

BadBoy 32

Chapter 32

First kiss

Maria is crazy. Like insane. Her only solution is much more crazy. I close my eyes once another student walks into the class. The person occupies the seat beside me, I stiffen. His cologne makes it easy to identify him but I don't glance his way. He kissed her. I am only taking one of the two pieces of advice Maria offered—to stay away from the site until something bigger blows this over. Their kiss is everywhere on the site, they are trending as couple goals. Yuck. As for her other advice, no, never.

On our bucket list, item number two is: Tessa will get a boyfriend. And today, Maria changed it to: Tessa will date Benjamin. I almost burst out laughing from thinking about it. I can't even get a kiss. The guy will not look at me twice. It's bad enough I have to complete most of the items on the list before the school year runs out, now, she wants me to date Ben. God forbid. Not after he has had his lips on that walking disease called Olivia.

I don't want that twerp again, she can have him. My subconscious mocks me, I slam my note on my slab. Fine, I am way out of his league and so is he. He's not my type. I like faithful guys who don't kiss liars.

Asher's voice floats into my head, I release a shaky breath. Maybe it was out of excitement. I hate to admit this to myself but he was genuinely happy, the happiest I have ever seen him. Ben's closed off and cool but I felt his joy. Asher said he has never gotten a cake surprise, that's why he wanted to do it for him. But he should have confirmed it from the people hanging around the locker. Olivia is a good liar, I had first-hand experience with her. Hayden too.

Besides, I will willingly kiss him. Heck. I'll make him cake every day if it means getting his kisses. My eyes begin to droop, I cover my mouth to stop a yawn from escaping. I missed hours of sleep because of this. Reason 12355626 why dating in high school is a big no for me. My eyelids are heavy by the time Mr Sam walks in with an apology, I force myself to stay awake until lunch break which is forty minutes away.

Ben taps me, without looking his way, I say, "Go and disturb your girlfriend. Leave me alone."

"You jealous?"

I scoff. "You wish."

But I am. My heart shrinks so much it hurts. Ben leaves me be and I am fine with that, he can spend the rest of his life kissing Olivia. Too bad she is already cheating on him with Noah. Isn't karma such a bitch? She might be late but she does show up to serve. I hope I am around when he finds out about his slut.

The lecture starts, Mr Sam introduces a new topic but I am unable to concentrate. Every nerve in my body screams for me to check the site but the sane part of me squelches that urge. Is he a good kisser? Must feel nice to have access to those pink lips pinker than mine. Does he use lip balm to get that pink effect? I breathe slowly. I shouldn't be thinking about that. He kissed the enemy and that's unforgivable.

"A little birdie told me you cried in the hallway," Ben says when Mr Sam turns his back to us. "Why?"

"None of your business." On second thought, I add, "You and your little birdie can go fuck yourself."

If he cared, he wouldn't have kissed that bitch. And why is he bothering me? I am not cut out for this attitude switch. He should stick to being an ass, I liked him better that way. Maybe I didn't but whatever.

"Help me out here, Miss. I'm trying to be nice. Stop treating me like shit, remember that line?"

He still won't call me by my name. "Just leave me alone."

"Your call."

None of us speak to each other for the rest of the class, I take solace in the fact Abigail is also ignoring Ben. Stupid of her to think she stood a chance with anyone Olivia shows interest in. I don't know what it is about that girl that makes every guy want to please her. She might have a sexy, fuck-worthy body but her soul is as black as the nail polish she's sporting. Black must be Ben's favourite colour too since he likes the bitch.

The bell for break rings, I am slow to get my things. Getting up feels like a chore imposed on me. Quite frankly, I don't feel up for anything. I don't want to be here. Not in this class or school that reminds me so much about the kiss. I ignore the handsomeness beside me to pick my bag, I hope he loses his match tomorrow. I hope he doesn't find a partner for the All-Rounder. The winners take home a hundred grand, I might not need money but that's a lot. A whole fucking lot but I haven't found a partner. For the

singles, you get quarter of the price. They claim the dual fights have more sponsors but it's a shitty excuse.

"Wait up," Ben calls out when I'm at the door.

Against my wish, I halt. My brain has a mind of its own because I don't want to, I don't want to be in the same room with him but my feet won't listen. I turn slowly to him as he approaches me with a frown. Even his frown is cute and I need to get my head out of the gutter. He's with Olivia. He can never be with me.

I force a scowl to my face, Ben raises his hands in surrender. I might have laughed at his poor attempt at a joke but the red lipstick on the corner of his lips catches my eyes. How did he miss that spot? Annoyed, I fold my arms on my chest. The idiot flashes me a wide grin and I almost slap him when my heart skips a beat. He needs to stop doing that because it's affecting my silly brain, I am turning to goo on the inside.

"What's up?" he murmurs, grin intact.

"The ceiling," I reply with a finger jerking upwards.

Ben's blue eyes gleam with an unnamed emotion, he chuckles, a sexy sound that melts the anger I am desperately trying to hang onto. "Yeah." He pushes one leg forward, clears his throat without saying a word. Is the badboy nervous? Why is he talking to me? Shouldn't he be rushing out to have lunch with his diva of a girlfriend? "I... Tee." Oh, no, not again. "I know you fight. I do too." He drags a hand through his face, pulling his lower lip to reveal his perfect dentition. He should be the face for toothpaste brands. I start shaking my head. "Don't bother denying it." He tilts his head to the side. "You were there last night."

"What do you want?" I ask.

"To apologise."

He shoves his hands into his pockets, bounces on his toes like he does inside the ring. "Apologise?" He nods. Can today get weirder? I asked for an apology last week and he threw it in my face. "For what?"

Stretching a hand in my direction, he says, "Look, I love my brother."

I am not sure why he's telling me that. "Good for you."

A deeper sigh escapes Ben and my belly knots with dread. "He wants to see you again and no matter what I say to him, he just won't listen. He thinks we are best friends. Haha." Wow. He's doing this for his brother. Last week's chat was a warm-up for this request. But did he have to laugh after that last part? I know we can never be friends let alone best buddies but really? Douchebag. "I don't know what you did to him but yeah, will you come?"

His eyes are everywhere but on me, I might have found his nervousness cute but I am confused. First, he didn't complete his apology, second, he's of the belief his brother is smitten by me. "Come? To where?"

"To his games."

Taking a deep breath, I fake a smile. "No."

"No?" Those expressive eyes narrow at me, I shake my head. "You are saying no?"

"You heard me right the first time."

Shock registers on his face, the boy must be used to getting his way. "A kid asks you for a favour and you say no?" I stick my chin in the air, I won't come. He will have to deal with it. Good thing I won't be there to see him break Asher's heart. "You are saying no to my brother?" I shrug, the kiss must have damaged his ears because I didn't mince words. His voice deepens. "I told you to stay away from him, didn't I?"

"And that's exactly what I'm doing. Staying away from your brother. You should be grateful to me."

That intensity that's only present when he is in the ring flashes in his eyes, he stabs the space beside my head. "Grateful? The fuck am I grateful for? You are the only thing he mentions and now you say no?"

What the hell is wrong with this dude? He is acting like that's my fault and my blood boils at the venom laced in the words he spewed at me. So what if he is hot, sexy and smart? I don't have to tolerate him.

"No. N-O. No. No is no, what don't you get?"

Our heads are so close, our foreheads almost touch. The tension rolling off both of us is palpable. "Your cruelty, I don't get it. How can you be cruel to a kid?" His venomous gaze rakes over me, I shrink into myself. "I get it. I really do. You are so sad and lonely, you want my brother to feel the same way."

Everything falls apart. His words drive a rod through my chest and my mouth falls open. When I finally find my voice, I whisper, "Cruel?" I don't know why I start tearing up, maybe because doing favours for that little cutie is what got me here. Tears roll down my cheeks, I don't care to wipe them. "I am not cruel or sad or lonely, you bloody idiot. You know nothing about me." My voice breaks, my chest heaves with each shaky breath I take but I am not done. "Fuck you, Benjamin Carter. Yes. You and your girlfriend can go to hell."

I am out of the class before he has a chance to reply. Tears blind my vision as I jog to the library. No way am I going to the cafeteria looking like this. Unlike those cheerleaders, I am not a hot mess when I cry, I am an ugly crier.

The library comes into view and I slow down. What was I thinking? Did I have to make my jealousy obvious? He and his girlfriend can go to hell? Great. I managed to ruin any little hope left for us.

Who am I kidding? There will never be an us.

The shelf holding *The Great Gatsby* novel is the first place I seek, my comfort zone. I slide to the floor with my weight resting on the shelf. I like to think Let does the same and in the few moments I am here, I feel closer to him. Taking out the novel, a small smile falls to my lips. I might never be friends with Ben but I have Let. On my insistence, Let admitted to being hot. He was modest about it, says that's what girls say and I believe him. It felt right because the most beautiful ones are always the most broken, except me. I am not beautiful or broken.

As expected, Let's note is in the middle of the novel. Last time, he was telling me about a party. He was so worried about overstaying I had to calm him. My heart drops once I read the first and only paragraph in the note, I take a deep breath and read slowly. I shouldn't have advised him to have fun and let loose.

Let: I enjoyed the party, it was lit. Lots of noisy teens. Guess what? I got my first kiss.

I don't know when I stand but the next moment, I am running out of the library without a reply to him.