

Chapter 36 Twisted

I don't move or speak. Part of me wants to walk out and pretend she doesn't exist. She smiles away at me, but it isn't innocent, not even in the slightest. It's clear just by looking at her that she is manipulative.

"Whatever you're planning to say won't work. Jake has confirmed you were here because of him, not me. I hadn't even been home yesterday." Alaric looks at her. He's worried—even I can tell. "What do you want? Then you can leave."

Her smile drops, and she turns to face him. "You think I want something, Alaric? Maybe I'm back, and I don't want anything? You're just assuming I'm here to gain something. I wanted to see Jake."

"I might not have assumed you wanted something if you came back like a normal person. You want to see Jake, fine. That doesn't explain why you would ask about my relationships. The fact that you lied to Ruby to cause issues says you want something. So what?" Alaric's body is tense, and his eyes constantly go to the door. He's worried Jake will come down.

"Maybe I'm here for Jake." She looks at him, but even I can see that's a lie. She doesn't care about Jake. What is she planning? "Where is he?"

"In his room." Alaric practically growls the words at her.

"I should go see him." She turns and grins.

"No." She stops and looks at me. "Even I can see you're not here for Jake." It's just cruel to act like she cares for him when she doesn't.

"Just tell me what you want, and then you can go." Alaric looks at her.

I watch as she looks around. She looks so calm like she doesn't care in the world. "Fine, I want money." She looks at Alaric, waiting.

"Did you even consider coming back for our son?" He stares at her, clearly in shock, and I sense he's never seen this side of her. Then again, they were young before.

"Will what I answer change if I get the money, Alaric?" Her words have my body frozen in shock. How could she not care?

"No, it won't change if I get you the money or not." He stands away from her, his hands gripping the side. He is really struggling, but then again, who can blame him? She had just disappeared, and he hadn't mentioned any issues before she left.

So had he seen her as a wonderful person, who has now come back and is twisted and selfish?

"I did search for him—that wasn't a lie. I wanted to find him, and I needed money. I talked to him and realised he had nothing. I was going to just go, but we started speaking about him growing up, and it became clear he wasn't poor. So I asked more questions, and it became clear you had money. This all confirms it." She waves her hand around the kitchen.

"You were going to use our son for money?" He stares at her, and his look screams he doesn't recognise her.

"He would have gained me from it, Alaric, even if it was just for a few weeks."

"You're fucking heartless." I stare at her. Jake used to always speak about wanting to find her. God, I'm glad he didn't. She's standing there like nothing is wrong like this situation isn't fucked up.

To begin with, I didn't think she was selfish for leaving Jake. Many women have kids and realise they can't handle it. They realise that they would cause more harm than good to their child and leave. So, to begin with, I thought it was cruel, but I didn't see her as selfish; now I do. She left because Alaric couldn't give her money.

"You see it as I'm heartless; I see it as using what I have to gain something. You wouldn't understand; you're a child. Maybe you should leave and let the grown-ups talk." I go to move, but Alaric stops me.

"Don't leave." His words are whispered to me. I wasn't leaving. I was ready to punch her.

"Look, the way I see it. Me walking and leaving you with Jake helped. You wouldn't have all this if it wasn't for me." She waves around, her expression smug.

Alaric stares at her. "Are you joking? You didn't help in any way."

"If I had stayed would you have got all this Alaric? Let's be honest I deserve the credit as you wouldn't have pushed so hard if I stuck around."

Was she like this before? I can't see how someone changes so much. "You can't take credit for something he built when you disappeared." He did it himself, without her. I won't let her stand there and make herself look like a good person for walking or make out like she deserves anything that he worked for.

"I give you money, and you leave?" Alaric looks at her, and she nods. I watch as he takes out his phone. "Give me your details."

Wait, is he really going to do it? She stands smiling.

"Alaric, no." I take his phone from him. He's wants her gone, he wants to protect Jake, which I understand. He's wrong to do this, though.

"If it gets rid of her and stops her using Jake, it's worth it."

It is, but he isn't thinking. "I agree, but what is to stop her from showing Jake next week and saying you paid her off to leave, and that is why she left?" I don't trust her, she doesn't seem like the type to get this money and walk and not return.

She laughs and glares at me. "You're not fucking dumb, are you?"

Alaric stands confused. She was, she was going to use it against him. "Let me guess. He sends you money. In a month, you threaten to tell Jake he paid you off and told you to stay away. For you not to, he has to send more, right?" She nods, agreeing with my words.

"It's worth it." Alaric takes his phone from my hand, and I take it back. I can't let him do this, not when it will make things worse.

"No, it's not. Then she will hold it over you forever. So get Jake here, let her tell him she is here for money, then he knows you didn't pay her to stay away."

He stands looking between us clearly debating it.

"Alaric, think about this. You two just got back on speaking terms. If she makes out like you paid her to disappear, he won't forgive you."

"It makes no difference to me, Alaric; I still get the money. I thought this would have been easy, but apparently, we're not married anymore." She looks at him, confused.

"I don't get why you're back now." He looks at her, waiting for her to explain. She has money or had it based on her clothes and jewellery.

"I need money, Alaric. That's all there is to it." Is she really going to get money and leave?

"Let me get Jake." I watch Alaric walk out.

"We're not much different, you and I." Her words have me staring at her in shock. "Oh, come on, you're here for the money." She sits laughing.

"No, I'm not." Everyone is going to assume that, but I'm not.

"No? Guarantee the novelty will wear off, and you will want compensation for letting him touch you."

Ignoring her words, I look down at my phone, and she laughs.

"Maybe I'm wrong. Maybe you're tricking him, aiming to get pregnant. Then you'll have money for life, right? Had I known he would do so well, I might have come back after a few years."

"Enough. I'm not discussing my relationship with you." I'm guessing Alaric is explaining things to Jake before coming back down. I stay staring at my phone.

"Relationship? That's not what you two have. You're merely a toy. So you're not going to pregnant to get his money?" I glance towards her, and my phone rings. Answering, I place it against my ear.

"Yes?"

"I'm home. Have you two sorted and talked about things?" Bex asks.

"I haven't had time. He has a visitor." I don't want to say too much with her standing right here.

"I should have come back with you two. What is happening? It's quiet, and I can't hear screams."

Groaning, my eyes roll, and I turn away from Beatrix. "Nothing is happening. We're simply talking. Is everything okay, or did you ring for gossip?" I laugh slightly.

"I'm guessing you haven't had time to consider it?"

"Consider what Bex?"

She sighs and laughs. "The fact that you were taking ineffective contraception and might be pregnant."

"I won't be." It's highly unlikely.

"Ruby, you can't just say you won't be and wait and see. You need to take a test."

"God sake Bex, I'm not going to be, I will do a test and send you proof that I'm not pregnant."

I hear her laughing. "Good, I'll speak to you later." Hanging up, I stand and consider it. She's right, I can't just say I'm not and hope for the best.

Turning Beatrix is smiling at me, I watch Alaric walk in with Jake.

"You want money, fine. Before I send it, you tell Jake everything." Alaric looks at her.

She turns from me to Alaric and smiles. "I don't know what you mean, Alaric; I didn't want money."

"Are you fucking joking!" I move towards her and Alaric stops me.

"Careful, Ruby, in your condition, a fight wouldn't be good." She laughs and taunts me.

"What?" Alaric looks at her and then at me. Shit, she heard.

Beatrix stands laughing.

"Ruby?" Alaric looks at me.

"You wanted money, why lie now?" I look at her, Alaric stays staring at me, Jake is standing confused and hurt. Beatrix, however, is smiling from ear to ear. Was her plan to cause trouble?

"I tracked you down, Jake because I needed money. I figured once I had it, I would leave. You had none, though, but he does." She points at Alaric.

"So you didn't come back to see me and get to know me?" He looks at her hurt.

"No, I needed money, it's that simple." She is heartless.

"Don't give her anything. I won't speak to her again, even if she begged." Jake speaks quietly.

Beatrix laughs. "He already said I could have it, Jake. You're too late." She looks from him to Alaric, and he's still staring at me. It's not exactly like I've had a chance to consider it, to read up and confirm what I read.

"Poor Alaric, apparently she's pregnant." Beatrix laughs, leaning against the side. "Not that she wanted you to know."

"Enough! You've had your fucking fun, leave." I glare at her.

"He's not sent it yet." She looks at Alaric. He finally takes his eyes off me and looks at her.

"And I'm not. You tried using Jake, and he knows, so I know he won't fall for it again. Leave." He looks at her. "You're getting nothing, so I suggest you leave now." He stands waiting, and I watch her walk off.

Jake turns and walks out.

"You weren't going to fucking tell me?" Alaric stares at me.

"No, I wasn't. I planned to hide it for nine months and hope you didn't realise when you strip and fuck me." My arms throw up, and he steps, shocked. "Sorry. I need a drink." I reach for the bottle, and he stops me.

Oh fuck. Yeah, no drinking.

"I'm sorry, but how did she know?"

"Bex called me, and I guess she heard. I don't know that I'm pregnant, Alaric. Bex showed me a recall on my contraception, so there's a high possibility I'm not pregnant."

"Okay, stop shouting at me." He smirks slightly.

"Sorry. I'm stressed and tired." I didn't exactly sleep much last night.

"Then let's go to bed." He grasps my hand and stops. "Food first."

Fighting back the urge to refuse and argue, I sit and don't speak. The kitchen is silent except for the sound of him cooking. My mind constantly goes over everything. I'm not even sure if I'm ready for a baby.

The plate appears in front of me, but I don't feel hungry; my mind is exhausted, and I want to sleep.

"You need to eat." I know he is right. I've not eaten today. We eat in silence, and I want to believe more than anything that Beatrix will be gone for good. Something tells me, though, that she won't be. She didn't get the money.

"Hey." He grips my chin and raises my head. "Go to bed. You're not even eating." He's right. He kisses my cheek and steps back. I walk upstairs, standing next to the bed I stop. The room is tidy now. The bedding has changed.

Stripping, I climb into the bed, my eyes fixed on the door. My mind is all over now, and it has not stopped. What if I am pregnant? I'm not sure I'm ready to move in with Alaric, yes we are dating but it feels far too quick.