, I rummage through my locker for hidden buckets of glitter, anything shiny or sparkly but my search comes up empty. Maria helps in getting some of it out of my hair but when I take a look at the compact

mirror she passes to me, I have to admit I look like a rainbow. I kick the bucket out of my way and return her mirror. "Where's Daniel?"

Her cheeks flush, she transfers her bag to the other hand. "He's absent." As usual. Her eyes light up, she leans so close to me she gets glitters on her black tank top. "We have a date," she says. A high pitched scream follows her statement, I slap a hand over her mouth and she licks my palm until I release her.

Some of her excitement eventually transfers to me, I forget I am covered in glitters for a moment and grab her arms. We jump, squealing and performing a two second happy dance which ends with laughter.

"When?" I ask.

"Friday night."

Today is Wednesday.

"Maria has a date on Friday night," I say in a singsong voice while bouncing on my toes and she turns a deeper shade of red. We have never had boyfriends. To me, they are not worth it but I'm happy for her.

I fire rounds of questions at her, she volunteers the answers without fuss. Last time I checked, she was crushing on him from afar and now there's a date? We start for our classes, enjoying the quietude of the hallway as we giggle and squeal at intervals without fear of being recorded. While I was stuck looking for my necklace, they were getting acquainted. My fear of being the third wheel evaporates at her smile, she is happy and it makes me happy enough to forget I might soon be neglected by my best friends.

We stop at my class first, she hugs me tight and I pat her back awkwardly, ruffling her blonde hair in the process. She pulls back with a look of uncertainty. “Talk to Ben, he might be able to put an end to this.”

Yeah, right. The same Ben who is the cause of my misfortune, I would rather talk to a tree.

“Sure,” I tell her. She swipes at my cheeks, I grimace at the amount of glitters that covers her palms. I thought I wiped them all, I can deal with having them on my outfit but not my face. “We will both be late if you keep up with this.” She nods and pulls me in for another hug, I snicker. Must be her period.

A round of laughter greets me once I open the door. Heads turn in my direction, I flash them my middle finger but Ms Eva, the literature teacher calls me out on it in a haughty tone. Miserable old hag with seven cats and no husband. Her life’s purpose is to annoy students and take sides with the jocks and richest kids.

“They were laughing at me,” I say in my defense but she wants to hear none of it. They don’t bother to hide the fact they were laughing, I let out a low hiss. She hits her table to signify silence at the increased laughter, I pray for the scripts to fly out the window. When I am out of hearing shot, I whisper, “Bitch.”

I am acting like a spoiled brat right now but they earned it. I feel a pair of eyes boring into me, I turn to blue orbs fixated on me and show him my middle finger. Jerk. He is the reason I am the laughing stock of the school. A corner of Ben’s lips twitches, I hold his gaze for another second before looking away.

Handsome jerk. It will be easier to hate him if he was ugly, dumb and fat. The fading dark spot around his eye only adds to his allure, I give myself a mental punch for checking him out. This guy is a prime dick.

Why must we share another class? One is enough. I might have attended AP Literature only once but I know everyone who should be here and his name is not on that list. My gaze falls on his desk, he's the only one with a photocopied copy of the novel. Is he really part of this class or he came to torment me?

"Find a seat, Sparkles," the hag says, eliciting another bout of laughter from the class. Stupid woman. I remain standing in the middle aisle for a moment, confused as my eyes take in the new arrangement.

Everyone is in pairs, everyone but Ben. He notices me staring at the seat closest to him and props one leg on it. I suppress the urge to walk over to him and slap the back of his head. Who says I want to sit with the pompous asshole? I occupy the lone seat by the wall covered with quotes from great philosophers and writers. Bringing out my novel, I start flipping through it until I get to the page written on the whiteboard.

"Find a partner."

Without looking up from my novel, I know Ms Eva is talking to me and I make a show of dragging my chair to my new partner, loving the look of irritation that crosses the hag and her supporters faces at the screeching noise my chair makes until I stop beside Ben. I yank the chair his leg is on, causing his foot to drop with a soft thud. He winces but covers it up with a glare when I notice. I occupy the seat without remorse, a proud smile slipping to my lips when I catch him glowering at me. Two can play the bully.