

# Empire

I exit gym class and head to my locker to grab the clothes I was wearing before gym.

"Jeez, you look hot in those shorts," I hear Ben's voice, as he wraps his arm around my waist.

I tense up and try to move away from him, thinking his going to push me to the ground. He immediately retracts his arm.

"I'm so sorry Roni, I should've asked before doing that-" Ben talks so fast.

"It's fine Ben," I know he won't ever do what he did to me physically ever again, but I'm still getting over it.

"How has your day been?" I change the subject.

"My day has been alright, how has yours been?"

"Mine was good so far,"

"That's good," I close my locker.

I walk away and go into the bathroom to change.

I get to class and sit down. Cindy's not in this class, I look up to see a new guy walk in, he's cute.

"Students, please welcome Shamus to our school," The teacher smiles at him.

She points to a seat next to mine, Shamus walks over and sits down.

"Hello, I'm Shamus," He holds his hand out.

"Veronica," I shake his hand smiling.

"Nice to meet you Veronica," He grins.

I get through class and invite Shamus to hang out with me for the day, show him around school.

"So here is the library, and over there is the gym," I walk around with him during lunch.

"Thank you for taking the time and showing me around," He thanks me.

"Oh of course," I smile.

He smiles back. He has a very nice smile and pretty eyes.

"Hey Roni," I hear Ben.

"Oh hey Ben, Ben this is Shamus, Shamus this is Ben," I introduce them.

"Nice to meet you," Shamus shakes Ben's hand.

"Likewise,"

We hear the bell ring.

"Alright well I should head to class," Shamus says. "Thank you again for making me feel welcome," He kisses my cheek, looking at me and winks as walks away.

I smile as he leaves, I look to Ben and he's very tense.

"What's wrong?" I turn to him.

"Nothing," He walks away.

I sigh and walk to my class. I get through the rest of the day and now I'm walking home, I have invited Shamus over to hang out for a bit.

We get to the house and I hear someone in the kitchen.

"Hey mom," I kiss her cheek.

"Hey sweetie, who's this?" My mom asks, smiling.

"Mom this is Shamus, he's new to the school, Shamus this is my mom, Sasha,"

"Nice to meet you," Shamus grins.

"Nice to meet you,"

We head up to my room, Shamus walks in and looks around. His eyes land on a picture of Ben and I kissing.

"Is that.." He pauses, "Ben? Sorry I just had to remember his name,"

"Uh yeah," I move the photo.

"Are you two together?" He asks.

"No, we're just friends,"

"I don't think friends kiss on the lips," He chuckles.

"Yeah that photo is kind of old would you like something to drink?" I ask, changing the subject.

"No, thank you though," He smiles kindly. "You got something on your face,"

"Oh, where?" I feel embarrassed.

"Under your eye,"

I wipe under my eye and look at him.

"It's still there, here I'll get it,"

He removes it with his finger, holding it.

"It's an eyelash, make a wish,"

Our faces are so close, I see him lean in as he places a hand on my cheek. I don't know if I want this, he's been so nice and he's charming and attractive but I couldn't do this to Ben. But Ben could do it to me when we were together. Our lips almost touch when we hear my window open.

"Oh hey," We hear Ben's voice.

I move away from Shamus and look at between him and Ben.

"Hey Ben," I smile, feeling flustered.

"What were you guys doing?" Ben stares at me.

"Nothing, I just had something on my face," I tell Ben, even though that's not what it looked like.

"It seemed like you two were going to kiss," Ben stares at me

"No, Ben-"

"Okay," He turns around to leave.

"Wait where are you going?"

"Leaving you two alone," Ben voice is stern.

"No, don't go," I grab his arm.

"Seems like you two are having fun, I'll leave you guys to it," Ben leaves.

"We weren't doing anything!" I shout out of my window.

Ben doesn't turn around or answer me. I sigh and close my window.

"Trouble in paradise?" Shamus looks at me.

"Yup," I sigh.

Shamus and I watch movies and eat junk food until dark.

## Ben's POV

They were about to kiss. Am I losing her? To the new guy? I'm sure he could make her happy.. Happier than I ever did, and I'm sure he wouldn't hurt her to way I did. But I know he could never love her the way I do. I didn't know what to do when I saw their faces so close.

I had to get out of there. All I want is to talk to her, I want her and I to be together, and the only way is for me to prove to her that I love her, and I need to gain her trust back. God, I should never have laid a hand on her, I don't know what I was thinking. I was not thinking, and now she's afraid of me touching her. She doesn't know how to act around me, she thinks everything she does is annoying, she doesn't think she's perfect. But she's perfect, she is my world, nothing she does annoys me. Veronica makes me so happy, I couldn't imagine my life without her.

I need see her, I leave my house and go to hers.

## Veronica's POV

"Thank you for having me over and making my first day good," Shamus smiles.

"Of course,"

"Alright, see you tomorrow," He leans down and pecks my lips.

I kiss him back, smiling. He leaves my house and I head back up to my room.

"Ben?" I see him in my room.

"Oh hey," He looks at me. "What's up with you and Shamus?"

"I don't know," I tell him.

"You don't know?" Ben sco s.

"Oh well u-um he kissed me, that's all. But you know that it meant nothing to me, right?" I nervously say.

"Meant nothing to you," Ben sarcastically spits, as if he doesn't believe me.

"Oh, just like you fucking Jessica twice meant nothing? I bet you did love her, that's why you went back to her a er the first time," I angrily vent.

Ben walks up to me, kinda too fast for my liking. "Please don't hit me," I whimper and move back.

Ben's face shows guilt as he backs up from me, "I'm so sorry, I'm a jealous prick, I just hate to see you with another guy, cause you could do so much better than me, I wouldn't lay a hand on you again,"

"Why did you just leave all pissy like that?" I change the subject, I hate it when we begin to talk about what happened.

"I wasn't pissy," Ben gets a little bit defensive

"You were so,"

"Was not,"

"Was so,"

"Was not!"

I grab my pillow and hit him.

"Was so!" I giggle.

"I was not," He grabs my other pillow and hits me with it.

"Oh it's on!" I laugh and hit him.

Ben and I end up having a pillow fight. Ben knocks me down to my bed. I start hyperventilating as the memory of him pushing me to the ground and Jessica kicking me comes to me.

"Please don't push me," I choke out.

"Roni oh my gosh I'm so sorry!" Ben gently wraps his arms around me, rubbing my back.

I calm down, as Ben is still holding me.

"I know apologies won't make you go away, but I am sorry for ever laying my hands on you, that was my biggest mistake," Ben whispers in my ear.

I look at him, and nod my head. He looks me in the eyes as his face comes closer. I feel myself almost lean in when I realize what I'm doing.

"I-I should go to bed," I whisper, his lips so close to mine.

"Alright,"

Neither of us move, we just lay there.

Eventually I get up and take a deep breath. I had to resist the urge to kiss him.

"Good night Roni," Ben looks at me.

"Good night Ben, I love-" I cut myself o , I'm so used to saying I love you to him.

Ben looks at me, waiting for me to finish my sentence.

"Good night Ben," I say.

Ben looks away and leaves.

I get ready for bed and lay down. Just having Ben around my pillows made them smell like him, making it easier for me to fall asleep with his scent.