

Teaser from Torn

Spoiler Alert If You Have Not Read Connected

Final Scene from Chapter 1
A Thousand Years

*“Love comforteth like sunshine after rain”
~William Shakespeare~*



“There you are! How are you?” she screams, bursting through the front door. It’s only been sixty minutes since I called her to say we’re home and she’s already here. She runs over to where I’m sitting at the breakfast bar having just finished with my security system lesson from Caleb.

I stand up slowly as my ribs ache much more today than they have since the incident. Probably from sitting in the car on the ride home. “I’m okay really. I look much worse than I actually feel.”

Aerie is crying and throwing her arms around me, tightly pulling me into an embrace. I wince a little and she pulls away. “Oh my God I’m so sorry I didn’t mean to hurt you!” Her face is full of concern and I look at her—the woman who has helped me in more ways than I can ever count. Of course she is here now. She is a vision of perfection in her red shift dress and black high heels, with matching headband.

“I’m fine,” I lie so she doesn’t feel bad. I’ve talked to her on the phone so many times since my incident I think she knows more about it than River does. She looks me over one more time and asks, “Why are you dressed like that?”

“Dressed like what?” I say trying to keep my smile from exploding.

“Dressed like you’re going somewhere when you should be in sweats and laying in bed. You even have heels on. You never wear heels unless I make you.”

I glance over my shoulder at River who is standing in the kitchen with Caleb and he nods his head. I’m so excited I just blurt it out. “We’re leaving this afternoon for Las

Vegas to get married!”

“You are not eloping, Dahlia London! You can’t. I want to see you get married.” She is really crying now and starts hugging me tight again before quickly pulling away.

“Sorry, sorry,” she says wiping the tears from her cheeks and trying to gain her composure.

I start to feel a little guilty, but quickly try to push those feelings aside. “We’ll have a party after the band’s tour and all of us can celebrate then, okay?”

River comes around the counter and hugs Aerie before whispering something in her ear. He then settles with his arm around me, pulling me into his side and says to her, “We’ll celebrate later, but we want to get married now.”

Aerie looks a little concerned as she says, “Is it safe for you to travel?”

Shaking my head I just look at her, “Really Aerie I feel fine. I promise.”

River kisses my hair softly. “Coffee?” he asks Aerie. “We just have a few things to wrap up before we take off.”

“No, you know I don’t drink that shit. It’s pure octane and tastes like it too.”

River’s phone rings and I hear him say, “Xander, I told you I’m not meeting her today or tomorrow. I don’t give a shit what she wants. No not then either.” Aerie, ignoring or not noticing River’s tone, pulls me over to the sofa. I give River a concerned glance and he nods at me, flashing me what I know to be his make-believe smile, and walks into the kitchen.

I sit down and talk to Aerie for a while. Once she feels she has wrung every ounce of information from me, she stands and says, “I’ll be back in an hour. Don’t leave until I get back. I mean it.”

I look at the clock and say, “Where are you going?”

“It’s a surprise. Wait for me. Please?”

“Okay you have an hour, that’s it.”

She returns with minutes to spare holding a gray suit bag in one hand and a shopping bag in the other. “You have to have a wedding dress to get married in,” she says as she unzips the bag and pulls out the most beautiful white silk dress. It is simple, yet elegant. A sleeveless cocktail-length dress with a deep V-neck and A-line skirt. It has gorgeous, yet subtly patterned silk embroidery on the bodice, making it special enough for the

occasion but not overwhelmingly so. It is the perfect dress.

She sits me on the bed and pulls out a simple pair of silver high-heels and slips them on my feet. “Just like Cinderella, Dahlia, you got your Prince Charming,” she says as a tear slides down her cheek. She pulls one more item out of the bag and hands it to me. “The dress is your something new, here is your something blue.” It’s a garter and as she slips it on my leg and up to my thigh, I laugh at her need to make sure I follow the typical bridal wedding traditions.

Then she stands up and removes the pearl earrings from her ear. “And these are your something borrowed.” They are her great-grandmother’s pearl earrings. I know them well and have always loved them. I remove my earrings and insert hers, then stand to look in the mirror. I really look like a bride. I throw my arms around her despite the pain shooting through them. “I love you Aerie Daniels forever and always. Thank you so much.”

“You don’t have to thank me. I can’t have my best friend getting married in just anything. And to be honest I was afraid you might end up in your Converse sneakers.”

Aerie leaves and I sit in my room reflecting on my life and how it has drastically changed over the past year. I walk over to the dresser and pull down Grammy’s pearls hanging on the mirror. As I slip them around my neck, I have an odd déjà vu feeling. I push it aside and can’t help but think how lucky I am. Today I’m going to marry the man who turned my life around; the man who taught me to love again. I thought Ben was my Once in a Lifetime, but who knew a Once in a Lifetime love could happen twice?

I feel so incredibly happy but suddenly a little sadness washes through me for those I’ve lost and I shift my eyes to the ceiling to say a silent prayer for each of them. I tell my mother and father I wish they could be here with me today. I thank my uncle for looking after me and keeping me on the right path. I think of my aunt and her mother and how they taught me that life is full of magic. Then I whisper to Ben that I will always love him and he will forever hold a special place in my heart, as my first true love. I finish looking in the mirror and take a deep breath. Okay I’m ready.

I walk into an empty living room and head over to the kitchen to plug my phone in. The battery is almost dead and I hope I have time to charge it. I hear chuckling from behind me. “Come on beautiful, you don’t need that today.”

He's laughing as he walks over to me and pulls me to him. "Hey what was that with Xander?"

He looks at me and shakes his head. "You know Xander, he always wants what he wants now."

"And he wants what right now?"

"He wants me to meet Ellie."

"Ellie?"

"Yeah, his contact for the label. Let's not worry about that now."

He places soft kisses on each of my eyelids. He pulls back and gazes into my eyes with adoration and says, "Are you ready to become my wife?"

My legs start to quiver as I pull back to look at his adorable face. "Only if you promise to love me forever."

He cups my cheeks and says, "Beautiful, I made that promise to myself the first time I kissed you. I promise to love you always. How could I not?"

My tears spill from his heartfelt words. I love him so much. He's hugging me, not too tightly, but enough that I feel his love for me and I know he will always be mine. He kisses me again and says, "The instant you become Mrs. River Wilde I'm going to show you just how much."

He grabs my hand and we head toward the door. Amazing Grace starts playing from my phone in the kitchen just as we're about to leave and I turn back. "River let me quickly grab that. I don't want Grace to worry about me any more than she already has."

I drop his hand and walk to the kitchen counter to answer my phone. "Hello?"