

Right Time, Wrong Brother

Chapter 3 - Joey

It'd taken me almost an hour to get through to a person to get a refund. Then another hour of trying to convince them I couldn't make it to Hawaii. I had to incur late cancelation charges, but in the end, I had managed to get my money back.

Now, I sat on the sofa of my tiny apartment, on the verge of tears.

I had cried so much in the last couple months, I knew if I kept trying to, eventually I'd cry blood.

Jake and I had known each other since we were kids. Almost fifteen years. I'd been by his side the whole time, and he'd been my rock. He'd protected me and made my schooling life easier, and for him to just move on like he had... I just struggled to understand what I had done wrong.

My phone buzzed across the coffee table, and I leaned forward, picking it up, smiling at the happy face flashing on the screen.

Holding the device to my ear, I held back tears. "Hey, papa bear."

"Hey, there's my Roo."

Roo... it had been my father's nickname for me since I was five and had seen a kangaroo at a zoo and refused to move around the world without jumping like one for weeks. "Where are you?"

"Cyprus." My father had decided after my mom had passed a few years ago, to travel. He was still reasonably young, and I was happy for him. But at moments like this, I missed him. "I've sent you another package."

"Papa, you don't have to keep sending me things."

"Yes, I do. I want to make you happy. Especially at the moment." there was a pause. Dad had been furious when he found out Jake was marrying someone else. He'd all but expected Jake and I to get together, since we'd been friends for so long. "How are you doing?"

"Terrible. I just had to cancel my trip to Hawaii."

"What? Why?" Dad asked. "You've been saving for that trip for years."

"Yeah, tell me about it. One guess on where they're going for their honeymoon... at the same fucking time as me..."

"Oh, Roo." I could hear my dad's heart breaking all the way from the Mediterranean. "That is unfair."

"Oh, and I got shown my bridesmaid dress today. It's pale, milky snot green."

"You know how hard it is for me not to get on a flight back and sock the pair of them? Seriously. That boy has rocks in his head. He always has."

I giggled and leaned back on the sofa. "Yeah, he's not the brightest star in the sky."

"You'll find someone who is the brightest star, and he's going to outshine the dim light that boy is giving off."

I whole belly laughed this time. I gave my dad one thing; he knew how to make me laugh. "Papa, jeez. I thought you liked Jake."

"I did. Until he broke my Roo's heart. Now if I see him, I'd probably run him over."

"Stop." I cackled and sighed, wiping the tears from my eyes. "One good thing I guess, at least I won't have to stress too much about impressing him anymore."

I'd been doing that for so long, I was actually scared about the thought of having a life without Jake. He'd been such a big part of my world, I was worried what my world was going to look like now, without him in it.

"You're going to be fine, Jolene. You're strong, like your momma was. You're going to shine so bright; he's going to wonder why the hell he decided to go for someone like Phoebe."

"I'd like to hope so, Papa." I leaned my head back on the sofa and stared at the glow in the dark stars on my ceiling. "Enough talking about Jake, where are you off to next?"

As my dad rambled about his adventures and where he was headed to in the next leg of his trip, I got up and pottered around the apartment, making sure my daily chores were done, before I headed to bed.

"Anyway, I better let you go, Roo, it's getting late there, and I don't want to keep you up any longer."

"Ok Papa. I love you."

"Love you too. night Roo." my dad hung up and I held the phone to my lips for a minute, before placing it on the coffee table. Turning away, I headed toward the bathroom, when it buzzed again.

Sighing, I went back to it and picked it up.

Jake's face was on the screen, and I frowned, tempted not to answer it. but in the end, I did. "Hey, Jake."

"Hey, Thursday night, Phoebe and her friends are heading out for her hen's night. I managed to convince her to take you."

Oh eww... I didn't want to go out with Phoebe and her fake friends.

"Really? I was hoping for a quiet night."

"Well, I want you to go. It'll be good for you guys to hang out and smooth things over." There was not a single sliver of compassion in his voice. It was an ultimatum and I felt like telling him to shove it up his ass. But in the end, I sighed and closed my eyes, pinching the bridge of my nose.

"Fine. What time?"

"They will pick you up at seven."

"Uh huh."

"This is going to be good, Joey. You and Phoebe are going to become great friends. I'll chat to you later."

The phone clicked and I almost threw it across the room in anger.

This was not going to be a good thing; this was going to be a damned disaster waiting to happen.

And when it did happen, I hoped to hell it would kick Jake where it really hurt.