

Chapter Forty-Five

Recap

I run past him, a smile still making its way onto my face, “Do you have any ice?”

“No,” He calls out, “Just get something from the freezer—it’ll have to do.”

I do as he says and open the freezer lid. The chill hits my bare arms, and I shudder before rummaging through the frozen bags section. I pull out a bag of frozen brussel sprouts and hurry my way over to him.

Seated in the very chair Layla was in earlier, he extends a hand as I get closer to him.

When I’m in reach, he snatches the bag and applies it with care to his swelling patch of skin. I stand on the other side of the island counter and observe the way the bad boy is gripping a bag of frozen brussel sprouts to his injury.

“Stop.” He orders, glaring at me.

I shake my head, convincing myself more than him, that I’m not smiling.

“Okay, maybe this is somewhat funny.” Travis admits soon.

I glance up at him in surprise, a grin spreading across my features in the same way a smirk is appearing on his.

And in this moment, I let myself relish the happy moment.

For I know that when I’m all alone again, the rage will consume me.

Chapter Forty Five

The rest of the morning went dangerously well. While Layla declared she was a walking trashcan in desperate need of a soothing shower, I resumed making breakfast for the three of us. Aside from nearly chopping the cutting board in half with the excessive force I was utilizing to slice the mushrooms, it appears nothing in the kitchen had my death wish.

Travis also explained to me what he was doing up so early. It turns out he had gone to drop on his mother and Mason at a family friend’s home up north.

“I don’t think Mom and Mason would stand much of a fighting chance here.” He had explained, figuratively weighing the odds, “Tara, the family friend, understands my family—much more than I do—and has always been willing to watch over us. Cassie adored Tara like she was her second mother.”

He didn’t elaborate any further on the last point, and I didn’t press on the subject either. His words simply floated in the air, laced with sorrow, and then dissolved in our silence. When I asked him if she knew about the gang trouble, he shook his head sternly.

“No, no one knows.” He shoots me a pointed look before continuing, “—but I’m sure she knows something’s off—she’s just has a lot of faith in me.”

Nonetheless, it makes me feel better to know that both Mason and his mother are safe and protected. And judging by the ease in Travis’s demeanor, he thinks so too.

“Okay,” I forward on the counter, “So what’s the plan now?”

“What do you mean?” Travis arches an eyebrow over pushing his empty plate away in satisfaction.

I look around, slightly confused, “Well, now that Mason and your mom are safe and sound, we can actually finish this.”

He drops his brow, his features tensing, “I thought I made it clear that we were going to lie low.”

“There’s a difference between that and sitting like helpless puppets.” I argue.

He hops on the island chair as I say that and moves towards the sink with his dishes in his hand. I follow him with my body, refusing to move an inch from my spot. As he passes me, he says one thing: “No.”

“Ugh—” I groan, “Seriously Travis—”

The sound of the doorbell cuts our banter in less than a second. I stare at his expression, trying to mask my instant uncertainty and replace it with Travis’s fire. He refuses to display any emotion, however.

Instead, he walks towards the door, one hand in his pocket, and the other clenched by his side.

“Mr. Emmons, sir?” An authoritative voice calls from across the door, “It’s the police—you are safe. We would like to speak to Miss Layla Henderson.”

Layla comes bounding down the stairs with a nervous but eager expression on her face. Travis walks forward, still cautious, but stealthily unlocks the front door to reveal nothing but honest, working police officers in their uniforms.

I walk closer, following behind Layla, and look over Travis’s shoulder. Three policemen, all dressed in navy blue button up uniforms, stand with one hand on their walky-takies, and the other by their side.

“Are you Travis Emmons?” One officer standing in the front asks?

He stands tall, perhaps six foot three, with gruesome detail to his beard and mustache cascading his pale colored face. His hazel eyes reflect glass—devoid and unemotional business.

Travis briskly nods his head, “That’s me.”

“Is Layla Henderson present in this household?” One other officer asks—much stubbier, though still bulky and fit.

I give Layla one glance before she pushes past us both and steps in front of the officers.

“That would be me.” She states firmly, offering them a small smile.

The officers return her gesture with a curt nod in her direction. “Miss Henderson, we have traced all possible suspects for your home break in and would like for you to come down and identify any familiar ones if you can.”

I glance at Travis in surprise, and then quickly step by Layla’s side. “Am I permitted to be there as well?”

The stubbier officer shakes his head, “No ma’am. Layla was the only person present at the time of the robbery; she is our only true witness.”

I purse my lips in agitation, thinking back to the home surveillance Travis and I had been watching. We were so close to finding out who the mystery thief was. The name is at the tip of my tongue and all I needed to do was see all the suspects. I would have been able to recognize them in seconds.

“But Faye is her sister—and she was there by the time everyone else was.” Travis interrupts icily, trying with great difficulty to control the slight outrage in his tone.

Another mediocre man shakes his head in between Travis’s reasoning. “We’re sorry. We can only take Layla Henderson in. If you have any objections, follow us to the main—”

“Yeah, alright!” Travis interrupts harshly, suppressing the obvious urge to roll his eyes. “We get the point.”

“Good.” The center officer replies firmly before shifting his stone gaze to Layla’s.

He extends a hand towards the cop car parked in our front parking space and motions for Layla to take that path and enter the vehicle. She takes one glance at the two of us, standing utterly and completely dissatisfied with our inability to help, before turning on her heel and falling in synch with the row of the three uniformed men.

We watch in fuming silence as they get into the car and pull out of the driveway at a diligent pace. Once out of sight, Travis lets out a sharp exhale at the same time my gaze flickers to our house across the street.

“Dipshits.” Travis curses at the police officers, his voice coming out grumpy and pissed.

“Tell me about it.” I mumble in agreement while absentmindedly staring at the abandoned house. The caution tape is gone—that’s one thing I notice. The flapping, eerie yellow line of tape across the entire boundary of our house has vanished. Last I recall, it was there yesterday. “Hey Travis, do you know why the caution tape isn’t there anymore?”

I continue to point and stare while he seems to think of words in the churning silence. “It must be the police because those idiots think they found the possible.”

I swallow uneasily and follow him into the house. I can’t decide if the reminder of the burglary, being the caution tape enveloping the house, made me feel safer than the absence of it.

I shut the door behind me and lock it securely before traveling the center of the living room where Travis is seated on the couch a few inches away from the curtains.

“This could all be solved if they just let you in.” Travis nearly growls, a scowl conquering his features.

I take a seat on the arm chair beside the window and nod my head in agreement. “Seriously. And at least I would’ve known if they were on the right track at least—I mean what if none of those guys are it.”

“That’s a good possibility, considering James is most likely behind this.” Travis points out angrily, “He’s good at being bad—I’ll give him credit for that.”

As he speaks, I hear the sound of a dying engine followed by two distinct voices and slamming doors. Both of our heads snap in the direction of the window.

My heart begins to race as I recognize the familiar tapping heels and thumping business shoes. It seems a year all these years of never hearing them, I’ve grown more familiar to them.

The sound of Dad’s burgundy leather business shoes pounding on the ragged cement.

My eyes widen and I instantly leap towards the window. I gently brush aside one of the covers of the curtain to get a better look. I don’t recognize the car—it’s a rental—a very cheap rental accord.

Then I catch sight of Laura, dashing around the vehicle, only to meet Dad on the other side.

I throw the curtains forward and spin around to face Travis with an unleashed force of panic. He seems just as concerned, and just as aware of the entire situation before I state it.

“My parents are home.”

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Hey guys!

Thank you for all your lovely and wonderful comments last chapter. Unfortunately, I haven’t had the time to reply to them—but I will, even if it is the last thing I do. I have read them all, so I know y’all exist—well I always know that, so it’s all good!

I don’t want to waste too much time, but I just need to say this once and for all so I never have to repeat it again: I know that recently, this story has gained quite a fanbase. I’m grateful for that—but I also am aware that for every supportive reader, there are at least three negative critiquers. Well, not even critiquers—just people who want to pick on every damn thing. My advice for those people, please just stop. For example, No. My story is not racist, derogative, stereotypical...and NO. I will not stop recapping. If you don’t like them, fine. Just scroll past them, easy as pie. They help me. So please deal. Other than that, most of you are wonderful! (:

Anywho, I told you last chapter that this chapter is where all the tables turn. Well, I’m here to keep my promise. Oh and by the way...this isn’t anything—just wait to see what I have in store for the next chapter. DAMN. I’m getting jittery just thinking about it!

QOC: I’m curious to know a little bit about each and every one of you. Going beyond the chapter...Is there any scene in this ENTIRE book, that you can relate to—that you feel connected to? Which one? (:

Can I get 50 comments?

COMMENT.

xxSummerxx