

Chapter 57 The Day

Standing in front of the mirror, I feel anxious. The dress is perfect, and Alaric was right. It is already feeling tight, so how bad would it be in another week or two?

"How are you feeling?" Bex appears behind me, and I shrug. "You can't back out now. It's too late," she jokes, and I nod in agreement.

"I'm not backing out, Bex," I say. I just feel anxious. I've been overthinking this whole wedding since the night of the party—more Alaric than anything.

Not him directly, but more if he's actually sure.

"You're crazy," Ivy laughs and walks in. "I told you last night; there is no way Alaric would have asked if he wasn't sure," she says before hugging me.

"Wait, that's what is worrying you? That Alaric hasn't considered it and won't show?" Bex stands laughing.

"Mock me later, please," I say as I move to sit and start putting my shoes on. "Right, I'm ready," I announce as I stand up.

"It's about time. The car was ready twenty minutes ago. At this rate, Alaric would have left." Bex stands laughing, and I roll my eyes.

"Stop. You're not going to help calm her if you're picking on her, are you?" Ivy explains, wrapping her arm around mine. "We're coming with you in the car. Your dad will meet you there. Apparently, you didn't want to sit in the car with him?" Ivy asks, looking at me confused.

"No, I'm still not entirely comfortable with him walking me down the aisle, but I am," I explain, and we walk out; getting in the car, I sit and feel more anxious than before.

"Look, consider it this way. He loves you that much he was willing to lose his son and entire family for you. He won't back out." Bex smiles and hugs me, and I know she is right but it doesn't help.

Part of me still feels like he is going to walk away and realise this is a mistake.

"I'll be fine once I'm in there and we're officially married." My words are barely a whisper, and Bex laughs.

"So you're going to be standing there anxiously the entire wedding, wondering if this is the moment he realizes and runs?" She smirks at me, and I know it sounds crazy.

"Just don't," I reply, and we get out of the car. I look up at the building. It's beautiful. I had no idea of the location; it's a stunning manor.

"Right, go on. Your dad is waiting. We will be right behind you." Bex kisses my cheek and steps back. Walking forward, I stop beside him. I haven't spoken to him.

I avoided him whenever he came to Alaric's.

"Are you ready?" He turns and looks at me. "You're nearly half an hour later; Jake kept coming out for Alaric and asking if I had heard anything," he glances at me briefly.

"I was getting ready," I whisper, knowing that is bullshit.

"Ruby, you're good with time and never were late getting ready for something. It's okay to admit you're worried," he says while smiling at me. He's right; I'm usually the quickest one ready.

I don't spend time fooling about or anything else.

"I apologise, Ruby. I thought disowning you would make you realise that Jake didn't love you, and I thought it would make you settle down." He smiles at me, and I nod.

"It's fine." It's over and done with.

"It isn't, had I not done that, maybe you would have spoken to us when Jake hurt you, and things wouldn't have got so complicated." He's saying it like he thinks this is wrong.

"I'm glad you did as if you hadn't, I wouldn't have found Alaric," I say, annoyed.

"I know, that wasn't me disagreeing with this. I could see the day he came to speak to us that he loved you. Where Alaric came to defend you, to try and repair things. Jake came with you but avoided even speaking to us. He told you in front of us that we didn't matter. Jake showed from the start he didn't have your best interest at heart."

Maybe he's right. When I visited with Jake, he just sat on his phone. When my parents tried to talk and express their disagreement, he spoke more about how he didn't care, and that they didn't matter.

"I'm sorry. I shouldn't have left that day with Jake." I should have listened to them.

"It's fine, we understand."

I laugh at his words. "That's a lie." My mum doesn't.

"Okay, your Mother is more set in her ways," he replies.

"And she doesn't agree with me and Alaric," I state, knowing that I'm right.

"She will come round; it might take time, but eventually she will. Shall we get in, as we're making you even more late?" He smiles at me, and I nod. We walk into the room, and I smile when I see Alaric.

Part of me relaxes seeing him, knowing that he is there and waiting. As we get closer, he turns and stares at me. My smile widens as I reach him, and he wraps his arms around my body.

It feels weird that I haven't seen him since yesterday evening. I keep my hand in his and listen to the man talk. I want to laugh. Alaric is trying to keep his eyes on my face, but they keep dropping.

Maybe the dress wasn't the best. I smile at him, and he rolls his eyes. It's a good dress, just with a very low front dip.

"Baby girl." I smile as he talks. "You were the person who walked into my life and turned it upside down. I told myself it was wrong, but something about you kept dragging me in. I said goodbye that day and walked, only to show up the next day making an excuse to see you." He smiles at me.

"The weird thing is, even when I wasn't near you, I thought about you. Then I ran and hid, scared that you were going to reject me. That was the moment I realised I loved you; if I didn't, I wouldn't have tried to hide and protect myself from you. You changed my life in the best ways possible, and I'm grateful that we both stopped each other from running. I honestly felt like I would never find anyone who truly loved me." He leans forward and kisses me.

"Your dress is a tease." I smile upon hearing his words. Maybe it is, but it's the perfect dress.

"I realised quickly that you were someone who knew the real me. You took that list from my hand and made me remove certain things, deeming them dangerous or reminding me that it wasn't me. You saw the real me, even when I couldn't. You asked me if I felt safe and why I didn't, and I hadn't realised until that moment that you were right. You saw the truth that I was blind to." I say the words and consider what to say next.

"All you have done since that first day is try to protect me, not just from myself, but from others and even yourself. I know that many think it's wrong, that many think us being together is crazy, but it isn't. I found myself with you. I found parts of me that I never knew existed. That was down to you. I am thankful that I came that day to get my things because you taught me to fight for myself, to stand up for what I want, and that what others think makes no difference, and I know I love you."

My words end, and he pulls me into him and kisses me. I'm grateful right now that we got married.