

## Chapter 51 Conversations

Callum and Alex stand smiling at us. My eyes are on Alaric, and he appears to be arguing with his father; Jake joins them as well. I feel bad for running.

"You should really go help." I turn to Alex, or is it Callum? God my head hurts after five minutes, I feel for their mum.

"I agree. Grandad is never happy, but he was smiling at you, so he likes you. There's a chance he will stop picking on Uncle Alaric if you're there." One of them speaks, and I nod.

Walking over, I reach them.

"Don't Jake." Alaric looks at him.

"They don't know the whole story." Jake looks at him. Are they arguing? I step closer, and they stop, and all turn to me.

"Hi, Ruby." William smiles at me, but his gaze slices towards Alaric.

"Oh, for God's sake, Grandad. I cheated on her multiple times, hurt her, and essentially used her to get money from Dad. It's not like I was a perfect boyfriend, and they slept together." Jake looks at him, and Alaric stares at Jake.

"You didn't say?" William looks at Alaric.

"Because he's my son, and I sorted it," Alaric explains.

"Why would you do that? It's disgusting." William looks at Jake.

Jake stands looking at him as his grandad shouts at him

"Don't shout at him." Alaric steps forward, his eyes focused on his Dad. "We barely see each other; I'm not telling you things like that over the phone." Alaric looks at him.

"What Jake did is in the past. He made amends, he's changed, and I've forgiven him." I look towards William. He smiles at me.

"You don't need to defend them, Ruby." He says politely.

"I do. I may not be dating Jake, but I still care for him as a friend. What he did, I know he regrets it, and that he hates himself for it, he doesn't deserve more hate." Jake has done nothing but try to make amends since.

"You seem like a wonderful young woman, Ruby." William smiles at me. "If you're sure he has made appropriate amends, then I shall scold him no more." He smiles at me, and Alaric rolls his eyes.

"You're acting like I let him away with it. I cut off his money and everything; he didn't even get a penny." Alaric looks at him.

"You're soft with him. What did you expect me to think?" William looks at Alaric. "How do you know he's not just playing the part for the money?" William asks.

"Because I don't want it. Ask Dad; I told him that even if he dies, I don't want it, and he's to give it to Ruby and the baby. The share in his businesses that were getting signed to me this year has already been signed to Ruby." My eyes widen when I hear Jake.

Alaric looks at me, he signed part of the business to me?

"And you're really fine with this? With your dad dating her?" William asks, and I keep my eyes on Alaric.

"Yes! If I wasn't, I wouldn't be here tonight when he plans to propose, would I? Leave him alone." I stare at Jake, and his mouth closes.

"I forgot you were standing here." He looks at Alaric.

"You know what, I'm getting a drink. You lot...Just, whatever, I'm getting a drink." Alaric turns and walks away, looking defeated. I want to run, but I can't.

"I'm sorry. I guess ruined everything." William looks between us. "All I was doing was ensuring you were fine with this and had learnt your lesson." He moves and hugs Jake. Moving, I walk to Alaric.

"If you're going to lecture me and complain, can it wait?" He looks at me. "My father likely isn't finished." He finishes his drink and refills it.

"No lecture or complaint." He was trying to protect Jake by not saying the whole story, then again, from getting told off. I wrap my arms around him.

"Really? You're not wanting to tell me of signing over half the business to you?" Half? My eyes widen. "Ruby?"

"No." Yes! A lot, but he's had enough tonight.

"Tonight is turning into a disaster, baby girl. Nothing is working out right," he says, and I look up and smile at him.

"I'm not leaving, Sir, no matter what. You said that if people disagree and don't approve, it changes nothing for you. That is the same for me. So even if your dad refuses to agree to this, I won't leave you. Your family drama won't cause me to run. It can't outdo mine." He's worried, I know he is.

"I'm sorry, son." I step back, hearing William.

"It's fine, forget about it." Alaric replies.

"That's impossible. I know you're not the child you were, and I know Jake isn't foolish like you were." William looks at him.

"I wasn't foolish." Alaric snaps back.

"You were. You walked away from your family and chose a woman over us, one who didn't even stay." William looks at him. "I'm sorry for disowning you over Jake."

Wait, I stare at them, shocked. He never said his parents disowned him.

"Can we do this another time? Tonight was meant to be good news, not drama." Alaric looks at him. He nods and walks away, and I look towards Alaric. "At sixteen, my parents told me I wasn't to see Beatrix again. I refused. She got pregnant, and I was told it was wrong. She was using me, and I was a fool. I refused to listen, so they cut me off entirely. No money, no contact."

I had no idea. "Until when?" When did he finally contact them again?

"When Jake was about six, my mum reached out, and I spoke to her. I'm sorry; tonight wasn't meant to be drama." He wraps his arms around me.

"Alaric, I don't care. Do you remember my parents?" I peer up at him. He nods and laughs. "Exactly, so don't worry, it won't scare me away. I do think you need to speak to him and tell him everything, Sir." Something tells me his dad is trying to make amends.

"It's his thing. He did it with Desmond when he announced leaving the country. For ten years, he refused to speak to him." He says it like it's nothing, but clearly, it hurts him.

"They are meant to stay for a few days here in the spare rooms. I might just tell them to go to a hotel." His words are quiet.

"No, you won't. I'm fine; none of this has scared me away." I mean, it's a lot of drama, but by the sounds of it, it's more because no one has spoken. So maybe being here for a few days will force them to.

"You're avoiding it, baby girl." His words are quiet, and I look at him.

"What?" I'm not avoiding anything. He laughs and looks at me.

"What Jake said, the business, me planning to propose." He looks at me, waiting.

"I didn't hear that. Ask me if I did tomorrow," I say, and his head tilts. "I'm pretending it never happened, or at least I didn't hear it." I laugh, and he nods, his arms wrapping around me.

"So, we speak tomorrow about the business thing?" He asks, and I nod in agreement. "And the other thing?" He looks at me. "Would you say yes?"

I consider it. Would I say yes if he proposed? I don't know, I do know though that I love him. What is the difference between us getting engaged now and in five years? Nothing really.

"Try your luck later and see what I answer, Sir." I wink, and he laughs. Leaning forward, I kiss him. "Go make Jake aware you're not angry at him for speaking about it." He nods and walks away.

"Ruby." Turning, I look at Sally and William. "I'm sorry for destroying your night." William smiles at me.

"It's not destroyed. There's still plenty of it left." I say and look towards where Alaric is speaking with Jake.

"We didn't do it to be evil." I look at Sally, confused. "We had money—not a lot, nowhere near as much as Alaric does, but enough. We could see she was using him for the money. He was foolish and gullible and didn't want to see the truth." She smiles at me.

"We thought cutting him off would make him see. We expected him to contact us once she walked out on him after the money was gone. He didn't, though, and we didn't know until years later that she had left him," William explains.

"We know we will come across as evil for doing that. He was seventeen when she got pregnant, but we wanted to show her true colours." Sally smiles.

"You're not evil; believe me, I don't see you as evil for it." I don't. What they were doing was trying to open Alaric's eyes to Beatrix, and from how she has been now, it's clear they were right.

"Are your parents here? Can we meet them?" William looks at me, and I laugh. They look at me, confused.

"Sorry, yes, they are here, although I'm unsure why. Alaric can introduce you, as right now they are not speaking to me." If I try to introduce them, I will just look hated.

"Is there a reason for it?" Sally asks.

"My dad is a pastor. They didn't agree with me dating Jake. They are very much. You save or destroy for marriage, don't drink, don't smoke and such. So all my choices the past two or three years are not very in line with their beliefs." I explain, and Alaric joins us.

"Can you introduce us to her parents?" William looks at Alaric.

"Sure." He walks off with them, and I rush over to Bex and Ivy.

"I need a drink." I look at them, and they laugh.

"You realise it's only been an hour, right?" Bex speaks, and I groan. I won't make it all night if there is any more drama. "Why are your parents here and smiling?" She looks at me, shocked.

"Apparently, they like Alaric, just not me." I shrug and laugh, standing we talk for a bit.

Things seem to have settled down now. Everyone is talking and smiling.

I see Alaric often speaking with his dad, and they are smiling, so that's a bonus. Soon after, he pulls me to him and cuddles me.

"You're looking tired." He smiles at me, and my head shakes, but in reality, I am. I'm so ready to drop and sleep, even right here.

I watch as he moves and goes down to one knee. No! I watch everyone fall quiet.

"Get up." What is he doing?

"You said try my luck, so I am." He laughs. I didn't think he would actually frickin kneel! "So, Ruby, will you marry me?" He holds out the ring.

"No." His eyes widen, and I laugh. "That's not fucking funny, baby girl." He glares at me.

"Kind of is. Of course, I will." I watch as he puts the ring on my finger and stands, wrapping his arms around me.

"You're so getting punished for that." I smile at his words.

"That was my aim. Plus, I didn't think you actually kneel." I stare at him, shocked, and he laughs.

"If I did it wrong, please just say. I will try again tomorrow and do it right." He smirks at me. "Your dad approved."

"What?" I turn and look at where my parents are.

"When I went to see them after Beatrix, I had the idea. So I told him I didn't care if he refused to give me permission; I would anyway. Apparently, he agreed, though. I'm still unsure why." He looked from me to them.

"Maybe they think it will stop my wild ways?" I laugh.

"Doubtful. I will only invoke them and add more fuel." My eyes roll at his words and he grins. We walk around, and people congratulate us, and I find myself quickly running away to bed, too tired to stay up any longer.

"What?"