

Badboy 72

Chapter 72

### **My Benny**

I love New York. It's all I spoke about when I realised I wanted to be in the movie industry. They think they are doing the right thing for me but it's too soon. Ben and I have not dated for up to three months.

The car behind me honks. Frowning, I spare a glance at the driver through the side mirror. He's pointing at the light. It has turned green. I mutter a silent apology and drive off. The excitement that's usually present when picking Ben is absent. I stop in front of his house and honk twice without getting out of the car.

Ben comes out first and keeps the door open for Asher. Asher tells him something, they turn to me and wave. I wave back with less enthusiasm. I don't know what Ben tells Asher but his head bobs rapidly.

"Tessa," Asher cries out as soon as he gets into the car. He throws his arms around me in a quick hug I return. The second thing he does is to put on his seatbelt because he knows I won't leave if he doesn't.

"Hey, Champ." I mess up his hair and he tries to do the same with mine but I'm quick to duck out of his reach. Asher kicks his legs out in protest, I bend my head and he ruffles my hair. "How was your night?"

Asher beams, he tries his best to put my hair in its former style. "Great. How was yours?"

Good until my parents happened. They already made all the plans. Telling me was the last step. Daddy spoke to his friend, he is willing to take me in to start the new semester. Once the process is finalised, we will be leaving. I don't even get to spend Valentine's Day with Ben. What about the All-Rounder? The play?

"Great too."

"Hey," Ben murmurs from the backseat. He leans over to peck me, I close my eyes briefly to soak in the warmth of his presence. Concern fleets across his face, his gaze lingers on me. He frowns. "You good?"

"Yeah."

I pull out of their street before Ben asks further questions but throughout the drive to Asher's school, his hand remains on my shoulder. It comforts me more than he knows it and the weight in my chest lifts. I park in front of Asher's school and he hops out of the car. He runs off screaming his goodbyes to us.

We are left alone and the nerves intensify. Ben squeezes my shoulder. "Babe. What's up?"

He slips between the front seats and settles into the passenger seat. I bite my lip but he doesn't scold me. My eyes lift to meet his gaze and I swallow the truth. I can't tell him we only have a week together.

"Nothing. I'm nervous about our fight."

The lie comes out pretty easily. I must have sounded genuine. Ben coos and takes my hand between his. He assures me with a touch. His thumb brushes my knuckles and butterflies explode in my belly. Ben brings my hand to his lips, places a feather kiss on the heel of my palms, another on my knuckles and wrists.

"Don't be, okay?" I was never nervous about our fight but saying that out loud kind of made me jittery. We studied our opponents for the first match. If we play our cards right and apply all the pointers Coach gave us, we will win. "We've got this babe." Yeah, we have. "We have about a week or two to prepare."

Two weeks. The fight is in the fourth week, on Friday night. I hope I'm still here. I nod again and his lips break into a bigger smile. His smile elicits a grin from me, he pinches my cheek and makes kissy faces.

My hands shake a bit as they wrap around the steering. Ben notices. "Do you think I should drive?"

"Yes." We swap seats, he grips the steering too tight and chuckles. Ben seems to understand my need for silence, the drive to school is quiet. Once he finds the perfect parking spot, I tell him, "Thank you."

Chill air sweeps into the car once he opens it and his hand on the door halts. He darts me a wary look. I look out the window to the car beside mine. My chest deflates. We agreed on no secrets but I don't know if this counts as one. I place my hands on my knees as his blue eyes take in my appearance, studying me to figure out the truth.

“Are you sure it’s just the nerves?” It is more than that. I spent the night browsing the prices of flight tickets. It’s too soon for him to have enough money saved for a flight. A wedge appears between his brows, he shuts the door. “You are way off, Gracie.”

“It’s just the nerves,” I say. He arches a brow, my palms become clammy. “I promise.”

“You’re lying,” he whispers.

“I’m lying.”

Ben openly stares at me. Anxiety knocks me up and I nibble on my lower lip. No secrets. No lies. But I am doing both. My breath hitches as his fingertips brush a side of my face, I roll my lip between my teeth.

“What’s going on, Gracie?” The lines on his forehead deepen. I open my mouth without a word. “You know you can tell me anything, yeah?” I can but not about this. “Even if I can’t help, I promise to listen.”

Longing darkens his gaze. I unfasten my seatbelt and take my place on his lap. He locks his arms around my waist, his fingers slip into the waistband of my jeans. My thoughts are a jumbled mess and I kiss him softly on his lips to delay the conversation. Ben responds with a moan, his tongue slips into my mouth.

Our tongues lock in a lovers tango, he pulls back briefly for air and smashes his lips on mine. We break apart later, chest heaving and breaths coming in shallow pants. My fingers work his hair from the root to the tips and his eyes glaze. I want to stay here with him. I want to get random kisses in the parking lot.

The pad of his thumb brushes my lips, he gives me a chaste kiss. “What’s going on?”

My eyes lower to his chest but his hand goes under my jaw, forcing my gaze to his face.

“It’s just some stuff I have to take care of.”

I trace random shapes on his chest, he grabs my hands to lace our fingers. My heart calms and I finally match Ben's gaze. His eyes blaze with questions I pray he doesn't ask. I won't be able to answer them.

"Want to talk about it?"

And ruin what we have at the moment? Hell no. I can talk to my parents. Mum will listen to me, I think.

Will she?

It was all she talked about this morning. It's a privilege for us to have Daddy at home. Knowing he will be home for our dinners, breakfasts and maybe lunches, makes her happy. I can't take that away from her.

"No." I shake my head. "Not yet."

He sighs and tightens his grip on me. I don't want him thinking it's about another guy so I press a kiss to his forehead. I push stray hairs out of his face and his frown turns upside down. That's the Ben I love.

"But you promise to tell me later?" His voice is hopeful, I can't disappoint him.

I make a zigzag sign around my chest. "Cross my heart."

"Okay." His lips pucker and I plant a kiss on them. "Don't take too long before you tell me."

"I'll try."

I peek at my wristwatch, we have fifteen minutes until the bell rings. My attempts to get off his lap fails, Ben maintains his hold on me. He's so possessive. It's cute and annoying. But more cute than annoying.

"Benny." I punch his chest gently. "I need to get my bag." He shakes his head. "Benny."

“I’ll get it for you.”

Folding my arms, my brows jerk up. How’s he going to do that with me on his laps? He understands my confusion pretty soon. Pink stains his cheeks, I giggle and slide off his laps to get my bag at the backseat.

A big ball of nerves sits in the pit of my belly when my fingers brush the case of the wristwatch inside my bag. What if he doesn’t like it? Hayden’s words fly back to my mind. It is the thought that counts. He will appreciate it.

Ben throws me an annoyed look. I’m taking too long. “Sorry, babe.” He mouths for me to hurry. I stretch a hand to him while the other closes around the case. Was he this nervous to gift me the boots? “Benny, you forgot something. Where’s my note?”

A cute frown appears on his lips as he searches his pockets. He pulls out a folded note with a triumphant grin. “You will get it when you sit here,” he says and pats his legs. I shake my head and he whines. “Babe, I’m missing you. Come and sit.”

“I’m right here, you know?” I mutter, his frown turns to a scowl. “How can you possibly be missing me?” Every cell in my body wants me to listen to him, I want to but I stay put. We won’t see each other until break so these little moments are precious. Ben glares. “Benny. I got you something but I’m nervous.”

“Don’t be, Gracie.” My lips pull into a thin line. “I love you so I’ll love whatever you give me.”

His words loosen the knots in my belly. I hand over the red wristwatch case to him and wait. Ben eyes it without collecting it and my chest tightens. He hates it. My heart sinks to my belly. He didn’t even open it.

I clear my throat. “It’s fine if you don’t like it.”

Ben wrenches the case open and the note inside falls out. He picks it. His expression changes when he reads the silly poem I penned down for him. We might be going too fast like Maria and Hayden said but it works for us. I squeeze my shoulders together while he tries on his new wristwatch. He smiles at it, then raises his hand for me to see.

It looks good on him. "You like?"

"Like?" Ben scoffs. "I love it." My lips stretch into a big smile. His head pokes outside the car, he curves his hands around his mouth and screams, "My Gracie bought me a wristwatch. " I erupt in a fit of giggles and he throws me a pointed look. "Now, will you please sit on my legs so I can properly thank you."

My laughter reverberates in the air and my head bobs. Of course I will, he's my Benny.