

Chapter 37 My Fears

I see Alaric walk in. His eyes come to me, and he stops walking. Why is he confused that I'm here in his bed?

"You should be asleep. It's been an hour."

An hour?

It didn't feel long at all. I watch him strip and climb into bed with me. "What's wrong?" He pulls my body against his.

"I didn't do this on purpose, Alaric." He looks at me, confused. "Possibly getting pregnant. I swear it wasn't done to trap you." I know everyone will think I have.

He smiles and kisses me. "For this to be your way of trapping me means you went to where ever they make the pills and tampered with shit. Did you, Ruby? I have to say there are far easier ways to do it." He looks at me, amused.

"No, but that's how it looks." If I'm pregnant everyone is going to think it.

"You're wasting energy on ridiculous thoughts that make no difference."

If only it were easy to stop overthinking everything. I'm not ready to be a mum. I still have to finish studying, and I still live with Bex and Ivy. My savings have almost bottomed out, and I'm nowhere near comfortable enough to have Alaric pay for anything.

"Stop, you're obsessing. It's late, nothing can be done so for now, you're not pregnant. You have no idea about the issue. Forget it." My eyes roll at his words. "How long do you have left studying?" He looks at me.

"About two months of classes. I'm working on my dissertation, so after this week, I've only got two classes a week." Which means I can get a job. I'll be able to sort out money.

"What are your plans for after?"

Sighing, I look at him. I have no plans anymore, not if I am pregnant.

"Stop glaring at me. You're not pregnant, remember? Not tonight. So what are your plans after? Indulge me, baby girl." He smirks, and I nod.

"The plan was to get a part-time job and build a business alongside it." I don't need loads of money; I can survive working part-time. Or I could.

After coming here, my spending has increased. Thanks to Bex and Ivy, nights out and such cost a lot. Before, I hardly spent anything, but then again, I didn't go out, I didn't drink, I did nothing.

Maybe now I wouldn't survive on a part-time job?

"What sort of business are you thinking?" He looks at me, and I haven't gotten that far. There's a lot I want to do, but I'm not sure which is right for me. "Okay, are you thinking of a business where physical goods are sold or a service?"

"I've no idea." I laugh while shaking my head. "I told myself I would figure it out along the way, but there's nothing that interests me." I can't think of a business idea I would enjoy.

"Something must interest you, Ruby. There must be something that you enjoy. You did the course, so think about it. What made you choose it?"

Ah, I forgot he doesn't know. "I didn't, not exactly. I enjoyed dancing; that is what I would have done, but my parents didn't see it as ideal, considering I was a church girl. So essentially, they picked business." Yawning, I fight to keep my eyes open.

"Well, there are businesses you can create around dancing. We will talk tomorrow. Now you're looking ready to pass out." I want to argue with him, but I don't have the energy. Closing my eyes, I finally fall asleep.

When I woke, Alaric wasn't there.

Walking down, I go into the kitchen and see Jake getting cereal. Laughing slightly, I walk towards him.

"Don't pick on me." His words are quiet, and he stares at the box, looking defeated. I forgot about his mum, and last night, I wanted to cheer him up.

"How long do you have until you need to leave for work?"

"An hour, I start later today, why?" He looks at me.

"Stop eating that. I will help you cook." He laughs at my words.

"Wait, you're serious?" He stands confused. "Why would you help me after how I treated you?"

"Because people deserve a second chance. Plus, I can't let you live not knowing how to cook." I pull the bowl away from him.

"Thanks Ruby, Dad told me this morning it was you who stopped him sending the money. It was my fault for falling into her trap. I'm fucking gullible."

Smiling, I nod. "No, you're not gullible, Jake. When you're not an asshole, you're kind. You want to help people and see only the best in them. People take advantage of it. Like at that private club, they saw you as a nice guy and used that. Grab the food." I point to the fridge and get out the pans.

"You're right there. Most months I had no money left, and most of it was given away to friends who asked for things, or needed something."

Which is bad. "Next time, Jake, ask yourself if you should be the one to help them, and how much can you trust them?" He needs to consider things.

We cook together, or rather, I stand and instruct him and occasionally save the food from burning. He isn't bad at cooking; he gets overwhelmed and panics, which causes him to focus on one thing more than the others.

As we're plating up, the door opens, and Alaric walks in. He stands shocked. "You didn't burn anything?"

We all laugh. "Only because Ruby stopped it; otherwise, it would have been. I'll eat mine away from here." He grabs a plate and leaves.

"Right, sit. Let's talk." Alaric pulls me to the table, and I sit, deciding to eat as I didn't yesterday. "First thing, there's no more running from either of us." He looks at me. "It only makes things worse. I get you wouldn't have stayed after what you saw, but turning off your phone and hiding away was the issue. You didn't even try to talk."

Sitting, we discuss it and agree that we will at least text the other person and explain the issue. Then we will either express we need time alone to consider things, or agree to meet up. It should help.

Had I messaged him and said Beatrix was in the kitchen half naked, making it appear he took her back, maybe he could have spoken to Jake sooner.

"So, your business idea." He smiles, and my head shakes.

"I don't have one, Alaric."

"You do. Think about it. You can do something around dancing." I'm not sure how that would work.

"I don't understand."

Sighing, He moves and places flyers on the table. "These are all businesses that revolve around dancing. I'm not saying copy an idea, most of these are miles away, so look through."

I pick up the flyers and look. The first is a kids' dance studio, so it would teach children to dance. The next is a women's space, a place where women go and learn to dance, pole dancing, and such. Flipping to the next, it's another class one; this is for adults. I look through them and now see what he means.

They are businesses, I just hadn't considered it. To me, in my mind when I thought of dancing, I thought theatre, and such. Which would have been the course I did.

"Okay, I will think about it more." I will, as I didn't think of the other side, the none performance side.

"Good, this is next." He puts down the pregnancy test. I had thought I avoided that, but apparently not. "You can't avoid it. When was your last period?"

My shoulders shrug. "Months ago, Alaric, the contraception stopped me from having them."

His eyes widen. "So, it's possible you got pregnant at the start and have no fucking idea?"

"I guess." I was on the pill. I didn't think I could get pregnant.

"Going forward, even if you're on the pill, take a test every month if you're not having periods, then you know for sure." He points to the test, and my phone rings.

Saved by the phone call.

I laugh at my thoughts, and he rolls his eyes. I hit answer. "Hello?" I smile at Alaric, but he looks annoyed right now.

"Is this Ruby Simmons?"

Okay, I pull the phone away and look at the number unsure of who it is.

"Yes, it is."

"Ruby, we require you to come into the student services and discuss an issue, please."

"What issue?" Why would I need to go in? Alaric looks at me, confused.

"We can discuss that when you get here. Can you be here for one?"

One? I look at the time. Shit, I don't have my car. "I don't know. One second." I look at Alaric. "I need to be at uni for one. Apparently, there's an issue."

"I'll drive you down."

"You have work." He can't take it.

"Nothing urgent. Anything can wait until later. I'll take you." Standing, he grabs his keys.

Putting the phone back to my ear, I sigh. "I can be there for one."

"Please come to student services and ask for Jane Ainsley."

Jane? "What is this about."

"We can discuss that when you arrive. See you in a few hours, Ruby." She hangs up.

"Get your stuff. We need to leave now to get there on time." Alaric smiles at me. I rush to get ready, and sitting in the car, I consider what it could be.

"You're panicking. It will be nothing."

"It's something Alaric, Jane Ainsley is there for major issues. So it's something. I don't think I did anything wrong." I'm sure I haven't.

"Okay, there are a few things it could be. If you're thinking something bad, is it plagiarism?"

My head tilts. Does he really think I would fucking cheat?

"You admitted you didn't choose it. I'm just asking."

"No, all the work is my own."

He nods and considers it. "How many days have you missed?"

"In total, over the years, maybe six, so it's not my lack of attendance." What else is there?

"Any criminal record you forgot to disclose or got while studying?"

"Yeah, I'm a pastor's daughter fugitive."

Laughing, he nods. "Hmm." He looks at me and shrugs. "I'm out of ideas."

"Thanks." I laugh slightly, and he nods.

"Look, those are the three bigger things. So whatever it is, you're fine. It can't be anything bad baby girl, stop panicking." I still don't get what I need to go in for.

"After this, you do the test, Ruby."

I want to refuse, but I know he's not panicking, as it's coming up to two months since we first fucked. "I will do the test, don't worry. I'll do this, go home, do the test and let you know."

"No, I'll wait for you and then come back to yours." He smiles and stops the car. "You will be fine. You know you did nothing wrong, so whatever they say, fight it. They may just need you to confirm it's your work."

Maybe he is right, and I just need to confirm it's my work. Then again, why would they need me to come in and speak to them? Sighing, I climb out of the car and walk in.

People are staring at me, but I'm used to it now. After Jake told everyone I was a prude, everyone watched my every move.