

## **BadBoy 29**

### Chapter 29

#### **Watch out**

It is stupid. I can be prosecuted for this but I still think of it. How Ben's finger felt against my lips.

Gosh, I'm so hopeless and foolish for thinking about kissing the guy who treats me like gum on his shoe. Last night, I had a dream where he asked me out. I press another finger to my lips, trace the Cupid bow like Ben did. Butterflies flutter in my belly at the thought of kissing him on stage, he has to play Romeo, I'll be Juliet. My inner voice mocks my fairytale and a soft sigh escapes me. I am getting ahead of myself again. Maria nudges my shoulder, I snap out of my reverie, trying desperately to wipe the smug smile off my face but it sticks.

"What?" I yell when she wiggles her eyebrows suggestively like she caught me with a hand in the cookie jar. "Maria. Speak now or forever hold your peace." Her brows only shoot higher, she winks and I roll my eyes. She does this a lot, makes you so antsy you start confessing to unknown crimes. "Fine, don't say it."

Grabbing my bag from the passenger seat of her car, I hurry to the front of the school, ignoring her cry to wait up. I turn sharply and place a hand on my waist. "Are you going to tell me why you are smiling like that or not?" Within a minute, she covers the distance and throws an arm around my shoulder. We take the stairs two at a time, she stops me from opening the door. "Maria Vega, what is your problem?"

The drama queen finally opens her mouth to talk. "Why didn't you just tell me you and Ben are a thing?" Confused, I squint and place the back of my palm against her forehead to be sure she is okay. She slaps my hand away. "I have evidence so don't you dare deny it. Best friends tell each other everything, Tessa."

Her facade of seriousness doesn't crack, I push the bag sliding down my shoulder. Glaring at her, I spit out, "Deny what?" She scowls like the answer is obvious but it isn't. I have not the faintest idea what shit she is talking about. I try to open the door again but she swats my hand. Jesus. Clenching the straps of my backpack, I ask through gritted teeth, "Did you wake up on the wrong side of the bed this morning?"

Mondays are not our favourite days of the week but we have survived it so far, we can endure it for the rest of the year and next. Silence meets my question, I push the door open and take my first step in.

The entrance is crowded, I meander through the students huddled in groups, discussing in hush tones. One thing is common with them, the subtle glances they throw my way. I steal a look over my shoulder to see Maria glaring at me, I don't bother to ask what the issue is before rushing to my locker. I am not in the mood for this today. The last time everyone paid this much attention to me, it didn't end well.

At my locker, I open the metal door slowly. If the pranks have resumed, I need to be prepared. Steeling my heart for the worse, I hiss when Maria yanks the door open. This girl. Nothing comes out of my locker, I check every nook and cranny. No glitters, no itching powder, no used tampons. Nothing odd.

The whispers along the hallway increase, I catch two students pointing at me but they look away once I straighten up. I flip through the activities of the weekend and last week for a hint but my brain comes up empty. The only attention-worthy thing I did was fight at the ring, with my mask on, of course. Yes, I won but no one knew it was me, except Ben but my match was after his. I also went to the supermarket to get the items for his cake since his birthday is on Friday. No one from school saw me but they are acting strange. As strange as Maria or worse. Does this have to do with Ben? I haven't seen him since drama practise. I hope it stays that way.

"Care to explain this?" Maria shoves her phone into my face, nearly blinding me with the sleek device. She thinks with her anus sometimes and this is one of those times. I don't get to see what the fuss is all about when she adds, "You are not crushing on him, you two don't have a thing yet you are kissing him."

Ignoring my crazy best friend, I tap the video on the screen and my breath catches when a scene from drama club plays. Without watching the rest of the video, I say, "There was no kissing." She huffs and folds her arms on her chest, pushing her cleavage. "Maria, there was no kissing. This happened during practice."

I might as well have been talking to myself. Brows furrowed, I hit the replay button. The video starts when Ben leans close to me. The distance between me and him is nonexistent and when he dips his head to whisper into my ears, it looks like he pecked me. But he didn't. The scene where he traced the outline of my lips makes our position more intimate, something that wouldn't be a problem if we were a couple. Heat floods my body at that thought, I blush furiously when Maria clears her throat. The video ends with our eyes locked and his finger on my lips. To outsiders, we look like couples about to kiss or do more. But I was about to melt into a puddle.

Maria snatches her phone from me, I bring out mine and check BG. At this rate, they will ruin my life. Is Whitney in charge of the site? It has to be her who made that video, the jocks were too busy laughing at me to make one. If Ben didn't trap me with those evil eyes, I might have noticed. The comment section of the video is blowing up, I cringe at some of the brash, nasty comments, cheeks burning at the caption.

Nerd girl snags BH famous jock?

Ew. Who captioned this shit? First of all, I am not a nerd, I have been to a pub, I have a fake ID and my best friend is a famous cheerleader. I am selective about the people I roll with, that's all. I shove my phone into my backpack and face Maria, her lips pucker into a frown.

"It is not what it looks like," I start, "look at Ben's face, he was literally about to kill me. Literally."

Her head rests on the locker, she says, "With his lips? His fingers? Or his sexiness?"

Against my wish, laughter trickles out of my mouth. Maria tries to hide her laughter but the corners of her lips twitch till she gives in. "No. None of that." But I won't mind death by those hot lips. She pouts and I explain the whole encounter to her. The glint in her eyes dies, her frown gradually fades. He will never kiss me. "Yep, nobody is kissing anybody."

"So you didn't snag the badboy?" She sounds disappointed. If I am being honest, I am too. A bit. My chest closes in on me, I shrug it off and put on a brave front. We won't work out. "Such a big fat shame."

Whatever, as if he will agree to be with someone like me. "I didn't snag anyone. I told you he hates me."

"I doubt it." We start walking, I am dying to forget this conversation. "Ben likes you. I know when a boy likes a girl and that boy likes you as much as you like him." Ah, I don't like him. She tsks. She might know a lot about boys but she is wrong on this one. I have interacted with Ben, I know who he truly is. We stop at her class. "Watch out for Olivia. The bitch already hates you, don't give her another reason."

"Isn't she like with Noah now?" I saw both of them leaving the janitor's closet on Friday. The girl acts as if she's disgusted by the idea of high school dating but she is forever sneaking in and out of locker rooms, library and other secret places with a new guy yet Ben still hangs out with her. "She doesn't have to worry, I don't like her man," I say, forcing myself to sound nonchalant. It is kind of expected for her to be with guys like Ben and Noah. Maria nods, I draw her in for a hug and she pats my back. "I'll see you later."

Once Maria is out of sight, I lean on the wall for support. Her words echo in my head, fear tightens my belly. If Olivia thinks I like Ben, she will come for me. Do something worse than that video of Daniel. I push away from the wall and start for my class, I can worry about that later. Ben doesn't even like me.

So lost in these thoughts, I miss a step and crash into someone who shoves me to the floor. Pain shoots up my knee, I whimper and my body goes rigid at the pink liquid that trickles down my hair into my face. Cold seeps into my skin, it takes me a minute to recover and dab my eyes with my shirt.

Irritation burns my inside. These girls will get it from me today. After getting rid of most of the viscous liquid, I stagger to my feet and my anger evaporates.

Olivia is flanked on each side by her minions, I can't take five of them down. She flashes me a smile, my eyes dart to the empty cup of yogurt in her hand and she coos, "Oops, so sorry. I didn't see you there."

Even if she was blind, she would have seen me. The witch pushed me. She stalks forward, on instinct, I take another step back. Her lips turn down in a frown, her finger shoots out to signify me to stay put. I stop moving and she bridges the gap. With her heels, she towers over me and a smile breaks out on her lips as her gaze sweeps over me. I need to change. Her hair is in a high ponytail with the tip dyed purple, I am tempted to strangle her with it. She leans close like Ben did in the video, her breath tickles my ear.

"Benjamin Carter is mine," she whispers. Her icy tone sends shivers down my spine, Olivia stands straight and smiles at me. Stretching an arm behind her for a paper towel, she folds it in half and pushes it into my hand, giving me no option to refuse it. "Be careful, Theresa. Next time, watch where you are going."