My Brother's Best Friend's Secret Baby –

Chapter 4

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Chapter 4 Rosalie's POV I woke to sunlight pouring through my window and an empty bed. Aiden was gone. I sat up abruptly, clutching the sheet around me. My body ached in that lingering, pleasant way that made memories come rushing back. The signs of the night before were everywhere: rumpled sheets, faint marks on my skin, the unmistakable reminder that none of it had been a dream. But he wasn't there. I grabbed my phone. Dad would already be awake. Jeffery too. Had Aiden slipped out before anyone noticed? I hurriedly got dressed, pulling on jeans and a T-shirt.

My hands shook as I tied my hair into a ponytail. What did this mean? Where was he? I crept downstairs, my heart pounding. Voices drifted from the kitchen. It was Dad's, Jeffrey's, and Aiden's. I stopped in the hallway and listened. "So you're really leaving today?" Jeffery asked. "Yeah. My flight's at two." "Man, we barely got to see you." "I know. I'm sorry." "It's your job. We get it." That was my father. "We're proud of you." I took a deep breath and walked into the kitchen. All three men looked up. Dad smiled, Jeffery nodded, while Aiden's expression didn't change at all.

"Morning, sweetheart," Dad said. "What do you want for breakfast?" "I'm not hungry." Aiden's gaze flicked toward me before immediately moving away. "You okay?" Jeffery asked. "You look kind of pale." "I'm fine." I poured myself a cup of coffee with a trembling hand. I could feel Aiden watching me. When I turned around, his eyes were already on me. "I need to finish packing," he said abruptly, getting to his feet. "Thanks for breakfast, Colonel." "Anytime." Aiden walked right past me without a word or a glance, as if I were a stranger. As if last night had meant nothing.

I stood there frozen, the coffee mug warm in my hands. "Rosie?" Dad's voice broke through my thoughts. "You sure you're okay?" "Yeah. I'm just tired. I didn't sleep well." Jeffery snorted. "You never sleep well. You're always up until three in the morning working on some art project." If only he knew what I'd really been doing at three in the morning. I excused myself and headed back upstairs. I stopped in the hallway, staring at the guest room door where Aiden was staying. I should leave him alone. I should give him space. I should respect the fact that he'd said one night. But I couldn't.

I knocked softly. "Come in." I opened the door. He was tossing clothes into a duffel bag. He didn't look at me. "We need to talk," I said quietly. "No, we don't." "Aiden, please." "I told you. One night. That's all." The words hurt far more than they should have. "That's

it? You're just going to leave and pretend none of this happened?" "Yes." "That's not fair." He finally looked at me. His expression was cold. "Life isn't fair, Rosalie. Get used to it." I flinched. He went back to packing. "You need to leave.

If Jeffery or your father see you in here, they'll know something's wrong." "I don't care." "They do. Your brother is my best friend. Your father is like a father to me. I'm not going to lose them because I couldn't keep my hands off you." "You're not losing anyone. We're both adults. We can make our own choices." "You're nineteen. You don't know what you're talking about." "Stop treating me like a child." "Then stop acting like one." His voice was hard. "It was sex. That's all it was. Don't turn it into something bigger." The tears started falling before I could stop them. He saw them.

His jaw tightened. But he didn't take the words back. "I have to go," he said. "Jeffery's driving me to the airport in an hour." "When will I see you again?" "You won't." "What?" "This can't happen again. Last night was a mistake. A huge mistake. Forget it ever happened." "How am I supposed to do that?" "I don't know. But you will. You'll go back to school You'll meet some mice guy your own age. Youll move on." "I don't want to move on." "Too bad." He zipped up his duffel bag and swung it over his shoulder. Then he headed for the door, toward me. I didn't move and blocked his path instead.

"Please don't do this," I whispered. "Move, Rosie." "No." Something flashed in his eyes. Pain, maybe. Regret. But it was gone as quickly as it appeared. "I don't want you," he said clearly. "Last night was a mistake. You were available, and I needed a distraction before deployment. That's all." The words cut deep. Deeper than I thought anything could. "You're lying." "I'm not." "You said I was perfect. You said being with me felt incredible." "I say a lot of things in bed. That doesn't make them true." I slapped him. The crack echoed through the small room. My palm stung.

His head barely moved. He looked at me with those cold, lifeless eyes. "Feel better?" he asked. "No." "Good. Now move." I stepped aside. He walked past me. At the doorway, he stopped. "For what it's worth," he said without turning around, "you deserve better than me." Then he was gone. I stood there in the empty guest room and fell apart. An hour later, I heard the front door close. I heard Jeffery's truck start. I heard them leave. I didn't go downstairs to say goodbye. Two weeks later, I stared at the pregnancy test in my trembling hands. It was positive.

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