

The Unwanted Bride Of Atticus Fawn Book 2: Chapter 41 - Tips

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~The Wedding~

~CLARISSA~

It was finally here. The day I had hoped would never reach was finally here. Damon would marry Anya today unless I found the proof I needed to show everyone she was a liar. It was not easy getting the address from Autumn without her finding out what I was doing, but I finally had it, and I was going there before the wedding ceremony started.

But before that, I wanted to see Damon one last time. I wasn't sure if I would be able to return in time. I wasn't sure if he would be a married man by the time I got back. I had no idea how long any of this would take.

I didn't plan on speaking to him, but I wanted him to have one last good look at me. I wanted him to see what he was letting go of.

"You look absolutely beautiful." Autumn compliments me when she sees me in the long black dress she chose for me to wear.

"Thank you," I tell her. "And so do you."

She holds my hand and walks with me down the stairs. I know she's trying to give me the strength to attend the wedding.

I decided to make everyone think that I was attending the wedding without them having to force me. I felt it was the best way to ensure less attention on me.

I spot Damon at the top of the stairs. He's already dressed in his suit, and he looks handsome just standing there. He looks exactly the way I dreamt of him looking while getting married to me.

Anya was getting to live my dream, and she didn't even deserve it.

His eyes finally fall on me, and his body goes entirely still. Griffin is talking to him, but he isn't paying any attention to him. His eyes are glued to mine.

I could feel the tears slowly rolling down my cheeks. I didn't think anything could break my heart as much as this did. Autumn stops moving when she realizes what's happening. I know that anyone can see us. I know that it's possible Autumn isn't the only one watching us right now. Neither of us was moving. The tears weren't helping our situation either. If Atticus came out and saw this, his assumptions would be confirmed.

Autumn tugs at my arm, and I know it's time for me to let go. Damon may not have realized it yet, but his actions today have severely damaged the beautiful relationship that we once shared.

Things could never be the same between us after today, even if the wedding doesn't happen. I would never be able to forgive him for hurting me.

I gave him many opportunities to choose me. I gave him many opportunities to fight for us. I threw myself at home multiple times, and each time he pushed me away.

"You got this," Autumn whispers as she hands me a handkerchief.

"Thank you," I whisper as I wipe my tears. I still couldn't believe that this was happening. I couldn't wait for it all to be over.

If seeing Damon in his suit was this hard for me to watch, how difficult would it be to see Anya in her wedding dress walking toward him? Thankfully, I wouldn't be here to see any of that.

"Do you need me to get you anything?" Autumn asks me gently.

"No. You've done plenty for me already." I assure her.

I waited for everyone to get busy with something Anya assigned for them. Autumn was the last to go. Anya was using every opportunity to get every member of the family busy. It was surprising that she wasn't trying to get me to do something like take pictures of her and Damon. I was sure she was waiting for the right opportunity to t*e me.

I looked around me and noticed that there was no one next to me that could see me leaving.

This was it.

Now was my time to leave.

I was sure this time that no one would realize that I was gone. Damon would be too busy with his wedding to notice I was missing. Autumn would also be busy.

I had to leave now, and I had to act fast before anything got a chance to start.

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~DAMON~

What the hell was I doing with my life? Why the fvck was this so hard to do?

I thought I was doing the right thing. I thought protecting Clarissa from herself and even from me would be the best decision.

Now I knew how f*g wrong I'd been all along.

She was right. Everything she said to me yesterday was true. I was a coward for not fighting for her. I was a coward for choosing to marry Anya instead of ending things with her. I was an a.ssh0le for hurting her because of my poor decisions.

I blamed everything on protecting her, but maybe she was right about me being scared. Perhaps my feelings for her terrified me to the point that I kept pushing her away without even realizing it.

This day had reached much faster than I expected it to. Seeing the tears in Clarissa's eyes earlier had broken my heart. It had completely left me shattered inside. I was doing this to protect her, but it only dawned on me that I was hurting her more than ever by marrying Anya.

She may never be able to forgive me after today. If I married Anya, I would not have the Clarissa that I was crazy about in my life anymore. My actions would destroy the joy in her heart. I would lose the one person I never wanted to lose.

No matter how much I wanted to protect her, I couldn't break her heart anymore to do it. I had to find another way. I couldn't marry Anya. I had to find a way to end this.

I had to find a way to stop this wedding.

I had to.

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~DAMON~

This was all my **fg fault**. *I waited till my wedding day to realize that it was the wrong fg decision.*

I knew everyone would be pissed at me after today. My family would be frustrated after already asking me numerous times to rethink my decision. Dante would be angry with me for breaking Anya's heart. And Anya, she would surely hate me for ending things with her on such an important day.

But Clarissa, she would be the only one that would be happy with my decision, and that was all I f*cked cared about. I wanted her to be happy. I didn't want to hurt her anymore. I would find another way to make things work between us. There had to be another solution to our situation. I was done pushing her away. I was done doing the opposite of what she wanted from me.

"Is the groom ready for his big day?" Atticus asks as he taps my shoulder.

My jaw clenches. I had to tell him the truth. I knew there was a big possibility that he would suspect my decision had something to do with Clarissa, but I didn't care, not after the look on her face earlier.

I didn't care if Atticus called me out on my actions. I didn't care if Anya called me the worst names possible; I couldn't marry her.

"I can't marry her," I tell him. "I can't marry Anya."

Atticus looks at me like I've just lost my mind. "What the hell is that supposed to mean?"

"Exactly what I said. I'm not marrying her." I answer him.

"You were ready to marry her just a few minutes ago. You're the one that put your suit on. No one f*ckingd you to do this. All of the guests have arrived, and they're expecting to see a wedding! Damon, we've always let you make your own decisions, but this is unacceptable. It's not just about you anymore; when have you ever been this irresponsible? I feel like I barely know you anymore."

I didn't have time to explain to him. I had to find Anya. I had to tell her that this wedding couldn't happen. She may already be in her wedding dress. I never wanted to hurt her. I knew Atticus did the same thing to her, but what I'm doing is much worse. I'm breaking her heart on her wedding day. I should have listened to everyone else around me. I should have given this wedding more thought. I rushed into it thinking that I was protecting Clarissa, and instead, I'd done the opposite.

But before that, I had to meet Clarissa. I had to tell her that this wedding was not going to happen. I had to see the relief on her face. I was ready to face whatever punishment she had for me after putting her through that t*e, to begin with. I was prepared for everything as long as it meant I didn't lose her.

"Damon!" Atticus calls after me as I rush out of the room.

I race towards Clarissa's room. I don't even bother to knock as I barge into it. I take a look around. I'm shocked to find the room completely empty. The last place I saw her

was at the bottom of the stairs with Autumn. I storm out of the room and down the stairs. I had to find Autumn.

Atticus was right behind me, and I knew that this wasn't how I wanted him to see me. I'd just proclaimed that I wasn't going to marry Anya, and minutes later, I was barging into Clarissa's room and running down the stairs like a hysterical person.

I bounce into Griffin while searching the crowd.

"What's wrong?" He asks when he sees the look on my face.

"I need to speak to Clarissa," I answer him. "Where is she?"

He shrugs his shoulders, "I've been too busy to keep an eye on her."

My jaw clenches at his response. Someone was always supposed to keep an eye on Clarissa. Whenever someone wasn't paying attention to her, she always did something drastic, especially at a time like this.

A cold shiver ran down my spine as I remembered her threat yesterday. She threatened to leave for good. I thought that she was bluffing. I thought that it was a harmless threat. Now, I wasn't so sure about that.

"I need to find her," I say as panic begins to sink in.

Atticus catches up to me then, and he's angrier than before.

He grabs my shoulder, "what the fvck is going on? You can't just walk out on your wedding day like this without giving a proper explanation!"

I run a hand down my face, "I can't do it. I don't love Anya the way that I thought I did. My feelings for her are not the same as before. I can't marry her."

I can't tell him the entire truth. I can't tell him I can't marry her because she wasn't the woman in my heart. I couldn't tell him that Clarissa was the only woman I craved. The only woman I needed.

Atticus looks shocked by my words. Of course, he would be; just yesterday, I was sure I was doing the right thing. Just yesterday, everyone believed that I loved Anya. They thought I was marrying her because I wanted to. No one knew the real reason behind my actions.

"Anya just arrived." He informs me. "I'm not a big fan of her, but I think she at least deserves the truth. You need to properly explain to her why this wedding will not be taking place. It's the right thing to do. In the meantime, I will try to find Clarissa. There's no telling what trouble she's up to now."

I knew he was right. I knew I had to speak to Anya, but I had this strange, unsettling feeling in my chest. I was desperate to see Clarissa. I hated the way I left things between us this morning. I had to fix it. I had to wipe her tears and make everything better for her, just like I've always done in the past.

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~CLARISSA~

Empty.

The house was completely empty.

Anya must have cleared it after discovering we had hired someone to monitor her. It's why she told me to stay away from her home. She was only trying to provoke me.

If I had told anyone about it, they would have thought I was making everything up to stop the wedding. Maybe that's what she wanted all along.

She wanted to make me look like a fool. She wanted to play the victim once more.

I dropped myself onto the floor and buried my face in my hands. This was my last chance to stop the wedding. It was my last chance to prevent Damon from ruining his life for me.

I couldn't believe it was all over. Anya had played me. She did this to distract me from the wedding. She knew I would go to the house as a last resort. She knew I would try to find evidence.

How could I have been so stupid?

I slowly lift my head from my hands after realizing something I should have noticed sooner.

What was that scent? The sound?

I've heard it before in the forest.

Fire.

Where was it coming from? I picked myself off the ground and walked out of the room, only to realize that all the exits were on fire.

A chill runs down my spine as I soon realize Anya's true plan. She wanted to k!ll me in this house. It wasn't just a distraction; she wanted me dead.

She was much worse than we initially thought. Why would she want to k!ll me? To get me out of Damon's life for good?

I ran to another room, and to my horror, the windows were already covered with flames. After searching the entire house, it was confirmed that there was no place for me to escape.

I could feel the heat pouncing on my skin, threatening to hurt me. I blinked once, then twice; I couldn't believe this was happening to me.

No one knew that I was here except Anya. No one would even realize that I was missing, and even if they did, they wouldn't know where to search for me.

I was in trouble. And this time, I was the only one that could save myself. There would be no Damon coming to my rescue.

The flames were getting closer and closer, closing in on me. I screamed as a piece of wood dropped onto the floor next to me.

I moved back to the first room I was in; it was the safest place in the house, at least for now.

I look around, trying to figure out how to get out of there alive.

I had to be missing something. I could try shifting into my wolf, but recently it hasn't been that easy and even if I did, I would still be trapped. I didn't have much time to think about anything. I had to move.

I hold my arm in pain when the flames finally catch up to me. I had to s.uck it up. It wouldn't be the only burn to get out of this place.

Even if I got out alive, what proof would I have to blame Anya for trying to k!ll me?

I let out a scream of frustration.

I have to find something. Anything to prove who Anya indeed was. I had to. I was running out of time.

I closed my eyes as I felt something move inside of me; it was a strange feeling, unlike anything I'd ever felt before.

Suddenly, there was a piercing scream, and it took me a few seconds to realize that the sound was coming from me. I didn't understand why I was screaming; all I knew was that my heart was in pain.

I opened my eyes, and the most fascinating yet shocking thing happened next. The fire formed a pathway before me, showing me the way. It doesn't take me long to start to move forward. I walked between it, and for some strange reason, I completely trusted it even though it could kill me.

I followed the path until I stopped before a strange untouched painting on the wall. Why was it pointing me to this painting? I slowly lifted it off the wall and watched as a picture fell from behind it. I catch it before it can touch the ground.

It took me a minute to realize what I was holding in my hands, but the moment I did, the ground shook beneath my feet.

It was her—the witch.

One picture. Just one picture was staring me straight in the eye. A picture that had only been freed because of the fire that was set to trap me inside this house.

I didn't have time to comprehend what was happening. The flames were howling in my ear, reminding me it was time to go.

I rush out of the house, following the path before the fire can burn it entirely down to the ground.

I clutch the picture to my chest as I watch the house burn to the ground before my eyes. It was falling apart right in front of me.

I bring the picture closer to my eyes, taking a good look at it for a second time. I still couldn't believe this.

It's a picture of Anya with the witch that had tried to kill me. She was hugging her tightly with another girl next to them.

This meant that they knew each other all along. Everything that we once thought was a lie. Anya wasn't under a spell; she was working with the witch.

But who was she to her? Judging by this picture, it's possible that she was her mom or an aunt.

Was this why she was so desperate to marry Damon? Was she slowly plotting her revenge?

The wedding would take place in less than an hour, and I was still in front of this burning house with the proof I needed to bring Anya down.

I had to save Damon from making the biggest mistake of his life. I wouldn't let her get away with this. She was a psychopathic liar, and I had to show this proof to everyone.

"Who are you?" A strange voice asks.

I spun around to find the young girl from the picture standing before me.

What was happening? What was she doing here?

If she didn't know who I was, it meant that Anya had kept her horrible secrets from her. This girl knew nothing about me.

I take a step towards her. "Before I answer you. Can you please answer just one question of mine?"

Something about the look in her eyes made me believe that she was a kind person. She would tell me the truth.

She looks hesitant at first but eventually nods her head.

"Who is this woman?" I ask her as I point to Anya in the picture.

She takes one look at the picture and then back at me.

She doesn't hesitate as she says, "That's Anya. My sister."

Her sister? I saw no resemblance between the two of them. I would never think that they were siblings.

I tried to remain calm, and I didn't want to frighten the girl. I needed more answers from her.

"And who's the woman next to her?"

She frowns, "that's our mother, but why are you asking so many questions? And what happened to our home? Anya told me we had to move, but I forgot to take this picture of us with me. I hid it behind a painting as a joke once. Anya told me to remove everything that meant a lot to us from the house. I returned for it but was shocked to see the house on fire. And then I saw you running out of it. Who are you?"

Their mother.

Their mother?

I couldn't believe it.

Anya's mother was the witch that had tried to kill me! This was insane!

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~CLARISSA~

The witch was Anya's mother all along. That's why she lied to protect her before she died. It all made so much sense. The witch knew so much about our family because she was Anya's mother the entire time. She had so much information about us because of Anya. She must have sent her into our lives to destroy our family. It was a sick twisted plan that started years ago when Anya first entered our lives. Was this the reason that Damon, Atticus, and Dante think she was their mate?

It would explain so much. It would explain why Atticus fell in love with Autumn and found out that she was his true mate. It would explain my feelings for Damon and his feelings for me.

Anya was never their mate, to begin with. Did this mean that Damon was mine? I've always felt such a strong connection to him, but I thought it would be impossible for him to be my mate when Anya was his.

Now I realized that all along, he was mine. He's been mine this entire time.

This would mean that Dante only loved her because of a spell as well. Anya would be a witch just like her mother. She must have used a spell on all of them. She'd hidden so much from us.

Why did we ever accept her into our lives? Why did we allow her to cause so much trouble for us?

What else was she planning? She must have been plotting something else after her mother was killed. Her mother's plan to get rid of us had failed; she would want to finish the job for her.

I had all the proof I needed to expose her to everyone. But I needed to get to them before the wedding began.

"I'm a friend of your sister," I explain. "She's getting married to someone close to me today."

Her eyes widened, “married?” she demanded. “That’s impossible. Anya wouldn’t keep something that big from me.”

She doesn’t realize how much her sister has been keeping from her. There was so much more. I didn’t have the time to explain everything to her. I had to take her with me so that she could see what her sister had been up to.

“If you come with me, I can show you that I’m not lying to you,” I tell her. “The wedding is happening at my home as we speak. I need to get back there right away.”

She bites her lip nervously as she looks around. “Anya never likes it when I leave home.”

“I’m sure she can understand this one time why you had to leave,” I tell her.

She still looks uncertain but eventually nods her head.

It was time to get back home. It was time to expose Anya.

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~DAMON~

“What are you doing here?” Anya demands when she sees me. “You’re not supposed to be here. Are you impatient to see what I look like in my wedding dress?”

I didn’t know how to tell her that the wedding was off. I didn’t know how to say it without hurting her feelings.

Since when have I ever made such bad decisions that affected everyone around me? Every decision of mine recently has been extremely stupid.

“We need to talk,” I tell her gently.

Her eyes narrow, “we don’t have time to talk, Damon! The ceremony is about to start, and I don’t want to be late!”

I swallow and take a look around me. I couldn’t even look her in the eyes.

I mutter a few silent curses under my breath.

“What’s wrong?” she asks when she realizes my weird behavior.

"I don't know how to tell you this, Anya, but there isn't going to be a ceremony." I finally say. "I'm sorry. This wedding can't happen today."

Her mouth opens as her eyes widen, "what the hell do you mean by that? Of course, there's going to be a wedding. I'm in a white dress. A white dress, Damon! There are hundreds of guests outside waiting to see us get married! I don't care what you have to say to me, we're going out there, and we will be married by the end of today!"

I run a hand down my face and try to remain calm. At least one of us needed to be calm under these circumstances. However, I still felt this unsettling feeling in my chest, which had nothing to do with Anya.

I was worried about Clarissa. I needed to know if she'd gotten herself into trouble again. I needed to know if Atticus had found her.

"Does this have anything to do with Clarissa?" She shouts suddenly.

Her words have shocked me to my core. Why did she ask about Clarissa? Did she already know that she was the woman I was in love with? Or did she mean something else? I had to find out.

"Why are you asking about Clarissa at a time like this?" I ask hesitantly.

I was anxious and even more uneasy than I was before. No one was supposed to know this. No one. How could I protect Clarissa if Anya knew about our secret?

"You didn't think I would notice how you stare at her like she's the last woman on earth?" she demands. "Do you think I'm stupid? Do you think I'm blind? I've seen the way the two of you look at each other. It makes me sick to my stomach. She's your sister, for crying out loud. I've always thought that Clarissa was the only sick one running after you, but when you confessed to me that night about having another woman in your heart, I knew that you felt the same way. I knew that it wasn't just her. I wanted to believe that you loved me. I wanted to believe that you wanted to marry me. Now I knew that you had this planned all along. You never loved me. You never cared about me. She's all you've ever cared about, and you know it."

I take a step towards her in horror, "you knew all along? All this time, you knew she was the woman I was talking about?"

I couldn't stomach this fact. She knew, and she pretended like she didn't. Why? Why would she say nothing? How could she still be willing to marry me after knowing this?

"Of course, I knew."

"Why didn't you say anything?" I ask her.

What do I do now? Do I beg her not to say anything?

"I was hoping that you wouldn't do something stupid like this." She hissed. "If you don't marry me today. I will make sure that every single person knows the truth about you and Clarissa! I will announce to the world that you're in love with your sister. I'll make sure that everyone knows she loves you too. Your family's name will be all over. I hope you make the right decision, Damon."

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~DAMON~

What the hell did she just say to me? Was she going to blackmail me into marrying her?

This wasn't the Anya that I knew and cared about. Since when has she been this way?

"I know that you're hurt." I try to reason with her. "I know you don't mean anything you just said to me. You're trying to hurt me for hurting you, and that's understandable. I know that this must be hard for you, Anya. I never wanted to hurt you. I've always been conflicted over my feelings. I could never tell what I wanted. I decided to marry you for the wrong reasons. I should have never asked you to marry me. I should have never made you think there was a chance for us to be husband and wife. I know I was wrong. I know that I deserve to be punished."

I take another step towards her. I would do anything for her to stop this madness. I couldn't let her go through with this threat.

"Please, don't punish Clarissa for something that I did. I was wrong. I was the one that hurt you. I was the one that betrayed you. She had nothing to do with anything. She's innocent. Please, don't do this." I beg her. If I had to go down on my knees, I would.

Her jaw clenched as she glared at me. "Look at how pathetic you look right now. Begging for a woman that you could never be with. Society will never allow the two of you to be together. Everyone will turn against you. When you turn your back, everyone will laugh at the two of you. They will scorn both of you. Your lives will be over for good. If you care about Clarissa at all, you will marry me. I'm sure that's why you even agreed to marry me,. Wasn't it? To protect her. You did it all for her. Nothing was ever for me."

I knew she was right. She was saying everything that I was afraid of.

"I agree that the wedding wasn't because I wanted to marry you," I confess. "But I have loved you in the past. I have cared for you. You know this. My feelings may have changed recently, but I've always protected you from everyone and everything. I know

my actions in the past don't make up for all the wrong I've done recently, but please, if you cared about me at all, don't hurt Clarissa."

She folds her arms over her chest stubbornly. "I already told you. Once you agree to marry me, I will keep my mouth shut. No one will ever have to know about you and Clarissa. The secret will die with me. You'll be my husband, and I'll be your wife. You'll forget about her, and she will forget about you."

My hands tightened into fists at my sides, "are you okay with marrying a man that doesn't love you? You said yourself that I was sick for wanting to be with Clarissa. Why do you still want to be with someone like me?"

She took a step towards me and buried her hands in my hair.

I couldn't move even an inch. I was too worried that I would do something to anger her. I didn't want her to snap and announce the truth to everyone. There were hundreds of guests present. All she had to do was walk into that room in her wedding dress, and all eyes would be on her.

I had to be careful with what I was saying to her. I couldn't piss her off any more than she already was.

"Because, unlike you, I'm still in love with you." She confesses. "Your feelings for me may have changed, but my feelings for you are still inside me. I can't just let go of it. I want to marry you, Damon, despite how imperfect you are. I want to marry you for all the good times that we've shared, not because of the bad. The decision is in your hands now. It's up to you what you want to do. Will you marry me, or will you let everyone know about your big secret?"

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~CLARISSA~

I'd made it back. Finally, I had to give the news to everyone. It was time that they all knew who Anya truly was. I couldn't believe that she'd made us all into fools. She honestly thought that she would get away with this. She was the evil mastermind behind everything all along. She was the one that leaked information to that witch. It's why she'd known so much about all of us. Anya was the spy all along.

If Autumn and I hadn't decided to do our digging, she would have gotten away with it. She would have married Damon and fucked her way into our family. What was her next evil plan? To kill us all in our sleep?

She must want revenge for her mother's death. She must have something planned. But what was it? If I confronted her about her lies, would she have a backup?

It seemed that even her sister had no idea what she had been up to. It was only fair that I showed this girl what her sister's true colors were.

"I've been here before," Willow tells me as we walk through the gates. There were hundreds of vehicles and people everywhere.

That was a good sign. The wedding hadn't started yet. I wasn't sure if confronting Anya in front of so many people would be a good idea, but I had no choice. They had to know now.

"You have?" I ask her.

"Yes. I followed my sister here." She tells me. "Multiple times. But I lied to her. I wanted to see where she often went. She came here plenty. She has always kept everything from me."

"Your sister hasn't exactly been honest with you either," I inform her. "She has hurt a lot of people."

"That can't be." She defends her. "Anya has always been kind to me. She has always loved and protected me from everything. She can't be a bad person. She wouldn't hurt anyone. I'm sure that you are mistaken."

I take a deep breath, "has Anya ever told you how your mother truly died?"

"Truly died?" She asks. "What does that mean?"

Before I can say anything, I hear someone shouting my name. I see Autumn running towards me.

Her eyes widen when she sees the bruises all over my body. Even the dress was burnt in different places. I knew she would have plenty of questions for me, but I wouldn't have the time to answer them.

"What happened to you?" She asks in horror as she reaches me. "Who did this to you?"

"Where is Damon?" I demand without answering her questions.

"I can take you to him, but aren't you going to tell me what the hell is happening?" She demands from me.

"I don't have time to explain," I tell her. "I need to stop this wedding before it's too late."

She looks uneasy but eventually nods and pulls me along with her. I follow her for a few minutes with Willow right behind me.

However, something in front of me forces me to a stop.

It's Damon. And Anya.

His hands are on her waist, she's in her wedding dress, and they're both kissing passionately like they can't live without each other.

And just like that, my heart shatters in my chest.