

## Bullied By The Badboy By Maramartha Chapter 18

That' s right

My eyelids flutter open, I squint at the bright lights pouring into my face. A sharp pain pierces my skull, I hold my hands to my head and clench my eyes shut, opening it at the caresses on my arm. Maria's face hovers over mine, I blink to clear the dots in my vision. The headache eventually subsides, I send a small smile her way to allay her worries. With her help, I sit up and scan the room. There are only two beds and the other one is empty. Maria is on a small bench by my bed, my hand clutched protectively in hers.

Light filters in from the high windows, I stare at the white walls until it clicks. We are at the school clinic. Pushing the damp hair out of my forehead, I whimper when I try to bend. My lower stomach hurts like I was beaten badly in a fight. That's right, I was punched. Punched by that asshole in an unfair fight.

Maria must have read my thoughts, she turns my face to one side while stroking my cheek and I am reminded of Ben's fingers cutting into my soft skin. She passes me a hand mirror, I flinch at the visible fingerprints on my cheek. The marks will fade, makeup will hide the scratch on one side of my face but it still stings. He also left his imprints on my neck from when he almost strangled me. My parched throat closes up at the memory. I cough, she shoves a cup of water into my hand, I down it in one gulp.

The school's nurse, Mae walks in with a notepad in her hand and pen tucked behind her ear. Her brown skin glistens under the bright, fluorescent lights and her smile brings one to my lips. Maria slides to the end of the bench so Mae can get more access to me. She hooks a finger

under my jaw to inspect my cheek, neck and other open skin available for inspection and I chew hard on my lips.

Nurse Mae eyes lower to my stomach, I lick my busted lips. “Theresa Mower.” I nod. “How do you feel?”

Those eyes are like lasers piercing through the fabric covering my stomach, I murmur, “Better.”

“Very good.” I shake my head when she tries to lift the hem of my shirt, I don’t want Maria to see my belly. Granted, she has seen it before but there are some unexplainable bruises that didn’t come from Ben but fighting. They will fade, blend with my skin as they always do but for now, they are very much new and visible. Nurse Mae smiles kindly at me, I relax when she straightens up to fold her hands behind her. Maria winks, I pout. “Thankfully, it was nothing serious so we didn’t have to call your parents.”

My parents. I inhale shakily and expel the air through my mouth. I totally forgot about them. They would have lost their mind if they saw me in here. Mum would bombard me with questions, cry and cling to Dad who would take charge of the situation. My head jerks in a nod. I am fine. I am completely alright.

“Does that mean I am free to go?” I ask. I throw one leg over the bed, pain scorches my inside but I put on a brave front. I am okay. I am fine. If I don’t want them to get my parents, I have to be. “I feel okay.”

“Sure.” She eyes me, holding a finger up, she pulls out a bottle of pain relief from her large pocket. The pills inside clatter when she shakes the bottle. “This will help. If you feel any sort of way, come back.”

The smile I give her is polite. There is no way I am coming back here even if it hurts, I will be fine. We fall into silence when she leaves the

room, Maria takes my hand, cracking my knuckles with a small smile. I don't remember who brought me here but it sure as hell couldn't have been her. A mild throbbing in my stomach has me popping a pill in my mouth, Maria snatches the bottle before I can take another.

"Did he do this?" she whispers.

I am not sure what she means by this, I don't look so bad. I shrug, intent on playing dumb.

"Who?" I pick at the loose thread on the knee area of my ripped jeans.

"Ow," I say when she flicks a finger on my forehead and she grins.

Glaring at her, I say through gritted teeth, "Don't do that again."

She rolls her eyes which finally come to rest on the stinging spot on my cheek, I look up. "You know who. Did he do this?" I shrug again. She jumps to her feet, eyes darkened with fury. "I'll be right back."

"Maria, forget it." But she's out the door with the same speed from this morning.

Falling back to the bed on my unhurt side, I close my eyes. I snicker till my side aches from laughing hard. I asked for permission to leave yet I am trying to make myself comfortable in a bed size smaller than the one in my room. I don't know how long I stay there but the click clack of Maria's heels jolts me awake. Peeling my eyes open, I blink at an angry Maria who plops to the bench.

"Ben is not in detention. I heard he got detention." Good for him. In my opinion, he should have gotten a more terrible punishment. She props her elbows on my bed, I ruffle her hair and she scowls, earning a giggle from me. Pushing a pillow behind me, I sit up and grab my phone on the stand. "But the dude is not there. I swear if they let him off easy after this, I'll report him to the police, the FBI. Everybody."

Unlocking my phone, I laugh. In ten minutes, the last bell will ring.

“Shouldn’t you be in class?”

Maria gasps, pressing the back of her hand against her cheek like she’s the injured one. “I’m distressed. Do you expect me to be in class when my best friend is sick?” Her hand migrates to her chest, she levels me with her infamous disappointing gaze. I snort with laughter. “Tessa, you wound me.”

“Point of correction, I am not sick, just injured,” I say.

She scoffs. “Same difference.”

The door to the sick bay opens before I can fire a response, our eyes flit to it and Maria starts shoving things into my backpack. “Alright, Tessa, time to go.” I roll my eyes, arms folded on my chest as Daniel closes the distance between us. She ignores him to glare at me. “Tessa, Nurse Mae said you can leave.”

Daniel makes a funny face above her head, doing the thing where he looks like he is cross eyed with his tongue dangling. I giggle and Maria’s stony gaze darts between both of us. Okay, the silent treatment is still ongoing but I don’t want to be part of it. This is why friends shouldn’t date within the same circle, you have to pick sides. I don’t want to since I suspect Daniel brought me here. He ignores Maria and slides onto the bench, paying no mind to the snickers and wide distance she creates between them.

“Hey, how do you feel now?” he asks, I pout. “Sorry I couldn’t wait, we had a pop quiz.”

Ah, I knew it had to be him. He pinches my nose, I try to strangle the cute giant. Daniel is tall with lean muscles that can easily earn him a spot

on the football or basketball team but nope, he's determined to finish his four years sentence and get out of here. I hate school sometimes but he hates it more.

"It's fine. Thanks." I point to a silent Maria. "As grumpy here said, I am good to go. I'm ready to leave."

Daniel glances at Maria like he's seeing her for the first time, she stares at her nails, wringing her finger and I have to clamp my hands on my mouth to keep from hollering. She's nervous. What? A giggle escapes me, I look away when their gazes flicker to me. Maria and nervous cannot exist in the same line.

"Maria," Daniel whispers.

"Don't talk to me."

I tap my phone, pretending to scroll through my messages when the sad truth is, no one cared to know why I wasn't in class. No one. The only two who care are right before me, silently glowering at each other. I catch Maria's frown as Daniel closes the gap, she swallows and I switch on my camera, setting it to video mode. They are so cute and I can't wait to tease them about this when they finally get together.

Their faces are a bit far off in my phone but I am content with watching them through the rectangular screen. Daniel whispers something that causes Maria's head to jerk up, her eyes narrow to vicious slits. I grimace, feeling bad for Daniel. I don't know what he said but he fucked up with that last statement.

"You are sorry? Fuck outta here with your apology because I don't need it." Uh oh. This is bad. Maria is not one to swear. There are degrees to her anger, since she's still speaking English, this won't end well. "I saw you with Olivia after the game and you couldn't even be bothered to talk

to me.” She scoffs, I lower the phone and quit recording. I feel like an asswipe intruding on such a private moment so I turn to the wall. Her voice cracks, hurt fills it and I am tempted to get up and hug her tight. “You should have at least done me the simple courtesy of cancelling our date to my face rather than send that silly text.”

“Tessa,” she calls out to me, yanking the hem of my jeans. I tense. “Let’s go, it’s time to leave.”

“Not yet, Maria. Tessa, don’t listen to her.”

They both turn to stare at me, hurt evident in their eyes, expecting me to pick a side. I shake my head, I am such a coward. “Sorry guys, you have to sort this one on your own.” I get out of the bed, my steps a bit slow as I shuffle to the door. I throw them one last glance, Maria glares, Daniel sighs. “Love ya. Bye.”