

## **BadBoy 26**

### Chapter 26

#### **Tell me**

Let: I'm sorry you get bullied. And I understand how you feel about your dad, I know that feeling all too well. Daddy used to be so busy but he tried to be there for us as much as he could. I miss him sometimes, we both do. Some days hurt more than others but we do our best to survive. The divorce hit him so bad he spiralled out of control, was always in and out of rehab. The few times he was sober, he was the best dad a kid could ever ask for. Daddy didn't want the divorce but mom did, she wasn't happy in the marriage anymore. We all knew, their fights became more frequent but we hoped she would change her mind.

It's funny how no one asks the kids what they want, they don't care how the separation affects us. We didn't even ask to be brought into this fucking world. It's unfair of them and maybe selfish of me to wish she stayed with him a little longer until AJ and I were much older to handle the divorce but I wish she did. Maybe he might still be here with us today. Daddy was a really good man, they were both good parents.

Lol. I think I am rambling now. Enough about me and my sad stories, let's talk about you, miss. Am I right? You are a girl, right? Why haven't you been to a party? Why haven't you kissed or dated? Tell me.

My cheeks hurt from smiling so much as I bring out my pen to reply Let, I fold his letter neatly and slide it into my bag to store it in my favourite shoebox once I get home. I try to picture him hidden behind the shelves in the library as he scribbled those words to me. Does he wait till he gets home before replying? Does he get so anxious about my reply? How often does he check? I give up on trying to figure out the mystery guy and start writing.

Me: Yes, I'm a girl. What do you want to know? Ask me anything and I promise to answer. Relationships are complicated. I don't think us boys and girls should be thinking of it at this point. We have our whole life ahead of us, we can meet people, fall in love and have our happy ever after. No need to rush into it.

Guilt threatens to choke me when I reread the lines I wrote. The white lie mocks me, I turn off the radio playing in the background and stare out the window into the empty lot. He was honest with me, I owe him that much. My chest rises and falls, I tug on my ponytail one last time and resume writing, determined to be honest. We don't know each other, I can get away with telling him whatever I want. Plus, I trust him.

Me: BUT. The major reason is, relationships scare me. A lot of things can go wrong, I don't want to lose lifelong friendships over a failed relationship. Or be the middleman when there's a fight between two of my best friends. Sorry if I'm not making sense but it happened to me once, I can't risk it happening again so, no relationships for now. Besides, I don't think anyone wants to date me. No one notices me and I like it that way. \*Giggles\* I admit I make efforts to be invisible, I don't know why but I am kind of used to it.

There isn't really much to say about me, I am the good girl, the poster child for good behaviour. Straight As with the occasional B+ that happened only once. Um, yeah, I think that's all there is to know about me. Now I'm the one rambling. Lol. I ramble a lot when I am nervous, you are making me nervous. Lol.

Anyways, how's AJ? I hope you two are fine and taking care of each other? I'm sure you are. If you need anything, don't hesitate to ask, I will always try to help. Before you say it, the answer is no, I don't pity you. I just want to help. Two of you don't deserve the hand life dealt you and if you need anyone to talk to, I am here for you. I hope you take me up on my offer, I don't mind reading your rambles, I ramble too.

Someone bangs on my window, I scream and in my panic, the paper flies to the backseat. My hand goes over my chest to calm my racing heart, I breathe through my mouth until the pounding subsides. Maria raises her brows in mockery and folds her arms on her chest. She gestures for me to roll down the windows, I grudgingly oblige her.

"The bell already rang twice, Tessa," she says, "what are you still doing in here?" Her eyes wander to the sheets scattered on the backseat, I start shaking my head. No, she can't see it. I have never complained to her about my dad or his job. It's bad enough that I invaded Let's privacy, I won't forgive myself if she reads his letter. "Is it a boy?" She opens the backdoor, picks up my letter to him and I swallow. "Can I?"

"No." She snickers, I angle my upper body so I am facing her. My fingers itch to snatch the letters spread on her laps but I stay put. If I show too much interest in it, it will pique her curiosity and against my wish, she will read them out and tease me about it for days. "Please don't read it," I say in a soft voice, playing with the hem of my shirt. She pushes it to a corner, I smile when she joins me in the front. "Thank you."

"It's a boy, yeah? You can always tell me anything." My lips pucker, I manage to nod and she squeals, clapping like the dramatic cheerleader she truly is. "I knew it was a boy. Is it Ben? Your long term crush."

My head rounds in her direction so fast I feel dizzy. Blinking rapidly to clear my vision, I ask, "Ben? Ew, no." Ben is far from disgusting but whatever. She pouts. "Why would you say that? He hates my guts."

“Can’t blame the poor boy. He missed two weeks of lecture because of you, now he has a bulk of notes to copy,” she says while inspecting her nails coated in red polish. “And you are a bit annoying too. So...”

“Hey.” I punch her shoulder lightly and she giggles. “I’m not annoying,” I whisper, “and he did deserve detention for punching me. It’s not okay to hit a lady, not okay to hit anybody.” She agrees with a nod, I lean over my seat to pick the papers strewn on the backseat. She is quiet as I slip the letter into my bag, I have to drop it in the library later. When I am settled on my seat, I turn to her. “Why do you think I have a crush on Ben?” I fake a shudder, force my lips into a tiny frown. “No way. He’s not my type.” Ben is very much my type but I am way out of his league. Besides that, I think he’s dating Olivia. “I’m not his type.”

“Sharon saw you drop him off last week,” she says and my cheeks burn. I wipe my clammy hands on my sweatpants, she wiggles her brows suggestively. Her sister is such a little snitch. “Why was the guy who punched you twice in your car?”

I shrug, she twirls the end of her curls around a manicured finger. “He needed a ride, I was there.” She casts me a long suspicious look and hums. “There was nothing to it, Maria. We share a few classes and that’s it. The boy can’t stand the sight of me.” The scowl he passed my way when he saw me and Curt flashes in my mind, I shake it off. “Even if I have a crush on him, nothing can happen.” Maria brings out her phone, I am not sure what her plan is but I say, “Don’t even think about it. I don’t need your help.”

And I don’t need Ben to notice me because I think I might be crushing on Let. Maria slides her phone back into her shorts, she runs her hands over her tanned legs and sighs. The warning bell rings, both of us look at each other and shrug. We should get back to class since lunch is over but I don’t feel like it and from her composure, neither does she. I push my seat back to create more leg room, she does the same.

“I asked Daniel out,” she blurts out after a moment of comfortable silence. My eyes round to saucers, she throws her hand over her eyes to shield herself from my reaction. I open my mouth and close it without a word, she finally looks at me. Her smile disappears. “I think it was a bad idea.”

My head bobs, I think so too but I don’t say that. They will make a power couple but if that video is still out there, their relationship will not happen. She might not recover from it. Curiosity prickles my skin, I throw one leg over my seat and pull her hand between mine. She offers me a smile, my heart skips.

“What did he say?” I ask quietly. Maria is hot, any guy she asks out should be excited but Daniel is not any guy. He has a lot at stake. She pulls her hand away, dumping her legs on my dashboard. I pretend not to notice when the voices in my head are screaming for her to get her feet off my baby. “Maria. Maria!”

“He didn’t say no but he didn’t say yes,” she says with a shrug. My muscles relax, that’s okay, I guess. But the look on her face says otherwise. “He said he has to show me something first.” Sitting up, she folds her arms across her chest. “What do you think he wants to show me? I swear to God if it’s something stupid, I’ll kill him. I’ll be done with his stupid ass for good.” Her back connects with the seat, she frowns. “It better be worth it.” Her gaze darts to me. “What do you think? Should I be bothered?”

That video replays in my mind, bile rises to my throat. I shake my head. “I don’t know what to think.” Her laser gaze fixates on me, I rotate my shoulders. I promised to keep it a secret until Daniel resolves it but it gets harder to uphold my end of the bargain with each passing day. Giving her shoulder a squeeze, I say, “Maybe you are overthinking it.” She nods, I smile a little and she huffs out a laugh. “He likes you.”

“Who wouldn’t?” The sound of our laughter fills the car, I snort. I cross my legs under me, she leans back until her head is touching the window. Fifth period should be starting now. “Halloween is almost here.”

We both know she’s only interested in the party because it has been confirmed Daniel will be there. “Yeah,” I say. Ben’s birthday is also around the corner. I already got the ingredients for the cake, all that’s left is to bake it and I’ll do that on the morning of the seventeenth. “We should get back inside.”

Maria’s lips turn down in a frown, she finally nods and we hop out of the car with our bags. Linking our hands, we stroll casually to the front doors and push it open. Today is not the day we will miss classes.