

Badboy 92

Chapter 92

We are done

Ben is pacing in my changing room when I enter. He straightens up once he notices me. There is that awkwardness that's never there between us. I take one more step inside and almost run out when he stalks towards me.

He is furious. I'm not sure why. We won. It doesn't feel like a victory but that money is ours.

Stopping a few feet from me, he thunders, "Why didn't you block that punch?"

I wince at the harshness of his voice. This boy sounds and looks like Ben but he doesn't act like my Ben. We have come so far and fallen apart. Maybe I can try to salvage our relationship. We will be okay.

"I... I'm sorry."

His cheek is red from the contact with our opponent's fist. Accepted, I was in the better position to stop the punch but I was distracted by our proximity. It was different from the stage play with our mediaeval outfits separating us. It has been so long since we stood so close to each other and it distracted me.

"Sorry won't fix my face," he murmurs.

Ben stares at his feet. We should be out there with Coach and the crowd celebrating our win or planning to. On instinct, I inch close to him. I want to hug my boyfriend. I miss him. I miss being loved by him. I miss being called his Gracie.

"Benny," I whisper. I'm right in front of him. Another foot forward and I'll be in his arms.

"Don't." Don't what? I take his hand but he snatches it back like contact with me is the worst thing to happen. Closing his eyes, he lets out a soft sigh. I don't understand why he's being this way. He misses me, I miss him too. "Don't touch me."

But I want to touch him. "Ben, please." I don't know what I am begging for. "Benny, it's me."

Another shake of his head and he says, "I have to go."

He takes a step to the left and I block his path. Another step to the right and I do the same. A sigh of exasperation escapes him, he runs his fingers through his hair but I stand my ground.

I am fighting for my boyfriend.

"I need to be outside," he says without looking at me. Standing taller, he frowns. "Let me pass."

"No." I wrap my hands around him and bury my face in his chest. "Don't go, Benny. Let's talk. I'm not happy. My boyfriend is not happy with me and I don't like it. You said we should always talk, Benny." I might as well have been talking to a brick. He doesn't say a word. He doesn't hug me back. "Please. You're breaking my heart. Let's talk."

My arms tighten around him when he tries to pry them off him. He's fighting to get out of my embrace and I am fighting to hold on to him. I don't want to lose him yet it feels like I have already lost him.

A few moments later, he stops struggling. I think we are fine until he says, "Tessa, get off me."

My heart breaks. How does a heart break twice?

When your boyfriend calls you by the name he loathes. My hands fall limply at my sides. My body finally listens to my brain. I take the hint. I am unwanted here. Benny doesn't like me anymore.

"I'm not Tessa, I'm Gracie," I manage to whisper. The voice doesn't sound like mine. "I'm your Gracie."

But he is already leaving. He's walking away from me. I feel it to my core that this time is different. We won't get back together. I'm not sure what we are fighting about since Olivia is fine and back in school. I have been punished. What does he want?

“Ben.” His shoulders tense, he stops but he doesn’t turn. I want him to look back so he can see me and how much his words hurt me. I know he loves me, so why is he being hard on me? Shouldn’t you be kinder to the ones you love? Seconds later and he hasn’t turned to me. “If you walk out, we are done.”

My words spur him on. He walks out and slams the door behind him. My heart breaks for the third time. It breaks into a million tiny pieces that can never be glued together. I stagger to the couch and fall to it.

Curling into a ball, I try not to cry. This is it, I guess. The end of Benny and Gracie.

The ringtone of my phone coming from the other end of the room forces me to my feet. Through my tears, through the heartache, I manage to exit the changing room and find my way home in one piece.

I rap furiously on the door until it’s wrenched open. Mum wants to scold me for coming in late and knocking like a banshee but one glance at my tear-stricken face and she draws me in for a hug.

“Sweetheart, what happened?” she says into my hair. Another sob escapes me. “Talk to me.”

What is there to say? There’s nothing to talk about.

I hate him.

I hate relationships.

I hate Olivia.

I’ll never date anyone again. If I don’t hate, no one can break my heart. Ben told me to be vulnerable with him and he hurts me right when I take his advice. Mum wipes my tears and guides me to the couch. The only people that deserve my love are my parents, my brother too. Maria deserves it. Ben can go shit himself.

We sit but I don't let go of her. I hold on to my mum like the lifeline she is. She is quiet as I cry into her shoulder. Stupid Ben. Stupid love. He should have let me enjoy being a loner in peace. Love is so stupid. It doesn't make any sense. How is it fair that the person you care about is the one to hurt you the most?

I release her briefly to say, "I'm ready for New York."

Her worried eyes narrow. "What?"

The tears are fast drying up. My thoughts are clear. I don't want to be here anymore. I don't want to pause my life for a boy who doesn't care about me. Maria. Hayden. They were both right. I shouldn't build my future around a boy. We are barely out of high school and he's already showing his true colours.

"New York," I say with more certainty. My hands shake but I hide them behind me. Nothing will stop me from reaching my goals now. He can enjoy SAS with Olivia. I still have Maria. I still have Hayden. I still have my parents. "I'm ready. Let's go now."

Palming my face, Mum says, "Are you sure?"

No. If Ben walks right through our door and asks for another chance, I'll listen to him. My heart wants him. I do too. But it is no longer about what I want, it's about what he wants and he no longer wants me.

I'm now Tessa. And he hates Tessa.

"One hundred percent." No use crying over broken glass. I was right all along, high schoolers should never get into relationships. I have my whole life ahead of me to meet the right person. Ben will be okay. He won't notice my absence. He won't miss me. Body pumping with the need to leave this sad town, I jump to my feet. "Can we go now?" Mum laughs. "I'm serious. I'm ready. Let's go now."

Noting my seriousness, Mum pats the couch but I don't sit. "I don't think you are ready." She doesn't get to speak my mind. I know what I want. I want out of this city. Her tone is patronising. "You think you're but you're not."

The events of the past weeks come rushing over me, my heart can't take it. Two weeks of suspension and he wasn't there for me even once. I want us to go.

"Why won't you just listen to me?" Ben didn't listen to me but she is my mum, she should listen to her daughter. "I want to go, Mum. I'm ready." I am pulled into another hug and the tears rush out again. Stupid Ben. "I'm tired. It hurts too much. New York will be better. New York is where my dreams are."

It is time to start chasing my dreams instead of a boy. He picked his side, it's time to pick mine. Even as I think this, it doesn't ring true but I cling to it. My heart hurt. It wants out of my chest as much as I want out of this place.

"Okay. We will go. First thing tomorrow morning." I nod. Tomorrow is too far but as long as we are leaving, then I am fine with it. "I'll book our tickets tonight." She draws back to wipe my tears. "Are you sure?" Taking advantage of my silence, she adds, "Give it some more thought, think about it."

No. "I don't need to think about it. I'm sure."

The worry embedded on her forehead only seems to increase. "There's no coming back, Tessa." Her voice holds questions I will never answer. I don't understand why she is trying to convince me, she wants me to chase my dreams. Dreams before boys. "Once we leave, we will not return here." I know that. "No more Benny. Can you handle that?"

No more Benny means no more Olivia. I will be fine. Noah is still my friend so it's okay.

"Yes."

Her hands linger on my shoulders, she is still hesitant but I am not. I want to stop hurting.

When Mum leaves to make a phone call and possibly book our flights, I head to my room for a hot bath to rid myself of his scent. I get out of the shower without drying my body. On second thought, I march to my wardrobe.

Inside my shoebox, his notes are there. I smile sadly at them and transfer the notes to my sock box together with the combat boots, the hair clip and even his valentine gifts. I don't need the memories of him or this place haunting me when I leave.

Reading the notes will only make my heart hurt more so I resist the temptation to do that. I carry the box to the back of our house after grabbing a lighter from the kitchen. The flame flickers when I turn on the lighter, I squat in front of the box until the flame dies off. For weird reasons, I can't bring myself to burn his gifts.

In the end, I rearrange everything and head to our neighbour's. The eldest child is twelve but he has seen me and Ben a couple of times. I give him strict instructions to give the box to Ben. If he doesn't come for them in a month's time, he can give out the boots and whatever is useful, then burn the rest.

"Are you sure?" The red-haired boy asks.

"Yeah." He stares at me like I have gone crazy but accepts the box. I might have gone crazy but that's okay. Crazy Tessa is what New York needs. We stay that way for a while. I finally murmur, "Thanks."

I rush back to my room before Mum notices I am gone. Lethargy creeps up on me, my eyes grow heavy but I try to fight off the sleep. I am not sure why I call him but I do. It goes straight to voicemail so I do the next best thing. I block him and delete every picture of us on my phone.

We are done.

* * *THE END* * *

Thank you for reading up till this point. There is a sequel and it is titled: Loved By The Badboy. I'm currently working on getting it up by next week. Sooo, keep an eye open for it. You can also follow me on Instagram for more updates on new and upcoming books.