

## Chapter 45

Rose's throat ached from holding the sob she so desperately held back. She could feel his pain like it was hers. Never had she thought he was going through all this.

The way he presented himself when they met wouldn't give her a single clue as to what lurked in his haunting thoughts. He seemed to always be cool and relaxed, not a single emotion breaking through the surface. She couldn't help to feel guilty for judging him so early.

"Does Asher know?" She found herself asking.

His eyes were a stormy blue now, either he was replaying that dreadful day in his mind or he regretted telling her his secret. He nods, gauging her reaction.

Luke was confused. Why hadn't she recoil back in disgust? Why was she still here? He didn't understand. Yes he wanted her to stay, yes he loved her but he feared that he would fail her just like he had done to Elise. He didn't know if he could be the man that Rose deserved.

Yet when he looked into those warm honey eyes he wanted to be that man, he wanted to be the only man for her. He was selfish but with Rose he didn't care.

Her striking brown eyes, similar to honey regarded him the same way she had done before, there were no traces of disgust.

Rose hated that he blamed himself for something that was really out of his hands. "It wasn't your fault Luke, none of it was." She whispered through a dry throat.

She could see that he didn't believe her and she wished she knew how to make him. Why couldn't this be easy? The question flutters through her mind as she wracked her brain for ways to get through him.

"How can you say that it wasn't my fault? I wasn't of age yet to drink and I knew that, yet I still did. I also knew that I didn't have a driver's license yet I took the car and drove it." His voice cracks at the end and she just knew he was far gone.

She lifts her hands and brushes her fingers over his stubble jaw. He flinches back and she fights to not feel hurt by his reaction. Her hands drop back to her sides, now feeling cold. "You were a kid back then Luke, many would do the same thing if they were in your situation. You need to see that it wasn't your fault-"

His mocking laugh cuts her off. "A kid? I was fifteen Rose far from being a kid. I mean I even had gotten a girl pregnant for fucksake, I was far from innocent."

"You were manipulated by your father to be with that girl. I'm not saying that whatever you had done was right because it wasn't. Like you said, you should've been careful. But things happen for a reason Luke and you need to let it go. Heal from it and move forward. What is done is done and in the past, there's no going back." She mumbles. She wasn't good at this, she didn't know how to make him see that it wasn't his fault.

Her mind works overdrive and something clicks. Realization dawn on her. "Is this what your father has over you? You're supposed to go to jail."

His blue eyes darken and he nods, reluctantly. "Yes the doctor noticed alcohol in my system and knew I was underage. The cops also had gotten to know that I didn't have a license. It was only inevitable that I would be sent to jail. But father did what he always did, he slithered his way until they dropped the case. Apparently I still owe him and at any moment he could have the case back open."

Rose's eyes soften into one of understanding. How could a father treat their own son this way? She tries to wrap her mind around it but comes up blank. "I'm sorry Luke." She mumbled, her throat tight with emotion.

He tears his eyes away but she had time to see the grief in his eyes. "What are you sorry for? You're not the one whose father is a fucking asshole. You're not the one who stupidly got a girl pregnant." He turned to me. "You're not the one who always seems to fuck up."

Her palm come to rest on her stomach where their baby was safely nestled inside. His blue eyes flick to the hand and he stares. She could sense the gears in his head turning.

She hoped that whatever he was thinking wasn't going to put a strain on their relationship, though she couldn't call what they had a relationship. She wanted him but she wasn't sure if he wanted her. The thought saddened her but she didn't dwell on it.

Whatever agreement they would come to she wouldn't care. She now had the heartbeat of their baby in her womb and would swear on her life to protect him or her. This baby growing in her womb was now her life and she prayed Luke would think so too.

His big palm comes to rest on top of hers, warming her hands with the heat of his touch. She looks into those orbs she loves and sees something shifts. An emotion she was too familiar with. He retracts his hands, leaving her feeling cold at the loss of contact.

"I can't do this." It comes out soft almost unheard. She hated how those words cut through the barrier around her heart and pierced it so deep that she feared she wouldn't be able to mend it.