

BadBoy 43

Chapter 43

What are we?

Me: He likes me back. We kissed. Oh, my God. We kissed not to prove a point but because he wanted to. We seem to be doing a lot of kissing but I like it. I don't really know him but I want to know him. I don't know what to expect. What do you think I should do? As a guy, would you appreciate it if a girl asked you out? Should I ask him out? Does that make me desperate? It does, right? I will wait for him to ask me.

I shove my phone into my pocket without getting a reply. Let was right. It's easier to chat with a phone. He hasn't replied my letters and I have stopped checking. If he replies, he will let me know. I walk down the hallway alone. It still feels odd doing it without Maria but the memory from our kiss has me smiling.

We kissed again when I dropped him off. He made me walk him to the door of his house and we kissed again. My cheeks heat up from the memory, I almost miss a step. We kiss a lot. I like it and I don't like it. I want us to have normal conversations.

Like me, did he start fighting because he wanted to protect himself or he does it for the money alone? My arms tighten around my bag straps. I halt.

Maria is waiting at my locker with her books on one hand. I stop in front of her and muster a smile. Her little frown makes me hopeful. At least she's not ignoring me. Am I forgiven? I miss my bestie.

"You should have told me," she says. I look down. There's no anger in her voice. I take it as a sign we will be best friends again in no time. "You lied."

To protect her feelings. "I'm sorry. He made me promise not to tell you." She narrows her eyes, I pull her in for a hug before she can protest. "I missed you, bestie. I will never ever keep a secret from you again."

"You better not," she says against my chest, voice muffled. We break apart but I rest an arm on her shoulder. "I missed you too. God." She rolls her eyes. "It was so boring without you." My smile is so big my cheeks ache. "Don't do that again or I will never talk to you again." I nod. I am taking out my books from my locker when she says, "I'm sorry."

The whispers in the hallways grow louder, I don't bother to look behind me to know the source of the noise. It has to be one of the jocks or cheerleaders. My gaze returns to Maria, she's offering me a contrite smile. I close my locker and sling my bag over my shoulder. I have a class with Ben.

"For what?"

She bites her lips, a smile flits to mine. If I do that in front of Ben, he will chide me. He likes my lips. He likes them without bruises. I like his too. Pouty and soft. I tug her by the arm and we start for our class.

Maria says, "I left you at the party. I was supposed to be your ride home." Bile rises to my throat as the memories from that night flash through my mind. I rotate my shoulders carelessly. Something good did come out of it. She stops in the middle of the hallway to look at me. "How did you get home?"

This will be the best time to tell her about the kiss and everything about Ben. "I got a ride."

Her perfect brow shoots up. "From who?"

My friends circle is really small, we both know it. She folds her hands on her chest but my lips remain sealed.

"Me."

Our heads snap in the direction of the sexy voice. I fan myself mentally at the sight of Ben. He's so drool worthy. He leans closer to place a kiss on my cheek and another on my temple. My insides turn to goo. I hear a few oohs and aahs. Heat crawls up my neck, people are watching. Maria questions me with her eyes, I duck my head and he takes my hand.

To Maria, Ben says, "It was me. I gave her a ride home." Stunned into silence, Maria can only nod. I inhale a whiff of his cologne. He smells so nice. "Next time, don't leave your friend stranded."

"I won't," Maria promises. With the way Ben is staring at her, she dares not say otherwise.

Ben's eyes lower to my face and my heart thumps against my ribcage. I know I told him not to ignore me but this is too much. I move in front of him to block my view of the small crowd of girls that have gathered to watch us. Ben pecks me again. My knees turn to jelly, I have to lean on him for support.

His hand easily snakes around my waist. "Are you okay?" How can I be okay when he's being so touchy in front of everyone? I manage a shaky nod and he winks. Jesus. "How was your weekend?" I open my mouth but it seems I have lost my ability to talk. His blue eyes flashes with mischief, he bops my nose and chuckles. "Guess what I found?"

I forget about everything but us. We are in a world of ours and he's the only one who matters. A childish excitement washes over me, I bounce on my toes and his eyes light up with the same emotion.

"What?"

"It's called a guess for a reason," he says with a grin. I smoothen his brows and bat my lashes, I can't think right now. "You have to guess, Gracie." I pout and he sighs. "You didn't even try. Guess."

A poke on my side drags me out of our peaceful bubble. I glower at a frowning Maria and his gaze darts between the two of us. She mutters an apology and takes steps back. As she should have done long ago.

We are back to our bubble. His hands reach behind him, he whispers, "Close your eyes."

I oblige him. With Ben, I can't think straight. His wishes are my command. Something cold settles on my neck, I pry my eyes open and stare at the object. Hayden's necklace. Tears well up my eyes and drop to my cheek. I missed my necklace. He flashes me a grin, I punch his shoulders and he jumps back.

"Normal people would have said thank you, Gracie," he teases, thumb brushing the tears on my cheek.

"Normal people wouldn't have taken my necklace in the first place." He squints. "Fine. Thank you."

His chest puffs like I said more than thanks. He swings his arms around my shoulders, guiding me in the direction of our class. For the first time, I notice we are alone and I wonder briefly when my bestie left.

I have a lot of questions to answer. Questions I don't know the answer to because I don't completely understand Ben. It's like he switched to a new personality after our talk. I steal a glance at him as he rambles about something Asher did. I should speak my mind more often, especially if it will yield positive results.

"Did I scare your friend?" he asks when we are in front of my class. I peek inside. It's empty so I don't rush to go in. A part of me wants everyone to see us together. The school's nerd and the bad boy.

"Maybe." Ben must have had the same idea as me, he snakes his arms around my waist and tucks his head into the crook of the neck. No one is in this part of school so we have the hallway to ourselves. I hook my arms on his waist, closing my eyes as the need to understand our relationship hits me. "What are we?"

Ben captures my lips in a brief kiss, I am left breathless by the time we come up for air. "My Gracie." He presses his forehead to mine, his perfect dentition on display and my heart riots in my chest. My back arches against the wall, he pecks my lips again and again until I melt against him. Then he says, "My babe. Does that answer your question?"

Not entirely.

We kissed. He called me his babe. His Gracie. Babe, not girlfriend. They are not the same. People use babe even with friends. We haven't defined our relationship.

Are we friends with benefits? As appealing as that might sound, I want more from him. Are we dating now? Must he ask me out before I can call him my boyfriend? I mean, he walked me to class. Pecked me in front of everyone. That's boyfriend duties.

"Yes." I place my hands on his chest to feel his heartbeat. He rubs his nose against mine. "It does, babe."

Someone clears their throat, we jump apart to see Abigail glaring at us. "This is a school not a brothel." Ben snickers and her irritation heightens. She redirects her gaze to me, I stick out my tongue and she scoffs. "You should take your shenanigans elsewhere. Some of us would like to study without fear of getting an STD."

She shoves me out of the way before I can think of a proper comeback. Of course, I am the one who has to bear the brunt of her anger. Ben stares at her back as she jams the door behind her and shakes his head.

“Ignore her, Gracie. She’s upset I’m off the market.” My heart slams against my chest. Did he just say what I think he did? He’s off the market. It’s official. Ben is mine. I press a kiss to his lips. “What was that for?”

“For being the best babe a girl could ask for,” I answer.

Laughter trickles out of his lips, he pecks a corner of my lips and offers me his hand. “Ready to go in?”

I glance at the end of the hallway. I shouldn’t have.

A chill travels down my spine, my blood runs cold. I gulp hard as Olivia’s blood red lips move into an evil smirk. We haven’t spoken since that night. She makes a slicing motion across her neck and winks.

Crazy bitch.

Ben’s head snaps in the direction I am looking but she’s gone. He eyes me warily, I force a smile to my lips and we enter the class while holding hands.