

BadBoy 33

Chapter 33

Ben the asshole

It takes me five days to reply Let. While we are waiting for Miss Jota to show up, I find a comfy space at the back and start drafting my reply. It's short. I don't have much to say to him but I try to be supportive.

Me: How did it feel? Was it good? Did sparks fly everywhere? Did it feel like the movies? Is she your girlfriend now? Will you two get married and have kids? Lol. Tell me, tell me everything, I want to know.

The ache in my heart grows as I fold the note and tuck it in my bag. I'll drop it off tomorrow. What was I thinking? A hot stranger will fall for me? The only reason he still talks to me is out of boredom. He said it himself, girls are easy for him to get. I hug myself, trying to hide in the shadow as Ben's head turns in my direction.

Maybe it's all in my head but he has been avoiding me. Sure, we have a few classes together but he sat beside Abigail today. I am not bothered. Na. I can never be. I am over him. I am over Let. I am over boys.

They can all go fuck themselves.

My heart flutters when his eyes find mine, his face pinches into an unknown expression and I look away before I start overthinking it. It is not concern I saw, maybe curiosity. He still hates me for saying no to his brother. I hate myself too but I am no longer doing favours. Maybe I should have.

It takes the memory of the kiss to get me back on track. I remember how his lips brushed hers, the soundless gasp that escaped Olivia before she slammed her lips against his. I remember because I spent the weekend watching it on repeat like a loser.

A screech pierces the silence, I wince, plugging a finger into my ear. "Sorry," Miss Jota says, pushing the microphone away from her lips. She motions for one of us to carry the mini speaker to the stage, I cringe at the thought of my voice echoing from it. School is over so, no one but the people inside will hear me but the microphone is extra. Makes me feel vulnerable. "We will go over the last scene quickly, then move to the next. Today's focus will be on the scenes Romeo appears in. Juliet, get ready."

Automatically, my eyes locate the back of Ben's head. He fits the role of Romeo but I don't know if I still want him to be my Romeo. Moving forward, I force the voices out of my head and climb the stage. Juliet and Romeo have an encounter in the next scene but I am taking solace in the fact we haven't picked a Romeo yet.

Noah and Ben came out top in the audition for the role. I know who I want but my heart is tired of aching.

"Can I start from the top?" I ask Miss Jota.

Back to her position behind her desk, she nods. "Carry on." But I don't. The doors fling open, Olivia steps in with her girls and everyone's attention is redirected. I roll my eyes as she sashays to Miss Jota's table. What does she want? Miss Jota shares my irritation. Her eyes narrow, she tilts her head. "Yes, Miss...?"

"Olivia Beckham." I zone out once she launches into an unwanted speech about her accomplishments, faking a yawn to show my displeasure. No one wants to hear about it. Ben throws me an annoyed look, I return it with a scowl and he averts his gaze. Stupid. Because she's his girlfriend doesn't mean the rest of us have to worship her. "I want the role of Juliet." My world stops, I hear my heart shatter into a million tiny pieces. She can't want it. It's mine. I am Juliet. "I have been practising. Ben lent me his script."

Ben the asshole. Ben the girl beater. And now, he's Ben the dream stealer. Why would he do that? I don't look away when our eyes meet for the nth time, he shrugs as if to say he couldn't resist her and a heavy sigh leaves me. It's so hard to be sane when I have annoying people like him around me.

The hall is silent as we await Miss Jota's response. Tension tightens my body, I hide my hands behind me and try to breathe. There are other roles I can play. Juliet doesn't have to be the star of the night, I can take the role of a side character and kill it. Maybe act the nurse or Lady Capulet. But I want to be Juliet, I want to kiss Romeo.

Placing her hands on the table, Miss Jota says calmly, "The role is taken but you can apply for another." Olivia's shocked gasp resounds in the hall but she's not nearly as shocked as I am. A smile springs to my lips, pride puffs my chest. I stand straighter like I am about to give a presidential speech about women like Miss Jota. "Tessa, go on."

Sure thing. I flash Olivia a brief smile, I can't wait to kiss her boyfriend.

"You don't understand. You are making a big mistake." Olivia's whiny voice stops me from performing, I place both hands on my waist. We should get in a ring, me and her. "I was the lead actress last year and the year before that." Who cares? A new era is here, I am the queen now. "Besides, Ben and I have great chemistry. That's important for any role." I fake gag, dumb bitch. Just wait, I'll show her chemistry with a little bit of biology. "Why don't you let Romeo decide who he wants to be his Juliet. The main leads must have chemistry and..." She throws me a look that burns holes into my body, on instinct, I wrap my arms around myself. "Can't say it's the case with Ben and Mother Theresa. Ben and I have great chemistry."

"Tessa."

"What?" Olivia spits back at Miss Jota.

"Tessa," Miss Jota says in a bored voice. "Her name is Tessa. Who says Ben is playing the role of Romeo?" He is not? I'm not kissing Noah. Olivia can have him and his lips. "If you will be rude to any of my students, then you shouldn't be here."

My God. Can this woman get any more awesome? Next time I see a shooting star, she will get a wish.

"I will decide who plays Juliet and I already made my choice." This woman is the best of the best. It is official, she's my favourite teacher. "Auditions started weeks ago and you walk in here now to tell me how to do my job? I will not tolerate that." Turning so her upper body is twisted in the direction of the rest of the students sitting spellbound, she says, "If any of you have a problem acting with the selected cast that have shown their skills and dedication right from the beginning, you can take your leave with Miss Olivia."

Another gasp travels through the air, the heads of Olivia's minions turn to each other. Sweet Jesus. I love Miss Jota. I snicker as the friends walk out with their heads bowed in shame, I should have recorded this. My smile fades as Ben's head snaps to me, I might have imagined it but a ghost of a smile flickers to his lips.

Weird. Giving it a serious thought, I steal a look at him. He doesn't appear bothered, maybe thankful to see her leave. "Change of plans everybody," Miss Jota says with a clap, "Tessa, we will start with the next scene." My head bobs in agreement, her wish is my command. "Noah, get to the stage. You play Romeo."

Okay, maybe not every wish. Noah delays in standing. He takes steps like a sloth and Miss Jota snaps. "Noah, hurry up or get out of my class." He quickens his step, surprising all of us by a sudden change of route towards the door. Laughter escapes me, today is full of good surprises. Unfazed by his stunt, Miss Jota points to the small crowd. "Benjamin?" She nods. "Yes, you. You are Benjamin, right?"

This might be my first and last class with Miss Jota but she's awesome. She knows everyone's names and calls them by it. Mr Sam also does that too. Ben nods and a corner of his mouth lifts. "Just Ben. I'm Ben."

"Okay, Just Ben. Get to the stage." She slaps a hand against her hips. "Chop chop, Mister. These scripts won't act themselves. We don't have all day." I snort at the colour on Ben's cheeks. "Tessa, get ready to step in."

Uh-oh.

Ben jogs to the stage, I take two steps away from him. "Closer, Tessa. You need to be close to him. Proximity is important because it's a love story." Ben smirks, I gulp and do as I am told. "Good."

We get into character, Ben starts his lines first and I am thrown into another dimension at his expertise. He walks the walk, talks the talk and I almost start to believe each word he says. His fingers brush my shoulder, a jolt of electricity zaps my spine and I jump. God. If this is chemistry, we have lots of it.

"Tessa, loosen up. Great job, Ben. Keep going."

Yeah, keep going. Touch me again. My eyes zero in on his sexy mouth that stops moving. Why? I love watching his lips. He takes another step so our bodies are almost touching, I blink and chew my lips.

"Not the poor lips again," he whispers. I chuckle. Okay, what? I shouldn't laugh, I hate the guy. His arm slides to my waist as required, my back stiffens. "Relax." I want to but he's touching me, his hand is on my lower back. Nudging me with his hip, he says, "Your turn." For what? "Your turn, Juliet. Your lines."

"Ah, yes. Thank you." I jump into action, my voice is shaky but he flashes me an encouraging smile and my nerves melt. Looking into his eyes, I say, "Don't waste your love on someone who doesn't value it..." Ben's lips pucker, his eyes narrow slightly and the rest of the words die in my throat. He releases me and

I instantly miss the warmth of his body. My lines feel like a warning but it is the truth, Olivia isn't a good girlfriend. He deserves better than her. "Ben..." His eyes fall on mine. "She's not good for you," I whisper.

"And you are?"