

The Unwanted Bride Of Atticus Fawn Book 3: Chapter 51 -

4 minutes read

~DANTE~

I tried to sleep. But I couldn't. Without Willow in the bed with me, it was damn near impossible. I'd grown accustomed to having her next to me every night. Her quiet sighs, the small noises she made when she slept, her scent, opening my eyes, and seeing her in front of me. I didn't have the pleasure of any of that tonight.

My bed was empty. f*****g empty. It felt like something was missing in the room and someone definitely was.

She was at that dumb party. They'd left over two hours ago.

I'd walked past her without saying anything earlier. I did it because I knew I would overreact if I saw what they'd made her wear for the party. I knew I couldn't take that chance. But now I regretted it. I should have stopped; I should have asked her not to go. But why would she do that for me when I've done nothing but hurt her?

I punched my pillow angrily.

Damn it.

It shouldn't be this hard to spend one night without her.

I should have at least gone to that party with her. I knew how much those damn assholes liked bullying her. I should have gone to make sure that she was safe and not getting taken advantage of.

What the hell was wrong with me? Why was I in such a mess tonight?

I picked up my phone, intending to call my brother, when I realized I was acting like a maniac. I was the one convinced that I had no feelings for Willow. So then, why did all of this bother me so much?

She went to a party with my family. What was there to be worried about? I should be happy that they were there to keep her company and keep her away from danger.

I knew my brothers; they wouldn't let anything happen to her.

Then why am I dialing Damon's number? I can't stop myself. All I can do is watch my fingers betray me.

He answered on the third ring just as I was close to ending the call.

"Can I help you?" He asks. Something in his voice bothered me, and I soon realized what it was.

"Are you drunk?" I ask him, concerned. If he were drunk, would he be keeping an eye on Willow? I couldn't count on Griffin; he would be too busy having drinks at the party as well.

"Maybe a little." He answers me with a chuckle.

"Why the f**k are you getting drunk when you should be looking after Willow?" I demand. "Do you ever look after the people I ask you to?"

Whenever I asked him to protect Anya in the past, he only hurt her. He was beginning to piss me off. I thought it was possible for us to move past what he'd done, but this only put more strain on our brotherly bond. Why could I never trust my brother to do a simple thing like protect a woman I cared about?

"Relax." He shouts into the phone. I could hear the music blasting. It did nothing to brighten my mood.

"You telling me to relax isn't f*****g working!" I growl.

"She's in good hands." He assured me. "She's with Carter's younger brother. They're having a good time. And don't worry. He's nothing like Carter. He's a good kid."

What.The.F**k?

"I swear, Damon, you better be f*****g joking right now." I threaten him.

Even if it were a joke, I would still be pissed with him.

"It's true." He insists.

"What younger brother?" I growl. "Tell me his f*****g name."

“Ares.” He answers me; he doesn’t even sound interested in this conversation anymore.

Just how much did he have to drink? I couldn’t respond. I was still in shock. It’s not possible. They wouldn’t all sit back and let Willow hang out with Ares. He wasn’t as bad as Carter, but he was still a Prince, and those men didn’t know how to be nice to a woman.

“You don’t believe me?” He asks as I feel my phone vibrate against my ear. “Check your messages.”

I end the call and do as he says. A chill runs down my spine when I see Ares with his arms around Willow as they sit beside each other on a sofa.

A low growl forces its way out of my throat. I didn’t even waste a second as I rushed out of my room and grabbed my keys.

I couldn’t f*****g believe it. One day I left Willow alone with my family, and they chose to let this happen.

I would never do something like that to them. If they asked me to look after someone, I would do it the right f*****g way.

Who could I even trust anymore?

I stare at the picture on my phone, and curses leave my mouth.

Why did this bother me so much? Why the f**k did I want to kill Ares for even talking to my wife?

It happened in the past when those men were commenting on her body. I didn’t think twice about making them all pay. I told myself that I didn’t want Anya to be disappointed in me. I said to myself that Anya wouldn’t want other men looking at her sister in that way.

But what excuse did I have now?

Willow seemed to be enjoying the conversation with Ares. Both of them seemed happy.

She looks happier with him than she’s ever looked with me.

If I weren't such a selfish a*****e, I would have left her to have a good time with him.

But I was selfish and I didn't want to see her with him or anyone else.

I don't know the f*****g reason for this yet, but I didn't have time to figure it out.

I jumped into my jeep and raced out of the garage.

I knew exactly where I was heading. f**k Carter, and f**k his brothers. They were always making our lives miserable.

The thought of Ares doing more than just putting his arms around Willow made me suddenly panic.

What the f**k? What's wrong with me?

What the hell was my problem?

I didn't have feelings for Willow.

I loved Anya. Only Anya.

So why did I feel like I was about to lose my f*****g mind?

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4 minutes read

~WILLOW~

"Can you excuse me for a second?" I ask Ares.

He nods, and I walk over to where Autumn and everyone else stands, looking at us.

"I don't think I can do this anymore," I confess.

It was hard to pretend I was having a good time.

We were in a more private area of the house just so that rumors about me and Ares wouldn't spread all over.

Autumn and Clarissa had thought about everything to protect me. But I knew they wouldn't be able to protect me from Dante if my actions tonight angered him.

"Why can't you?" Clarissa demands.

"It doesn't even look like Dante is coming," I say. It's been over two hours, and there was no sign of him.

"He called a few minutes ago," Damon tells me. "I acted like I was drunk and like none of us were keeping an eye on you. Trust me; my brother will be here."

Even Damon seemed convinced that he would be here.

"Just keep talking to Ares for a few more minutes." Autumn tries to persuade me. "If Dante still doesn't show up, then we can stop all of this and go home. I promise."

I sigh. I'd made it this far already; I could wait a few more minutes for Dante.

I was inwardly praying for him to show up. This was the only sign I needed from him to keep fighting for our marriage.

I f****d myself to walk back to Ares, who was waiting for me, with a smile. He wasn't that bad of a person. He didn't try anything weird or make me feel uncomfortable.

I wasn't sure why he was helping me.

"He will show up." He promises me as I take my seat next to him once more.

"Even you're convinced that he will?" I ask.

He nods. "You're his wife. If he cares for you at all, he will be here. My brothers and I have sort of a reputation. It isn't always true what people say about us, but it will be enough to bring Dante Fawn here to take his wife away."

I narrow my eyes, "I don't believe you. Dante will not come. Also, I've heard the rumors about your family. I've seen the way Carter acts. He is a player. I believe at least some of the rumors are true."

He sighs and leans closer to me, "Don't believe everything you hear. My brother isn't that bad. If you get to know him, you'll agree with me. Also, I'm pretty sure your boyfriend is already here."

"My boyfriend?" I ask, confused.

"Dante Fawn."

"He's my husband." I remind him.

He winks at me, "I prefer to call him your boyfriend."

I ignore him, "why do you think he's already here?"

I didn't see a single sign of Dante anywhere. Was he saying this to mess with me?

He leans back against the sofa with both hands behind his head. "I've been timing him. He called Damon a few minutes ago. If he's angry after seeing you with me, he is most likely driving at full speed. That means that he should be here by now. He's probably parking recklessly, with no care in the world, barging through the crowds looking for the both of us. It will take him longer than usual since we're in this private area, but I'm sure he will find you soon enough."

I gape at him. "You have quite an imagination."

He grins, "Or maybe I just checked my phone and saw your boyfriend barging into the house through the cameras like he wants to murder someone. Most likely me."

My mouth parts. "You're lying."

"Three." He whispers. "Two. . . One."

The door flew open suddenly, and my head snapped in its direction. Just like Ares and everyone else promised me, standing in front of me with a murderous expression on his face was none other than Dante.

“Ares,” Dante says his name like he wants to rip his neck from his body.

Ares doesn’t look afraid. Maybe it’s because his brothers are all over the house. If anything happens to him, they will be here in a split second.

Ares stands up to greet him, and I begin to panic. This wasn’t the right person for Dante to start a fight with. It wouldn’t end well for anyone here.

I immediately jump in front of Ares. Dante looks shocked by my actions. He might think that I was trying to protect Ares from him, but I was doing the exact opposite. I was trying to protect him.

“Look who’s finally joined us!” Damon says as he hits Dante on his back. “We’ve been waiting for you.”

Dante growls at his brother. “Stay the f**k out of my way Damon.”

“Having some problems with your brother?” Ares asks. “I can help you both out.”

“Why don’t I help you break your nose first?” Dante threatens him.

“I’m sensing a lot of tension in here,” Ares says as he sniffs the air.

“Let’s all calm down,” Clarissa says as she tries to ease the tension.

Dante takes another step toward Ares, and I quickly place both hands on his chest to stop him from moving forward.

His eyes look hurt as he gazes at me, “Move your hands, Willow.”

I shook my head. “Please, let’s just go.”

“Move. Your. Hands.”

I was beginning to panic. If I didn’t stop Dante from picking a fight with Ares, there’s no telling what would happen here tonight.

Since I never thought that Dante would come, I didn’t have the chance to prepare for any of this.

What am I supposed to do now?

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4 minutes read

~WILLOW~

“Are you not going to move?” Dante asks for the last time.

He would have to forcibly move me if he wanted me to get out of the way. I would never let him walk straight into trouble, not while I was alive.

“We were just talking, and Ares was very respectful—”

I don’t get to finish my sentence when Dante grabs me by my waist and throws me over his shoulder.

“Dante!” I gasp. “What are you doing?”

He doesn’t answer me as he storms out of the room with me still in his arms.

I could see all the surprised looks as everyone began taking pictures of us. This was sure to make the headlines by the end of the night. At least I was being photographed with Dante and not Ares.

I don’t bother trying to get down from him. I liked that he was carrying me.

Did this mean that everyone was right all along? Did Dante have feelings for me but didn’t realize it yet? I could feel my heart fill with hope at the possibility of Dante liking me.

I never thought it would be possible for Dante to ever have feelings for anyone other than Anya.

I didn’t want to get my hopes up. There was still a chance that he was doing this because it would be what Anya would have wanted from him.

Dante opens his Jeep and practically throws me onto the seat. I’m extremely quiet but giddy with happiness as he leans over and buckles me in. His scent fills my nose, and I lean in to smell him some more. Dante doesn’t seem to realize as he pulls away and walks to the driver’s side.

He was still very pissed. I could tell by the vein in his head that threatened to pop.

“Are you upset with me?” I asked before he could even start the vehicle.

He places both hands on the steering wheel and stares straight ahead.

“Why were you in there with him?” he asks, ignoring my question. “There were so many other places in that house for you to be in, yet you chose to be on a small sofa with another man while his arms were around you.”

“His arms weren’t around me.” I disagreed. “His arm was behind me, but it wasn’t touching me.”

Dante growls, and I try not to be intimidated by him.

“Do you understand how much worse all of this could have ended if someone else had seen the two of you like that?” he asks me. “We recently went on a damn trip to an island just to stop the rumors about our marriage, and a few days later, you’re already doing something that could reverse it all.”

“Are you trying to say that I’m the reason behind all the rumors?” I demand. “Because I’m absolutely sure that your behavior towards me is what started the rumors, to begin with. Everyone can see the truth in your eyes and actions, Dante. They can clearly see that there is a big difference in the way you treated Anya in the past and how you treat me now.”

His jaw clenches, and he aggressively starts the Jeep.

“Just like you to run from everything.” I snap. “You can’t give a response because you know it’s the truth. I’m not at fault for any of this, and you know it.”

He leans back against the seat and closes his eyes. I can tell that he was trying to regain control of his emotions.

“I know you aren’t to blame for any of this, Willow. I f*****g know it.” He growls. “That doesn’t make any of this easier. In fact, your innocence in all of this makes everything so much harder for me.”

“Well, then maybe I should stop being so innocent,” I suggest.

His head snaps in my direction, and I can see my words have angered him. "Just because it makes things harder for me doesn't mean I want you to change that about yourself."

"Let's be honest with each other, Dante. You would be much happier if I were more like Anya!" I shout. "The reason this marriage can't work is because I'm nothing like my sister. So maybe, I should be more like her because, unlike you, I actually want our marriage to work."

Dante looks at me like I've just lost my mind.

"Willow—"

"Don't try and tell me otherwise." I snap. "Were you even here for me tonight?"

"What do you mean?" he asks as his forehead creases.

"Tell me the truth, Dante. Did you come here tonight because you didn't want to see me with Ares, or did you come because it's what Anya would have wanted you to do?" I demand. "Everything you do is because of her. Even after she's no longer here, you still do things to please her. Did you also do this for her, or did you do it for me?"

I could feel my heart pound in my chest as I waited for him to answer me.

He's broken my heart so much recently; I wouldn't be surprised if he did it again.

"Willow, I don't know how to answer that." He finally says.

I narrow my eyes, "it's a simple question, Dante. It shouldn't be that hard for you to answer me. As your wife, I deserve to know. Did you come here for me, or did you come for my sister?"

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4 minutes read

~DANTE~

I couldn’t look away from her piercing gaze as she waited for me to give her an answer.

Did I come here for her, or did I come for Anya?

I already knew the answer to that question. I didn’t need to think twice.

I was here for Willow. Only Willow. My promise to Anya had nothing to do with my decisions tonight.

However, for some reason, the following words that came out of my mouth were the exact opposite.

“Anya would have wanted me to be there for you tonight.” I lie. “She wouldn’t have wanted you to land yourself in more trouble. I was doing what she would have wanted me to do.”

All lies—all of it.

Why the hell couldn’t I just tell her the truth? Why did it scare me to admit that I came here for her?

Was I afraid that she would take it the wrong way? Was I terrified she would take advantage of me as Anya had done?

What was my f*****g reason?

Whatever my reason was, it wasn’t worth seeing the pain on her face. Her bottom lip trembles uncontrollably as she turns her face so she no longer looks my way.

She says nothing to me as I pull out of the driveway.

The guilt in my chest was growing. I should have told her the truth. I should have said to her that I came here for her. Why was it so hard for me to admit it?

f*****g Ares. I could see his stupid face in my head.

He was in that room, smirking at me. Smirking!

And Willow protected him from me. She stood in front of him like he was someone that she needed to protect.

Nothing had f*****g hurt as much as that did. I didn’t want her protecting some pathetic fool unless that fool was me.

Why did she protect him from me? She barely knew that guy. She’d only spoken to him once, as far as I knew. They couldn’t have gotten that close so quickly.

She told me that she thought she was in love with me. Did she already change her mind? Did she have feelings for him now?

“Do you like him?”

It took me a while to realize I'd asked that question out loud.

I can feel her gaze, but my eyes are stuck on the road. I couldn't look her in the face; I was scared she could see through my lies.

"Do I like who?" she asks; her voice sounds shaky, and it bothers me more than it should.

"f*****g Ares," I growl. "Do you like him?"

She grows quiet at my question, and I steal a glance at her. She isn't looking at me anymore. She's staring straight ahead, and she looks like she's lost in her own thoughts.

"Willow?" I ask again. "Aren't you going to answer me?"

"Whether I like him or not shouldn't have anything to do with you." She says without any emotion in her voice.

My jaw clenched, and my hands were close to breaking the steering wheel in half. "You're married to me. Of course, it has something to do with me. I should know if you have feelings for someone else."

"No." She snaps. "You don't have the right to know anything. You've had feelings for my sister since the start of our marriage. You've been so in love with her that you couldn't see how much you hurt me. Tonight you had the audacity to admit that you only came because of Anya and not because of me. So no, Dante, I do not owe you any answers or explanations. From now on, we should both just pretend that we aren't married. You've been doing that so well already; now it's my turn."

I couldn't listen to this anymore. The thought of Willow acting like we aren't a married couple and being closer to men like Ares was sending me f*****g insane.

I pulled the jeep into a side street and angrily got out. My initial intention was to clear my head for a few seconds before getting back into the jeep, but I ended up doing something totally different.

My body has a mind of its own as I pull her door open and unbuckle her seatbelt.

“What do you think you’re doing?” she demands.

I grab her waist and pull her out of the vehicle. I do not stop until she is trapped between the jeep and my body.

We’re both breathing hard as I gaze into her eyes. I’m very aware of her perfect body pressed up against mine but I couldn’t let it distract me tonight.

I couldn’t hold it back anymore.

I wanted to keep the truth from her, but she had to know. She had to.

“I didn’t come because of Anya.” I finally blurt out.

“What?” she asks as she waits for me to explain myself.

“You asked me earlier if I came for Anya or because of you.” I remind her. “I’m telling you that I came for you. Not for Anya or anyone else. I came because of you, Willow.”

Her lips parted slightly, and right now, all I could think about was k*****g them.

“But I asked you earlier, and you told me you came because of Anya. You said that it’s what she would have wanted you to do.” She reminds me of my earlier words.

She didn’t need to remind me; I remembered the lie I had told.

“I lied,” I whisper. “I lied, Willow. I came for you. I promise, I only came for you.”

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3 minutes read

~WILLOW~

Did he really come for me? And not for my sister? How could that be?

Why did he lie earlier? What could have possibly been the reason for that lie?

“Why did you lie?” I whisper. “Is it so hard to accept that there’s a possibility that you might care for me?”

His eyes look dark with some unknown emotion as he gazes down at me.

“I don’t know,” he whispers in a defeated tone. “I don’t know what’s happening to me, Willow.”

His body goes still briefly, and he tilts his head to the side.

“Hold on.” He whispers. “Don’t say anything.”

I remain quiet as I wait for him to explain his strange behavior.

“F**k.” He growls. “They followed us to take pictures of us.”

“Who followed us?” I ask as I try to look around.

He cups my face with both hands and forces me to keep my eyes on him. “Don’t.” He orders me. “I don’t want them to know I’m aware of them.”

“Is it another photographer?” I ask.

He shook his head. “These aren’t from my parents, I’m sure.”

I held my breath as Dante gently pressed one finger on my bottom l*p before letting go. There’s something in his eyes that make me shiver from head to toe.

Before I could respond, he did the last thing I expected him to do.

He covers my mouth with his own, and I swear I almost die against his jeep in the middle of nowhere.

It was very unexpected, and I think this is the reason why I can’t seem to find my breath.

He takes both of my hands and places them above my head, preventing me from stopping the k**s. I don’t think he realizes that there wasn’t anything in this world that would possibly make me stop him from k*****g me.

He shoves his body harder against mine, and I can feel every part of him pressed up against me.

I gasp against his lips, and he uses that opportunity to stick his tongue into my mouth. I was melting. My knees felt weak, and I was having trouble standing. I was happy for the support of his body; I needed it, especially now.

He deepens the k**s, and I can't stop the m**n that escapes my mouth.

Dante lets go of my hands suddenly. To my disappointment, he also stops the k**s. He leans his forehead against mine for a few seconds.

"Get inside the jeep." He says in a hoarse whisper. His breath is warm against my ear, sending a chill down my spine.

It takes me a few seconds to collect my thoughts, but I eventually do as he asks.

I watch as he walks over to the other side and jumps into the jeep. He reversed out of the street, and I saw the flashes before me. They were taking pictures of us all along, just like Dante said.

"I'm sorry I had to do that to you, Willow." He apologizes when we have driven far away from them. "I had to give them something to write about. Anything to prove that our marriage is not a failure. If I didn't, the rumors about you would only have worsened."

Of course, he hadn't k****d me because he wanted to; he only did it for the rumors to stop.

Still, earlier, he admitted that he'd lied about coming for me because of his promise to Anya. But that could have been to prevent any more rumors, just like the k**s tonight.

I turn to look at him. He was focused on the road, but there was something bothering him.

I had to know the truth. I knew he at least didn't come for Anya but for me. However, I had to know if this was done to protect his family's reputation. Did his parents force him to come like they usually did?

"You said that you came because of me." I remind him. "Why? Why did you come for me? Was it to prevent any more rumors about our marriage?"

His hands tighten on the steering wheel. "You never gave me an answer. Do you like Ares? Were you with him because you wanted to be there, or was there another reason?"

Was he avoiding my question by trying to distract me with questions of his own?

I wanted to get a reaction out of him. This was my chance to prove that Dante had feelings for me. This might be my only chance.

He lied to me earlier. It was my turn to tell my lie and see his reaction.

"Tell me, Willow." He tries again. "Do you like Ares?"

I take a deep breath; I never liked playing with Dante's feelings. I always tried to be honest with him, but it had to be done today. I didn't have another choice. I had to lie to him.

"I don't know when it happened or why it happened, but I do like him." I finally say. "I like Ares."