

You' re Mine by Penny Brooks Chapter 23

Chapter 23

Harper

I clutch my books closer to my chest, irritated that I have to carry them but my backpack is already full and my locker won't open. It's jammed yet again. I hate this school.

The moment Ryan and I arrived this morning, the first person I saw was Easton. He looked right through me, his eyes narrow slits, his lips thin. Aisha approached him and it was as if he forgot all about me, his attention solely focused on her.

She sent me a look that told me she witnessed our little interaction and she wanted to interrupt it on purpose, the catty bitch. I leave them in a huff, my determined steps taking me to my locker, only to discover it wouldn't open.

Thank God I brought all my books home last night, in the hopes could lose myself in homework. Didn't happen.

All I could think about was stupid Easton

Didn't help that he sent me a friend request on Instagram and like the pathetic loser he always reminds me that I am, I accepted it without hesitation. And then I went and

followed his profile, which is public. No surprise.

When he direct messaged me, I almost fell off the bed. At first, he acted like he was into me, and despite everything that's happened between us, the miniscule good and the overwhelmingly bad, I thought maybe he was going to confess his real feelings.

Then he made it seem like all he wanted was a sneaky hookup here and there, and I was disgusted. *More* with myself than him.

This is why I can't get my hopes up. Easton will always bring them crashing down

I walk into my first period classroom early and collapse into my desk, dropping the books I'm carrying with a loud thump. I suppose I could go to the front office and complain about my Wocker. They'd write me an excuse for being late so it's not like it would be a big deal.

I'm about to get back up when Sadie darts into my classroom, her eyes wide, her expression downright frantic.

"Oh my God, there you are! Are you okay?" she asks, her words so fast they practically trip over themselves.

I frown. "What are you talking about?"

"You didn't see your locker?" Her frown matches mine.

I slowly shake my head, confused. "I went to it earlier, but I couldn't open it. That's why I'm carrying my books." I wave a hand at the stack in front of me.

"Oh shit." She glances around the room before her gaze returns to mine. "Come with me."

I follow her out of the classroom, leaving my books but taking my backpack with me. We head for my locker, which is surrounded by a small group of people. As I draw closer, I can hear whispers and

laughter. Snippets of conversation.

"..she wishes." is what I hear someone say

That someone is Aisha.

It's only four letters written in bold black spray paint across my faded gray locker door. But the word penetrates my heart and nearly makes me crumple.

SLUT!

They even used an exclamation point.

No one says anything, but I can feel their eyes on me, waiting for my reaction. I refuse to give them one. I'm on the verge of tears in an

instant but I suck them up. No way can I cry in front of these people. That's what they want.

That's what they live for.

I scan the small crowd, their faces blank, their lips curved as if they're enjoying witnessing my humiliation. Sadie is so angry I can practically feel her vibrate as she stands next to me.

"Who did this?" Her voice rises above the crowd as she gestures toward my locker. "Who?"

"I was just here," I whisper to her. "They had to have done it in a matter of minutes."

In front of other people, too.

Where my locker is situated is usually pretty quiet before the first bell rings. It's a smaller cluster of lockers that sits at the end of the hall, and it's usually so peaceful in the morning

Not today though

"What the hell is going on?"

At the sound of the angry male voice, both Sadie and I turn around to find Ryan pushing his way through the crowd until he's standing right in front of me. His gaze goes to my locker door and his expression tightens.

He's pissed

"Who did this?" he asks me.

I shrug. "I have no idea, but it just happened. I was at my locker a few minutes ago and I couldn't get it to open."

He strides toward my locker and does the combination on the lock, which he knows. Just like I know his, too. When it doesn't open for him, he curls his hand into a fist and starts banging on the door. Like magic, it pops open and he steps away just in time as a pile of garbage falls out of my locker and onto the ground.

When I blink the items into focus, I realize I'm staring at a pile of what looks like used pads and tampons.

"Gross!" screams a female voice,

Chine

just before they all start laughing.

Sadie slips her arm around my shoulder and pulls me in close. "Who could do this?"

"What the fuck?" Ryan turns his murderous glare on everyone watching and they all take a collective step back. "Who did this to my sister?"

I'm shaking. Who hates me this much that they'd try to humiliate me so badly?

I can only think of one person, even though my brain rejects his name. He couldn't be so cruel.

Could he?

A whistle blows and the next thing I know, our vice principal Mr. Rose is standing in front of my locker. All the onlookers are gone, making their way to their classrooms and Ryan is yelling at Mr. Rose, asking him what he's going to do about it.

"Did you give your combination to anyone, Harper?" Mr. Rose asks me.

I shake my head, still fighting the tears. "Of course not. I was just here and there was no spray paint on the door. I don't know how they could've done this without being seen."

Unless they're well protected and popular. People will turn the other way when someone they like-or fear-is doing something wrong.

"Who do you think did this?" Ryan asks me, his expression one of pure rage.

I'm terrified to say his name, but it's like I can't hold back

"Easton."

You' re Mine by Penny Brooks Chapter 24

Chapter 24

Easton

I heard the rumors about Harper's vandalized locker at the beginning of first period. How someone wrote slut on the front of it in black spray paint-like what the fuck?

By the end of class, I'm being called into the vice principal's office. The serious expression on Mr. Rose's face tells me he means business, and he doesn't even hesitate with his accusation.

"Did you vandalize a locker this morning before school started?"

he asks.

I scoff, shocked he would think it's me. "Absolutely not. Why the hell would I do that?"

The pointed look he sends me for cursing at him makes me want to say something else. Something ruder. "Watch your mouth. And where were you on campus before the first bell rang?"

"Out in front of the school, like always am. I have witnesses if you need them to vouch for me." I lean back in my chair, completely at ease.

"Let me look in your backpack." Mr. Rose points at where it sits on the floor.

"No."

"Thave every right to search your belongings when you're on school property." He flicks his fingers. "Give it to me. Now."

Without a word I hand over my backpack and he settles it on top of his desk before he zips it open, rifling through my things. Irritation fills me but I'm confident he won't find shit. I don't even know what he's looking for. A spray paint can? The person who actually did this would have to be a complete idiot to walk around with the evidence still on them.

"Looks like there's nothing." Mr. Rose says once he's finished and gives it back over to me.

"Want to search my car? I can guarantee there's nothing incriminating in there either," I say.

"Not yet," Mr. Rose says, which sets off a fresh wave of annoyance.

"Why do you think I did it?"

"Your name was mentioned in the list of suspects," Mr. Rose says.

Irritation is replaced by full flown anger. Did Harper actually believe I would do something so awful to her? What kind of asshole does she think I am?

chutz "Do you still think I did it?" I rise to my feet, slinging my backpack onto my shoulder

"I'm not sure, so be prepared to get called back in," Mr. Rose says before I leave his office,

The rest of the morning I'm in a red haze, too angry to speak, to pay attention, to do anything but walk through the halls like a damn robot, my gaze constantly scanning, looking for Harper. The little bitch is nowhere to be found and by the time lunch starts, I'm infuriated.

"Hey baby, want to go off campus together?"

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I turn to find Aisha standing in front of me, tempting in a cropped black shirt and high waisted jeans. She looks good as usual, but the problem with Aisha is she lacks substance

"No thanks," I bite out as I push past her.

I hear her say something else but ignore her, moving through the crowds of people like a shark whose scented his prey. I find her in the cafeteria, sitting at a table with Sadie, the both of them hovered close and whispering. I stop in front of the table, and my presence does nothing. They don't even notice me.

"We need to talk." I demand, my voice so loud they both jump.

Sadie watches me, her eyes wide. Harper contemplates me coolly, her expression completely unreadable. "What do you want?"

"To talk to you. I pause. "In private."

Harper shakes her head. "Not a *good* idea."

"I don't give a shit what you think." I round the table and place my hand on her shoulder. Just like that, a bolt of lust shoots through me at first contact

So fucking annoying.

"You can't just boss me around" she retorts.

"I can when you're spreading false rumors about me and your fucking locker," I throw back at her.

Without a word she slips off the bench and we're walking beside each other, exiting the cafeteria together. Ryan watches us with narrowed eyes but he doesn't say a *word* or make a move toward us.

I can tell he doesn't like that I'm talking to his sister. Well tough shit.

Blake watches us too, his face unreadable, his gaze blazing.

That guy can go suck a dick.

Once we're outside, I grab hold of Harper's arm and lead her toward the parking lot, which is mostly devoid of people. The moment we're out of sight, she's yanking her arm out of my hand, turning on me like she wants to rip my head off.

I would never vandalize your locker," I tell her before she can get a word out.

She freezes, her mouth falling open for a brief second before she snaps it shut

"I'm a dick but I would never go that far," I continue. "I don't know who did it, and after what's happened between us, I'm

surprised you'd think I would be so

awful."

She crosses her arms which only plumps up her tits. It takes all I've got not to stare at them. "You're pretty awful, Easton."

"Did you tell Mr. Rose you thought I did it?"

She shrugs one shoulder. More than enough confirmation. I take a step toward her and she stiffens, her expression wary.

"Even after everything we've shared?" My voice is soft, my heart pumping wildly as I get closer. This girl-what the hell is she doing to me? I don't get it.

"We haven't shared much" she whispers. "One moment in a

closet?"

"And another in a bathroom. And at my party." I'm so close I can smell her, that delicious scent lingering around us. "Stop pretending, Harper. It's unbecoming."

She dips her head, her hair falling forward and covering most of her face. "Who did it then? Who wrote that on my locker?"

"It wasn't me," I say with so much conviction she looks up, her gaze meeting mine. "I'll help you figure out who did it though."

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Her brows draw together. "You

will?"

I touch her cheek. Stroke along her jaw. Press my thumb against her bottom lip. "Yes. I'll rip their head off for you too, if that's what you want. I'd do-" I clamp my lips shut.

I need to shut the hell up before say something I don't mean.

"You'd do what?" she whispers, her gaze dropping to my lips.

Yeah. She can deny it all she wants, that she hates me. Wants nothing to do with me. But she can't deny that she wants me.

We're happening, whether we like

it or not