

BadBoy 35

Chapter 35

You knew

The music is loud, too loud. It's barely 8:30 pm but the smell of alcohol clogs the air. Drunk teenagers of varying degrees crowd the mansion, a few students are dancing on a pool table. One of the females from school is getting ready to strip, the boys surrounding the table are encouraging her with whistles and catcalls.

Maria drags me into a quieter area before the live show starts, we meander through sticky bodies to the kitchen. I will never get naked in front of anyone but I don't have a problem watching other people do it.

Half-empty red solo cups are on the countertop, I avoid touching them as Maria waltzes to the tall fridge like the landlady. I shake my head at her behaviour but she ignores me. Someone clears their throat from the door, our heads snap to the door and Maria turns into a blushing queen. She's a goner with Daniel.

Red dots appear on Daniel's cheeks when their eyes meet, he stops in front of us with two cups. "Don't accept any drink that doesn't come from me." We nod like the good girls we are. If he didn't offer this to us, I would sip water all night. He is talking to both of us but his eyes never leave Maria. I clap to get his attention, he smiles sheepishly. "I love your dress." He takes a swig from his cup. "Who you wearing?"

"I wish I knew," I answer, bending over with laughter at my failed attempt at a joke. Maria did all the work, I am playing my part by being here. I hope to God she counts this Halloween party as a real party.

As planned, Maria is dressed as Catwoman. Her legs for days are on display. The skimpy outfit matches Daniel's black tux, he offers her his hand and my cheeks heat up when he pecks her on the lips. Gross. They should take this somewhere else and Maria has a lot of explaining to do. What was that she said about not getting together with him yet? Sipping my drink slowly to appear busy, my face scrunches at the burst of numerous flavours on my tongue. I taste berries, a hint of lime and something really sweet.

Daniel says something not-so-funny, Maria snorts so bad her drink spills all over her belly. I cringe as she laughs her way to the sink to wash off the stain. Bringing the cup to my lips, I ask, "Have you told her?"

He looks over to Maria and smiles. They are not even dating. We catch her reflection in the window above the sink, she waves at us and we wave back. "On Monday. Don't want to ruin tonight."

Maria returns before I reply, he hands her his cup, she accepts it with a grin. I roll my eyes, they are so sweet I want to throw up. We strike a conversation, they try their best to involve me but I start feeling like the third wheel pretty soon. They wave me off when I excuse myself, no idea where I am headed.

Pop music blasts from the box speakers at different corners of the parlour, my eyes scan the place and my chest falls with defeat. No familiar faces.

Loneliness creeps up on me, I make a U-turn towards the stairs. Emptying my drink into a flower pot, I lean on the rails for support, watching people dance and have fun. Something I am having trouble with. I have only been here for ten minutes but this feels like a bad idea.

Tired of watching others do what I lack the confidence to do, I start for the corridor by my left. The chill air hits me first, my hand tightens around the door knob. I should have brought a sweater but the heat inside kept me warm. I step forward while scanning Nate's backyard. It's big with an empty tub.

It's freezing out here. A sane person will get back inside but I am not thinking as I sit on the edge of the tub. I pull off my boots, dip my feet into the tub and a shiver shoots straight to my scalp. It's a hot tub.

Alone, my thoughts circle back to Let. Why won't he reply?

I look up to the sky and release a sigh. If I was with my car, I would have left. I hope my ride home is not drinking. Speaking of the devil, the backdoor flings open, Maria rushes out and I jump out of the tub as she storms towards me. My best friend is not violent but I stagger backwards at the anger in her eyes.

Daniel runs out behind her, his chest heaving as he tries to catch his breath. Maria holds a hand to stop him from speaking, she inches closer to me and for the first time, I notice the tears shining in her eyes. My heart misses a beat, I look to Daniel for an explanation. He shakes his head. What did he do?

"Maria." I try to touch her but she slaps my hand away. Tears leak out of her eyes, my chest tightens at the mascara running down her cheeks. Daniel keeps his distance, a plea on his face. "What happened?"

"You knew, Tessa," she murmurs. "You knew and you didn't tell. I thought we were friends."

Panic claws my inside. "We are friends. You are my best friend, Maria." My only female friend on planet earth and I can't lose her. She erupts in taunting laughter, Daniel takes another step back. I am guessing this has to do with him but the coward is not saying anything. "Maria? What are you talking about?"

Stomping to Daniel, she pulls out a phone from his breast pocket. She slaps it on my chest. "Watch it." I hesitate, she snaps. "Don't make me mad, Theresa Grace Mower. Watch the fucking video right now."

My heart dips. I know the video, but I don't want to watch it. "Maria." She starts shaking her head. "Maria."

"Watch the goddamn video," she deadpans. I tap the screen and that video comes to live. The video of Olivia giving Daniel a blowjob. She watches me, when the video ends, she snatches the phone. "Did you or did you not know about this video?" I open my mouth to explain, she says, "Tessa, I just need a yes or a no."

Colour drains from my face, I manage to whisper, "Yes."

Without another word, she walks out. Daniel tries to talk to me, I brush past him. Stupid. I don't want to hear the speech he should have given when Maria was in my face, disappointed and in tears because I betrayed her. But it is not what she thinks. I would have told her but Daniel wanted to do it himself.

None of the faces resemble Maria's, I jog up the stairs, peeking into rooms with the doors ajar. The smell of beer is thicker, I also smell weed but it does not stop me from looking inside the rooms. My stomach churns at the sight of some students making out, I shudder with disgust and continue my search.

She has to be in here somewhere. Prepared to leave this cursed party, I twirl, almost falling on my ass when I bump into someone. The witch. Fury rolls through me at her smug smile, I push past her but she yanks me back.

"What the fuck is wrong with you?"

Olivia sneers. "You really wanna know?" I stand my ground as the bitch nears me, the sound of her heels bouncing off the walls. I don't care. I don't want to know but I don't move another inch. Breathing heavily on my neck, she tucks a loose strand of hair behind my ear. "What did I tell you about Ben?"

Giving her slutty outfit a onceover, I let out a long hiss. Is she dressed as a call girl? I walk around her but I am dragged back, only now, she's not the one who pulled me. Someone holds my hands behind me, I wriggle in their embrace, desperate to be free.

"Let me go," I spit out and she smiles at the person holding me. "Olivia, what the fuck is the meaning of this?"

Her smirk signifies doom, I can't help the sinking feeling tonight will be worse than her other pranks. She inserts two fingers into her mouth and whistles. Zoey steps out with a blue bucket, I stamp the foot of my captor, the idiot groans and his grip tightens. Olivia's smile widens at my attempt to escape, her eyes darken with mischief as she grips my jaw. I spit on the bitch's face, she gives me a backhand slap that causes my neck to snap to the side.

A stale smell assaults me when Olivia opens the bucket, Zoey's nose wrinkles. Is that fish water? She cannot put that on me. I hate fish, I am allergic to it. She knows that. "Noah, get that slut on her knees."

I squirm, trying to get a kick to his side or ram my elbow to his ribs but he dodges me. His feet slam into the back of my knees, I collapse to the floor at the impact, too weak to move as they empty the content of the bucket over my head. I try not to think as the water soaks my body, seeping into my costume and places fish water should never be. I try, I really try to ignore the mess I am sitting on but the smell overwhelms me and I throw up on myself.

Olivia plugs her nose. I raise my head. "You stink, Tessa." They laugh, she whispers, "Did you get that?"

The itching starts before I have time to process what just happened. I bolt to the nearest bathroom with their laughter ringing behind me, ripping the tight costume from my body without care for who will see my vitiligo. I wet paper towels to scrub my body and press it against my neck, my chest. It fucking itches. Everywhere. My whole body itches.

Scratching my arm till the skin reddens, I duck under the sink, rinsing my hair until my scalp hurts. The door opens and closes after a while, I am too engrossed in getting the smell off me to care about my state of undress. I am not even putting on a bra.

I hate today. I hate Nate for this party. I hate Olivia.

My efforts are in vain, the smell continues to plague me. I only succeed in turning redder and wetting myself. I push balls of tissue into my nostrils and put on my partly shredded costume. I need to leave.