

## **I Called Him Temptation: Day 15**

The last time I saw Tino was a few days ago. I needed some time away from him.

After my last class, I stopped for a moment and took out my phone to text him, but just the thought was tiring. I don't want to do this, not right now. I kept those feet moving right out those doors. As I walked up the stairs, I took a deep breath. It had been so long since I left right after class, I forgot how good it felt. I got in my car alone and looked at the empty seat next to me. That felt good. My phone vibrates in the cup holder as I drive and see his name. I ignore that, too.

"Where are you? Why didn't you call me?" He asks when I answer 5 calls later and sit down in my living room.

"I'm at home." I say.

"Well, come back up here, I want to see you."

"I wanna see you, too, but I'm at home."

"You went back to him, didn't you?"

"What? I'm gonna pretend like you didn't say that. Anyway, I'm not turning right back around and going up there." I already did that once this week for him and felt like a damn fool.

"You're coming back here so I can kiss you and grab that ass again. You can't say no. Hey, is your mom there?"

"Why you asking about my mama?" I get up and walk around.

"So, she can hear all the nasty stuff I'm about to say to you. Put me on speaker!"

I shake my head, smiling. “I hate you. No. See that’s why I’m not coming up there, and see if you really want to do all that, why don’t you come find me? And when you taking me on this date? Yeah, that’s what I thought.”

“I love it when you talk to me like that. Say that to my face, that’s when I take your legs and—”

I hang up the phone before he can finish. As if I’d be dumb enough come back up there after the way he just talked to me.

“What?! So, there was no Netflix and Chill before or after you broke up with him?”

Ok, fine. I am dumb enough to make a double trip to see him.

“No. I was scared that would happen. Just like every other time.”

“So, you texted him the breakup? Damn, you a savage!”

“No! Shut up!” I look at him. “I saw him, actually.”

“Yeah, ok.” Tino laughs, so I push him.

“I did! Damn!”

I don’t say anything for a while. I just look at Tino laughing his ass off. He had me wanting to ditch him, too.

“Do you miss him?” He asks after collecting himself. “Did you cry?”

I shake my head. I cried so much, I had no tears left. “Of course I miss him! It’s still fresh, my dude.”

“You said it when you first met me—well met me again—that you wanted to break up with him cuz you weren’t happy. I just gave you the motivation to do it.”

He was right. This was how it all started, with me being in an unhappy relationship with my boyfriend. The boyfriend I thought I wouldn’t miss. I just thought Don would fight for me or do better. I guess it wouldn’t have made a difference whether I told him the truth, anyway. Ok, maybe this break we’re taking is him fighting for me? I just felt empty, like a broken toy. I mean, he did brush the issues I cared about most off like they were nothing. That hurt like a sword in my chest, then this guy comes along and listens to me, comforts me. Except, right now I don’t feel any better. I feel like Tino’s next to leave and I’ll be all alone with no boyfriend or fuckboy. After all, he was just her to help me, take me on a date, then leave. Right? I don’t wanna be a player no more.

“Have you heard of D2B?” He asks.

“Dick too Bomb?”

“Dick too Bomb. You know some women will stay in a relationship just for that. They nigga ain’t shit and you know why they won’t leave? Cuz bitch, dick too bomb! D2B, dick too bomb, D2B.” He starts dancing and snapping his fingers while singing.

“Ok! You can stop now.” I laugh.

“I guess he didn’t have that bomb D, but I do.”

I roll my eyes. I guess I’d have to see for myself. I’m sure he’s average. Then again, who am I? He really thinks he’s gonna get some. We’ll see. He gets up and sits on the other side of me so I’m looking at him.

“Are you sad? Are you mad?”

“No.”

“Are you happy?”

“No.”

“Are you going back to your boyfriend? He said he misses you.”

“Do you have to keep bringing him up? I just wanna go home. Bye.” I get up to leave. He follows me.

I glance at Tino’s hand wrapping around mine. They’re big and always sticky, but I can’t take my eyes off the dirty fingernails. I make a face imagining all the infections I could get. Then again, I’ve let them get on my face, no telling where else I’d let those fingers go. I shudder and step back from him.

“You can stay here,” I say, “because you’re only making me feel worse.”

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I’m sorry! Ok, I won’t talk about it anymore.” He lays his head on my shoulder. “I’ll make it up to you. Whatever you want.”

I shake my head then look away from his nails and keep walking. I was going home so I could get away from him. Again. I didn’t care if he followed me to my car, which he did, because I wasn’t letting him in. He kept grabbing my ass and whispering in my ear, so it was hard to ignore him. When we got to my car, it was even harder to resist him. He turned me to him while I debated unlocking the doors. He was standing so close to me our lips could touch.

“I’m not letting you in,” I finally say, putting my keys away.

A smile creeps across his face. This is where the begging begins. He keeps asking me to forgive him and let him in. He tries wresting my keys from me. We're running around in circles around my car. I'm not letting him in my car. I'm not taking him to the bus stop.

"C'mon Mage. Don't be like that!"

"Like what? Your baby? Who is your baby anyway, Tino? Hm?"

That stops him. He shakes his head, quiet. I watch him. He looks so different from when I first saw him, like he really see him clearly now. Has the spell been broken? He laughs, still shaking that head.

"Give me your keys."

"No."

"I don't have a baby, OK? You're my baby. Keys, my baby? Please?"

I look him up and down. Why do I keep putting up with this dude? Driving this dude around?

"That's not what you meant. You meant a *baby*." I grip the keys in my pocket tighter. I can't look at him. "That means a baby mama, probably *babies* and *baby mamas*! And here I am, going dumb! I keep making extra trips to see you, hoping for a date, hoping for something more. But it's just too much. You're too much! I can't."

"Mage! The fuck?"

I jump-slide across my trunk to the passenger side. Unlocking it, I hop in the car and lock the driver side just as Tino reaches for it. I shake my head at him. My heart beats in my throat as I pull off, watching Tino in my rearview with tears in my eyes.