

Chapter 181

The day had been long and exhausting, but very fun. My friends were truly very competent. We had already hired everything - decoration, buffet, band, a quartet to sing and play during the ceremony, party favors, guest list, the cake, and of course, the dress. Since I didn't want anything extravagant, it was quick, but it was perfect.

We had also scheduled with the notary that Rick gave us the contact for, and we spoke with the priest, who initially didn't want to agree to give the blessing because we hadn't done the pre-marriage course, but Melissa found a way to convince him to meet with us on Friday morning to do a mini-course. So, he ended up agreeing and would give the blessing.

Samantha and Manu made a beautiful digital invitation and scheduled it to be sent to all the guests at dinner time, so the parents wouldn't find out ahead of time. They had already arranged that on Friday, the two of them would be in charge of RSVPs.

Melissa had already filled up my schedule for Friday. There would be the pre-marriage course, which she had already told Rick to let Alexander know about, the spa, salon, and the final fittings of the dresses - mine and theirs. I preferred that each one choose their own dress and what color they wanted to wear. I wanted them to feel comfortable and happy with what they wore, and not just fulfill a bride's wish that could make them uncomfortable. Nor was I the type of bride who was afraid of not being the center of attention. I would already be at an altar, what more could draw so much attention?

My friends were all different from each other, and not everything that looked good on one would look good on the other. I wanted them to feel beautiful too. And for them to look beautiful by my side. That's why each



one chose the dress they wanted, and I loved their choices, which were beautiful and vibrant colors, each one with a different color. It was perfect, I would get married in a flowery garden full of different colors, they would be like flowers. 1

Before going back home to get ready for dinner, Manu asked me to send my vows to her to type up for me and leave on the altar table.

"Manu, I'm not going to do vows." I explained.

"What do you mean? Nowadays every wedding has vows that the bride and groom write." Manu explained to me as if I wasn't informed.

"That may be, Manu, but I want mine to be traditional. The old and perfect 'I promise to be faithful to you, in joy and in sadness, in health and in sickness, in wealth and in poverty, loving you and respecting you, all the days of our lives, until death do us part.' It's perfect! It can't be more perfect than promising love, fidelity, and respect in good times and in difficult times, for the rest of our lives."

"Oh, Catherine, you're such a big romantic." Melissa laughed.

"Besides, it worked for my parents and for Alexander's parents, so let's keep the tradition going." I said, smiling.

"You're the boss!" Samantha agreed.

At home, I still found Alexander, who was a bit grumpy and told me that Mel forced him to spend the next two nights at Patrick's house and only come back to see me at the wedding. They would take the opportunity to all gather there, like a boys' camp. Henry had promised a bachelor party. I warned Alexander that it was better if this bachelor party didn't involve women, making him laugh.



When I finished getting ready, I ran my hand over the dress, looking at myself in the mirror. I was wearing a hydrangea blue dress, fitted to the waist, with a flared skirt and midi length. It had no cleavage in the front; the cleavage was on the back. At the waist, there was a detail of a thin belt in the same fabric, attached to the dress, forming a Chanel bow on the back. I let my hair fall loose on my shoulders and completed the look with light makeup and nude shoes and clutch. 1

I went to the living room, where Alexander was waiting for me. He was handsome, as always, in a light gray suit without a tie and a white shirt. When he saw me, he came towards me with shining eyes.

"You are simply stunning!" He smiled and gave me a quick kiss. "I'm going to marry the most beautiful woman in the world!"

"What an exaggeration!" I smiled, putting my arms around his neck. "And where is everyone?"

"They're gone. Your parents took Peter. They went with the driver and two security guards."

"Well, then let's go."

"Do I really have to sleep at Patrick's house? I won't tell Mel anything!" His tone was pleading.

"Yes, you do. Because she will end up finding out, and I don't want to suffer her wrath." I smiled and pulled him by the hand. He left sighing.

When we arrived, everyone was already there. Our friends and the group of parents, as well as Lygia, Jorge, and Margaridinha, the nickname Sam gave that stuck, and now Dona Margaret had become Margaridinha to all of us. We greeted everyone, and I received many compliments. Peter was



on Patrick's lap, telling him about the car movie he had watched that afternoon, and Patrick gave him attention as if it were a major business meeting.

I was happy to have all the important people in my life there. We were gathered in the living room, and waiters passed by serving champagne. Alexander called everyone's attention and began to speak:

"Friends and family, this week we experienced horrible moments, but they brought us even closer together. However, everything that happened made me realize that when we are sure of something we want, we shouldn't wait. And that's why we are gathered here today. I want to thank each one of you for being here supporting us and for having welcomed me in the worst moments." Alexander sighed. "When my parents passed away, I felt completely alone in the world, and you surrounded me with love and support. And, when I thought nothing could bring me joy, I found the woman of my life and my son, and we are expecting another child. I would like to make a toast to that. To you, to family, to my children, and to the most precious woman in the world who filled my life with light."

Everyone raised their glasses in a toast and applauded Alexander's words, who spoke again:

"I am absolutely certain that you are the love of my life, Catherine, and that I want to spend my whole life with you." Alexander took my hand and walked with me to my parents. "Therefore, Anthony and Selina, I would like to ask you to give me the honor of making your daughter my wife. I promise you, and all our friends here, that I will take care of her and love her every day, I will strive to give her a happy home and a peaceful life, I ask for your blessing to marry Catherine and I promise to dedicate myself so that we have a marriage as happy as yours and like my

parents'."

"Alexander... ahem..." my father needed to clear his throat, and I noticed he was as moved as my mother, who was in tears. "You are indeed a man of your word. When I met you, you said you wanted to date my daughter and that it wouldn't be a long courtship. It really won't be." My father smiled and made everyone laugh with him. "I am a simple man, Alexander, but I am sure you will make my daughter very happy, because one can see in the way you look at her how much you love her. And where there is love, everything can be resolved, faced, and endured. You have our blessing. You are welcomed into my family as a son, know that."

I was crying, and a lady from the catering service handed me a small pack of tissues that she was already distributing among the guests. My father and Alexander hugged, and then my mother also hugged Alexander and kissed his face.

Alexander turned to me, took a small box out of his pocket, and opened it. Inside was a beautiful engagement ring. It was made of white gold with the metal crafted on top as if they were branches and leaves, and in the center, there was a round diamond embedded, and on each side, there was a triangular aquamarine stone joining the diamond at its base. A perfect junction.

"The diamond, Catherine, is a symbol of durability and constancy, just as I want our marriage to be," Alexander began to explain. "Aquamarine signifies the quality of being unique, and you are unique to me. I want you to be sure of that. It was with this ring that my grandfather proposed to my grandmother. Then, it was with this ring that my father proposed to my mother. And now, it is with this ring that I ask you to marry me. This ring is a symbol of my commitment and my dedication to you. Choose me to be yours, Catherine, for the rest of our lives."



"Yes... a thousand times yes... I will say yes to you every day for the rest of our lives," I said between tears and sobs.

I placed both hands on my fiancé's handsome face and gave a light kiss on his lips. Alexander took the ring out of the box and showed me the inscription "Maktub" on the inside of the band, which I knew meant "it was already written." This made me cry a little more. Alexander placed the ring on my finger and kissed my hand. We were officially engaged. 1

"Oh, before I forget, you will receive the invitation, but our wedding will be next Saturday," Alexander said and smiled.

For the next hour, we explained to my parents and the other guests why we would get married on Saturday and that everything was already organized.

"I won't lie, I'll go home more relaxed knowing that you are married, that you will have someone giving you support from now on, my daughter," my father said, hugging me after dinner.

My father knew I was capable of taking care of myself and my son, but like every father, he wanted to see his daughter happy next to someone who loved and protected her. I understood that.

"Rick, you kept your promise, the dinner was fit for kings. Thank you!" I said, hugging my friend.

"It was nothing, pretty woman." And looking at Melissa, he said with a mischievous smile, "I want to see you outdo me!" He provoked her, knowing she was coordinating the wedding preparations with an iron fist.

"Rick, don't activate her psychopath mode," I lamented, and everyone burst out laughing, but it was too late, Melissa had already accepted the



challenge.



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