

I Called Him Temptation: Day 5

He gave me his number and told me to call him when I'm ready for him to take me out. I kept staring at the number in my phone, thinking about calling it then changing my mind. Finally, I used it the other day after class. We made our plans.

We were going to meet up at Klyde Warren Park because they have food trucks! You can't find that on my side of town. Anyway, we had to change plans since I'm not comfortable with driving Downtown on my own, and I'm not riding on his motorcycle down there. Tino and I had been texting back and forth throughout the day about what we'd do instead.

I tried on different outfits and jammed out to The Weeknd. My anxiety had been on high all day to the point I considered cancelling our date. That would be blatantly cheating, even if we didn't kiss or touch, which I knew we wouldn't. Still, it was just one date and things would go back to normal.

At 1:00, he called asking if I'd be fine meeting him at the Barnes and Noble near me. I told him that would be great, and I'd meet him there in an hour. I got excited imagining how everything would go and turned up my speaker as I untwisted my hair. 10 minutes later, he called to tell me to meet him at the park by my college. Well, I guess he showed me. Neither half-way nor close to my home. Part of me thinks this isn't going to be a date at all, probably just a major disappointment, and I guess it serves me right. I agreed to meet him there, excited for whatever surprise he had planned.

I settled on dressing casual with a black and white baseball shirt and faded skinny jeans.

Honestly, I figured this would be a casual thing, and I knew he sure as hell wouldn't be dressed up. I've learned these guys' dress patterns by now.

I pulled into the parking lot behind the tennis court, a little sweaty from the air-conditionless drive and unforgiving sun. Then I see Tino, with his skateboard, through my rearview. My face turns hot as I hesitate with getting out of my car.

“Why’d you drive in a circle before coming back over here?” He asks as soon as I open my door.

Sheepishly, I explain that I didn't even know there was a park here. I'd never been on that side. I was embarrassed.

"So what do you have planned?" I ask as we walk under shaded trees, hoping for an exciting response.

"I was thinking we ride the bus. See some places and get some food. Eat lots of food. I used to do it all the time with my ex."

"Oh." I slow to a stop. The bus? His ex? What happened to him having a motorcycle?

"What?" He asks, noticing I'm no longer beside him.

I blink, incredulous to his oblivion. Are we just gonna do everything he did with his ex? I shake my head, running a hand across my brows.

"Nothing." I respond.

He says we can figure things out and suggests we get on the bus that's already waiting at the bus stop. I stop him and suggest we wait for the next bus because I wasn't ready to board. We sit on a bench a few feet away from the bus stop. Before sitting down, I look underneath the bench.

"What was that for?" He asks.

"Checking for spiders. When I was a kid, we used to go hiking a lot. One time, there was this bench covered with little black spiders all underneath it. So now I always check." We both sit down.

"Spiders are fucking awesome."

"No they aren't."

"If I got a pet tarantula, I'd want you to take care of it for me."

I roll my eyes.

"I'm kinda high right now. Can you tell?"

I shrug and give him a quick once over. "Yeah, your eyes."

"Don't worry. I'm not a drug addict!" He says turning his whole body toward me. I shrug my shoulders and look down at my feet.

But I bet you're an alcoholic, I think to myself. In the few days of getting to know him, I know that he really likes to drink. In fact, he told me he used to sneak vodka through water bottles in high school and was drunk pretty often. It didn't sit too well with me.

"But you smoke a lot. And drink a lot."

"I don't drink that much...anymore. Ok? I'm not an alcoholic. I barely have time to drink now anyways, and if I did have time I still wouldn't."

I stare at him in amazement wondering if he really expected me to believe that. I mean, not that any of it matters to me, anyway, because he's not my boyfriend.

"Yeah, ok. You never said you quit drinking, though. But whatever."

"Like I said, I mostly just smoke. Are you mad at me? Don't be mad at me. I can tell you're mad."

"I'm not. Look, are we still riding the bus or are we doing something else?" The bus doors were already closing after 3 people got on.

"We'll get on the next one." He says, waving his hand through the air. "Let's just sit here and talk till the next one comes."

I watch as the bus rolls off and hesitantly sit back against the bench. "Ok." I'm still bundled with nerves about riding the bus. That, and being seen by Don. But Don doesn't ride the bus.

"So," he begins. "...you like me right?"

"Yeah, you could say that."

"So, what do you like about me?"

Where to start? I stare into the gaps and leaves of the overhanging trees. My eyes briefly drift over to him. I know he's crazy and wild, but I can ignore that. In fact, it's one of the things that just draws me in.

"Well," I drag, "you're funny, somewhat rational, caring, easy to talk to, and you know what you want." The word 'cute' simmers on my tongue. I smile and shake my head.

"What about my looks? Do you think I'm ugly or cute or what?"

"Yeah, no. You're not ugly, you know that. I think you're kinda cute." I say. It felt weird, giving this stranger, who's not really a stranger, compliments while the image of a pissed boyfriend lingers in the corner of my mind.

“Well, I think you’re cute...”

I blush. He inches closer to me on the bench, slowly sticking a hand in my hair and playing with it. I start to say, “Could you not?” Instead, I stay silent, preparing my next question and preparing for his potential reaction. I know he’ll deny it.

“...and sweet but with a nasty side when you get comfortable around someone. You’re smart and—”

“You’re a flirty person.” I blurt out and look at him as if everything else was hinged upon his answer. “Do you consider yourself a flirty person?”

His hand goes stiff for a second before he continues fluffing my hair. “If you mean talking to other girls over you...”

“I mean flirting.” I look away from him again as students pass by. “I remember you used to flirt with *everybody* in high school. Even me. You still do.”

He denies and denies before finally admitting the truth. He’s a flirt.

“Ok, yeah, I flirt. But it’s part of who I am and it’s fun. Do I flirt because I want to cheat? No, but I do it because I like to see the smiles on girls faces when I do it. Doesn’t mean I want to fuck them.”

I scoff. This guy is unbelievable. I can’t help but laugh at his ridiculousness. It’s not long before the bus comes back around. Now, it’s as if he’s forgotten all about boarding it. Instead, he asks me about my boyfriend. Things like, have I talked to him and what am I going to do about him.

“Well, I really wanted to call him and break up because I know otherwise, we’d end up...well, you know. But of course, I still should do it in person because calling is the douchebag way to do it. But the thing is...” I just go on and on thinking up my plan like we were conspiring a crime.

“Will you be ok?”

“Yeah...yeah,” I nod my head furiously trying to convince myself. “I’ll be OK.”

“You want me to come with you when you do it? If you want, I can be right there with you?”

Straight poker face.

Que the record scratch. Did this dude really just suggest coming with me to break up with my boyfriend? He must want both us to end up on an episode of Dateline. I can just imagine how utterly stupid that would look, me going up there with him. I shudder at the thought, still at a loss for words in response to his insane proposal.

I manage to say, “It’s already bad enough that I’m breaking up with him! That’ll only make it, ha, worse! It’s supposed to soften the blow, not make it worse! Anyways, aren’t we supposed to get on this bus now?”

“Yeah, you’re right. That wouldn’t be too good.” He says. He sure wasn’t lying about being high.

After missing the bus, again, we go inside the Arts building. We weren’t going to ride the bus, after all. It was beautiful outside, as could be seen through the tall windows. I could see the ponds and my other favorite spots from here. Tino buys us sodas from the vending machine and we continue talking in the lounge area. This “date” was not going anywhere near where I expected. At school. On a Saturday. Glancing at him from under my eyelashes, I wasn’t even

mad that we weren't on a date. He makes the most ordinary thing exciting. It's the oddest feeling. We sit on the seats against the windows. He wants to play a game on his Nintendo DS while we talk.

"Sit on my lap." He pats the lap of his gray jeans.

"NO!" I say.

"Hmm. Will you sit on my lap?"

I scoot away from him. "No."

"Will you sit on my lap? Please? I really want you to sit on my lap."

"Nooo."

"It looks like you want to sit in my lap."

I lay my crossed legs over his thighs but refuse to put my whole body on top of his.

"Ugh, fine. What do you love?" He asks.

"I love—" My phone buzzes in my pocket before I can answer anything but what he wants to hear. It's a text from my boyfriend.

I can't help but feel like trash reading it. I'm a horrible person, I can't respond while I'm here with him.

"Is that your boyfriend?"

I don't say anything.

"Oooh! What'd he say?"

“Ha! I’m not telling you.” There’s a short silence as my guilt slowly rises above us like a puff of smoke. I drop my legs from his lap. “I should probably go.”

“No, you’re staying here. With me.” He’s holding my wrist. “Why are you so worried?”

I say nothing.

The silence doesn’t last long before Tino’s back to asking me what I love. He wants me to say him, practically pleading for it. I don’t love him, I can’t love him. I tell him that it takes time to know if you love someone. Then, he asks me what’s on my mind. Now his arm is around me, fingers running lightly across my arm as he makes me play this weird video game. I told myself we wouldn’t touch, but he can’t keep his hands off me.

He’s pulled me into his lap, and now I want to tell him that he seems too good to be true. Maybe that he’s a guy I could only dream of and we just happen to meet at the most unexpected time? But I can’t say that. I won’t say that.

“You and this whole series of events are too good to be true and I’m not sure why. So why?”

Damnit, Mage!

“What are you afraid will happen?”

“I don’t know. A lot could happen.”

Then, he proceeds to calm my doubts. When I look at him, it’s as if he’s in soft-focus, beard, baby-dreads, and all. He tells me he won’t cheat on me because he doesn’t have the time nor energy. He’s not gay, he likes girls and only girls. Lastly, Cupid’s arrow to my chest, he won’t hurt me because he couldn’t do that to me.

“And I like sex.” He adds, which was no surprise.

I scoff, “Yeah, what guy doesn’t?”

“You know, I once went to this orgy sex party with my ex when we were still together.”

I make a mental note to avoid having sex with him. “Wh...why are you telling me this?”

“Because there are guys more obsessed with sex than others and I know some of them personally.”

“You’re not making too great of a case for yourself now.”

As he gives me this wild trip of a story about this sex party, I can barely look at him. I’m desperately trying to get out of his lap. His grip is too firm, though.

“Wow, so that’s how you know about...that and...that. But seriously, this feels weird.”

“But you’re so soft and warm.” He presses his head against my back. “So how big is your boyfriend?”

“Are you asking me about my boyfriend’s penis?”

“I’m just curious.”

“About?”

“If I’m below average.”

“Well, how big are you?”

Shocked, he goes silent before saying, “You can’t ask me that!”

“I just did. And you started it asking how big my boyfriend is.”

“OK...so I measured it against some dildos before, and it was like the same length as one of the bigger ones.”

I look at him then down the hall. “Oh...so what did you have dildos for?”

“Why would you ask me that?” He looks at me with panicked eyes.

We’re both silent. I laugh in his face and can’t stop. I fall back onto the seat behind me laughing, and now he is, too. It was the way he asked that question like it was perfectly normal thing. We finally collect ourselves and he tells me how he came to playing with dildos and comparing his size to them. He powers off his game and shoves it back into his backpack.

I tell him I need to leave before it gets dark. We kept talking as he walked me to my car.

Standing in front of my car, he asks me for a kiss. I look him up and down, like the audacity of this dude. He said I promised him, though I didn’t. He says he’s not leaving until he gets a kiss. It doesn’t have to be on the lips, he says, just a kiss on the cheek. Well, guess he’ll be waiting all night.

I keep looking at him as my heart pounds in my ears. I reach out awkwardly with one arm, then the other, and grab his arms. I keep thinking he’ll trick me and end up kissing me on my lips if I do kiss his cheek. I’m not kissing him. This wasn’t part of my plan.

“I can’t.” I say, folding my arms in front of me.

Then, he pulls me in and kisses me on the forehead.

When I get in my car, he gets in too. I try to get him out, but he won’t leave. He insists we talk some more. I tell him I’m a hoe. He says he’s a hoe too, that we can be hoes together. I tell him he still owes me a date and he promises to make it up to me. I’ll be waiting.