

Chapter 47 Dinner Date

I'm looking at the building, and Alaric is watching me. After I managed to drink the smoothie, I planned to relax. Apparently, Alaric had other ideas, and instead, I found myself in the doctors.

Now, though, I have tablets to take—ones that will hopefully prevent me from getting sick. They might not stop the nausea, but I won't be sick. That is what the doctor said anyway.

After the doctor, he took me to get a dress for the evening as if to test my mental state and prove a point. His expression was constantly amused at the awkwardness that radiated from within me while I tried to put away my issues about his money.

Then, on the way out, he said well done, like I passed a damn test.

"You know you won't know for sure if the tablets are working if we don't go in, baby girl. I'm sure Lucas and Bex will be waiting." His hand reaches for mine, and I nod.

Getting out, we walk in, and the hostess guides us to the table where Bex and Lucas are. The place is lavish. It's as if he thought of the most expensive place just to make a point.

Bex jumps up and hugs me. I need to tell her at some point I'm pregnant, but I'm not sure I can too soon.

"Are you okay? Oliver explained what happened last night, Jake had told him." She asks while looking across my body for any damage.

"I'm great, Bex, I swear," I say, trying to reassure her.

"Are you two planning to stand there all night?" Alaric smirks at me. Yes, okay, we're just standing by the table. I move and sit next to Alaric, his hand settling on my thigh as he leans closer to me. "You're doing well, baby girl. The smell hasn't had you running away yet." He's right. It hasn't.

"I'm Alice, I will be your waiter tonight. Here are your menus. I will be back in a few minutes to take your drinks order." She hands out the menus and leaves.

Looking at the drink menu, I browse it and feel it disappear from my hands. Turning, I look at Alaric, confused. He moves and places another menu in my hand.

"Non-alcoholic," his words are whispered. Yeah, I forgot about that.

"I can have one glass Alaric." I'm not going to drink excessively, but one glass is fine.

"Which I would normally agree with you, but you have barely eaten for days. You've thrown up loads, so alcohol right now won't help." He looks at me, and I fight back rolling my eyes. "I'm just looking after you, baby girl," he explains, and I know he's right.

"Okay, no alcohol." He's not wrong; I've hardly eaten and have constantly been sick. So that one glass that they say is fine wouldn't be. Alaric speaks to Lucas and Bex about what drink would be best. They all agree on one.

"What drinks can I get you?" The waiter looks at us.

"Can we have Petrus, Pomerol 1980, please." Alaric speaks and glances at me, waiting to see what I'm having.

"Sir, we only do that by the bottle." She looks at him, and her expression says she's waiting to be shouted at. Does that happen often?

"The bottle is fine." Lucas smiles at her.

"Anything else?" She smiles and waits. We didn't plan this, and I didn't want to tell anyone yet, but I am ordering something non-alcoholic, which is going to tell Bex.

"Can I have an orange juice, please?" Alice bows slightly and walks away, and I see Bex staring at me. I watch her, and she's already practically bouncing in her seat. Her grin continues to widen, and she stares at me, waiting.

"God's sake, yes, Bex, okay, yes," I say, watching her mouth open. She goes to squeal but holds it in at the last seconds.

"I thought you said no?" She asks and glances at Alaric. He's talking to Lucas right now.

"Originally, it said no. Now it's a yes. I will explain later." I explained, knowing that she was itching to know. A few minutes later, the waiter came back with the drinks and asked if we were ready to order. We tell her our order, and she walks away.

I look at Lucas, and he continues to talk to Alaric. I've met him once, briefly.

"So, do you use the business often, Lucas?" I ask, and he turns to me and nods.

"Not exactly. I go there to socialise but rarely use the rooms," he answers and smiles at me.

"You still used it after your wife died, though?" I inquire, and he nods.

"It was a place we used together; we knew a lot of the people there. Going there to socialise was like going to a second home." He smiles at me, but I see the pain in his eyes.

"Where is your daughter while you're here or at the business?" I ask and watch him laugh.

"With a babysitter, one she has had since birth." He smiles and explains, and I nod. The same one since birth?

"How close are you with this babysitter?" I look at him, and Bex's eyes widen. Alaric grips my chin and turns me to face him. What? I smile at him, and he leans closer.

"Stop, Bex didn't scare him away, but you're about to." Alaric's words have me laughing. "Baby girl, he is already petrified as it is without you interrogating him. By the way, he isn't fucking his babysitter. She is like seventy. Stop." His words are firm, and he pulls back and looks at me.

My eyes go to Lucas, and he speaks with Bex. Alaric leans in again. "You're trying to find a reason to push him out and tell Bex not to trust him. Don't do that." He kisses my cheek and moves back, releasing my chin.

Maybe he's right? Every answer seemed fucking perfect, like he had planned it beforehand. Maybe I was just trying to find something.

"I'm sorry." I smile at Lucas.

"It's fine. You're worried about her, I understand." He smiles at me, but he seems too fucking perfect. Maybe it's just me. I try to push my worries away, Alaric has known her for years and found no fault, so I must stop trying to create one.

Food gets served, and we sit and eat. The conversation changes constantly, and I listen to Lucas and Alaric talk about Lucas' business and its expansion. Maybe I'm just paranoid? Bex smiles across at me, and I can see she is happy.

I didn't ask her about his daughter, though. Is she okay with that? I've no idea if she is happy to be in a relationship where she is possibly going to have to spend time with a child.

Have they spoken about it? Bex is wild. She swears and threatens to kill people a lot.

"You're staring. Just ask." Alaric looks at me, and I realise I was staring at Lucas.

"Sorry, I just wondered if you two had spoken about your daughter and considered it? Are you happy letting Bex be around your daughter?"

Laughing, he nods. "Who wouldn't want her to be? I can just imagine her at the school gates threatening to kill someone for my daughter." He chuckles, and we all laugh.

"I wouldn't threaten a child, maybe the parent for not raising them right, but not the child. I'm not that bad." Bex groans, and we continue to laugh.

"We have spoken, and she won't meet my daughter for a few months, not until I'm sure this isn't just something they say that will be finished and over soon," he explains, and I nod, understanding him.

Alaric said women were interested, but finding out he had a daughter made it turn into nothing more than fun. They didn't want the restrictions of his daughter. After eating, Alaric took Lucas to the bar, likely because he could tell Bex was ready with a barrel full of questions about me being pregnant.

"So, how are you feeling about the pregnancy?" Bex asks gently, her eyes searching mine.

I smile, grateful for her question, but I am also grappling with a mix of emotions. "Honestly, Bex, I'm happy... really happy," I start, my hand instinctively resting on my stomach. "But I'm also worried." I can't deny it.

"Worried? About what?" Bex asks and leans in, her expression showing genuine concern.

Alaric told me to take my time and consider it. I know I want the baby, regardless of my worries. Taking a deep breath, I try to find the right words. "It's just... depending financial support from Alaric. I mean, I know he wants to help, but it's hard for me to accept on him like that." It's not me. I don't want to come across as getting pregnant to trap him for money.

Understanding immediately lights up in Bex's eyes. "I get it. It's a big change, especially as you're used to being independent." She explains to me.

I nod, feeling relief that Bex understands. "Exactly. I've always been the one to take care of myself, you know? And now, with a baby on the way, it's like I'm suddenly relying on someone else for support." I've had no support from my family since I was eighteen, not even emotional or to talk to.

"But Ruby, it's not like you're asking for a handout," Bex points out gently. "You and Alaric love each other, and this is something you're facing together. It's okay to lean on each other, especially during such a significant moment in your life. Plus, I'll help."

Her words resonate with me, easing some of my worries. "I know you're right. It's just hard to shake off those old feelings of independence. It's hard to shake off the worry of what people will think."

Bex reaches out and squeezes my hand reassuringly. "I understand, Ruby. But you're not alone in this. You have Alaric, and you have me and also Ivy. We're all here to support you every step of the way. As for what others think, screw them, you know the truth."

A small smile creeps onto my lips as I look at Bex. It's so unlike her to be serious, but somehow, it's what I needed. "Thank you, Bex. I don't know what I'd do without you."

Bex returns the smile, her eyes filling with warmth. "You'll never have to find out. We're in this together, always. Regardless of what happens with me and Lucas, you and Alaric, I'm going nowhere." Standing up, we hugged, and I'm glad I spoke to her now.

We say goodbye and leave. Getting back to the house, we go to Alaric's room. Getting ready for bed, I sit on it and look at Alaric.

Alaric's presence is reassuring, his eyes filled with a mixture of anticipation and uncertainty as he is no doubt considering the whole situation and waiting to find out what I have chosen to do.

Taking a deep breath, I know I have to voice what's been weighing on my mind and give him an answer.

"Alaric," I begin, my voice steady but tinged with nervousness, "I've been thinking a lot about the baby, us, everything."

He nods, his expression urging me to continue. I can sense the tension in the air, the weight of the words hanging between us.

"I want to keep the baby," I say firmly, my heart pounding in my chest. "I want us to do this together."

There's a flicker of surprise in his eyes, followed by a wave of something else – perhaps relief, perhaps fear. I can't quite decipher it, but I press on, determined to lay everything bare. If I stop, I won't speak.

He knows my worries, but I haven't exactly expressed them to him.

"I know it's not going to be easy," I admit, my voice softening. "I have worries, doubts about how we'll do this. What it will mean and what others will think."

His hand reaches out, finding mine, a silent gesture of support that speaks volumes. I squeeze his hand, drawing strength from his touch as I continue.

"But I don't want to let those worries dictate my decision," I say, meeting his gaze with unwavering determination. "I believe we can figure it out, Alaric. Together. I don't want to run and not keep this baby over my own fears that are pointless."

There's a pause, a moment of quiet reflection as we both process the weight of my words. And then, slowly, a tentative but genuine smile spreads across his face.

"I'm with you, Ruby," he says softly, his voice filled with conviction. "I already said I was happy about this. Your fears are not pointless! Never think that Ruby."

Relief floods through me, washing away some of the uncertainty that had been gnawing at my insides. With Alaric by my side, I know we can tackle whatever challenges lie ahead – including my worries about him supporting me when it comes to money.

As we settle into bed, the warmth of his embrace envelops me, and I feel a sense of peace wash over me. No matter what the future holds, I know that we can handle anything together, and nothing will change that.