

The Unwanted Bride Of Atticus Fawn Chapter 23 - Tips

0 17 minutes read

-AUTUMN

Atticus pushes past me and rushes to get to Anya. I've never seen him panic like this before. He's in a hurry to get to her, and everyone here knows it. He drops to the ground beside her, shouting her name as his brothers had done just a few seconds ago.

She doesn't move, prompting him to move her from the ground. I turn away when he picks her up into his arms and holds her close to his chest.

The crowd has gotten loud once more; it's like a replay of what happened on my engagement night. Only this time, it's much worse. People already thought they were cheating behind my back; this would only fuel the rumors. It was only going to get worse from now on.

Anya had managed to make both of what was supposed to be my special nights, all about her. I wasn't sure if today was intentional, however.

They were still mates; it must have shocked her when we kissed in front of her. But it was also possible that she only acted to get Atticus's attention. After all, she came to my wedding in white, wearing something that could pass for a wedding dress.

I've attended multiple weddings in the past, and I've never seen anyone do something so petty.

I took a deep breath and faked a smile as guests came forward to congratulate me. I had to remember that Anya and Atticus were connected, no matter how much that bothered me. They will always feel pain when the other is hurt. That was the kind of connection you couldn't just ignore.

I have to wonder what would happen if I ever found my mate. I couldn't imagine loving anyone more than I loved Atticus, my husband. It felt weird just thinking about it; I couldn't imagine having to introduce him as my husband to strangers.

"I'm sorry about her." Clarissa apologized as she joined my side. "I don't know why everyone always rushes to her aid when it's clear she doesn't deserve their attention."

"It's okay," I assure her. "They are mates, after all. It's hard to fight their feelings. I don't want to hold it against either one of them."

Clarissa sighs, "you're too nice, Autumn. Too nice. People are going to hurt you if you keep being that way."

She wasn't the first person to say this to me. I've been this way my entire life; it was hard to imagine myself any other way.

I'm reminded suddenly of the tattoo of Damon's name I'd seen on her. She didn't like Anya, and while she must have her reasons, I think her primary reason was because of Damon.

So then, was it true? Had I seen a tattoo of his name on her b.utt? If that was the case, I felt sorry for her. She wasn't the only person who liked someone in love with someone else. It just so happened that both men we wanted were involved with the same woman.

"I'm happy Atticus married you." She confesses. "Anya was making him unhappy, and I don't think he even realizes it. You are different from her. You can make him happy if he just opened his heart to you."

Hearing Clarissa say that to me thoroughly warmed my heart. If Atticus didn't like me, I was at least lucky that most of his family did. They were all kind to me from the beginning. All except Damon and Dante, who barely spoke to me, but I understood why.

Anya must have warned them, or maybe they decided on their own to keep their distance because of her. To them, I would be the reason why she was always sad recently.

"Thank you for welcoming me into your family. I'm also happy that I married into a family like yours. You're all so kind to me." I thank her.

Things could have been much worse. My parents could have married me to a family that hated my guts. I had to keep taking a positive look at my life now.

"Your dance with Atticus is up next." My mom informs me.

We didn't practice for it, not even once. I hope I didn't make a fool out of myself. Though from all the things posted about me in the past few days, would that be the worst thing to happen to me? Embarrassing myself while dancing was the least of my problems.

I'm not even sure where Atticus is at this point. All I know is that he's with Anya. On our wedding day, my husband is too busy taking care of his ex-girlfriend to show up for our dance together. And there was nothing I could do about it.

I've imagined what my wedding would be like to Atticus many times in the past. Not once did I picture it to be like this.

In my delusional mind, I imagined it to be a small wedding by the beach with only the closest people from our lives attending; we would be deeply in love with a bright future ahead of us. At that time, I didn't think once there was a chance that we would ever be married in this life; I'd gotten my wish but not in the way I'd always dreamed of it to be.

"Why is Atticus taking so long?" His mother questions. "Sometimes I swear he does things intentionally to give reporters plenty to write about our family."

It wouldn't be the Fawns if there weren't a weekly scandal. There was always something new and exciting happening around them. It just so happened that this time it included me.

"It's what makes us so popular, mom," Griffin says as he joins us. "In the meantime, why don't I get a dance with my beautiful sister-in-law?"

"That will not be necessary," Atticus says as he finally returns.

"Get her to the dance floor and put a smile on your face." His father grits out. I can tell that Atticus was going to get an earful tonight.

Atticus takes my hand in his, and his warmth immediately spreads throughout my body.

The lights are suddenly dimmed, and a slow, romantic song begins to play in the background. I'm avoiding looking into Atticus's eyes; I know I'll melt the second I do. And I don't want to do that, not after he left me waiting while he took care of Anya.

He didn't have to rush to her side. His brothers could have taken care of her just as well. So why did he do that on our wedding day?

I'm surprised at my thoughts. I'm usually more understanding than this. I've never let my anger get the better of me. What was happening?

My eyes fall on our parents, "they're telling us to move closer to each other." Atticus says as he follows my gaze.

Closer? If we got any closer, I would lose all control and do something stupid like try and kiss him.

"Are you okay with that?" He asks as one of his hands slides up my back. I can barely hear what he's asking me with the loud pounding in my chest.

I slowly nod even though my mind screams for me to say no.

"Autumn." The concern in his voice forced me to look at him. Our bodies are much closer now, and his body heat is making my body do weird things.

He looks troubled, "today must not have gone how you expected it to. It was never my intention to make today worse than our engagement night. I'm sorry for everything. I'm not trying to hurt you. But when it concerns Anya, I act without thinking. I know it's probably the last thing a wife wants to hear, but I can't control it. Whenever she's in pain, I'm in more. I'm trying my best to stop it, but so far, I'm failing."

My heart feels like he'd just punched it. Hearing him say how much she affected him was even harder than seeing it happen in front of me. But I can't blame him for it. He's helpless, just like I am. She has his heart, and he has mine. I understood what he felt because I felt it too.

"You don't have to explain yourself to me. I understand what you're going through. I would be just as helpless if the man I loved was in pain." I confess.

His head snaps up at my words, "the man you love?"

Oh no. What the hell was wrong with me? Why would I say that to him? I wasn't thinking right.

"Autumn," he says in a strained voice, a tone I've never heard him use before. "Is there a man that you're in love with? Why didn't you say something before we got married? Why wait until now to tell me?"

I bite my lip as I try to search my stupid brain for an answer. I knew something like this would have happened when he brought our bodies closer together. It made me do dumb things, and this was an excellent example of that.

"No," I finally say. "I'm not in love with anyone. I was trying to explain that I would act the same way if I had someone I was in love with. That's all. I'm sorry for any confusion."

It was the biggest lie I've ever told.

Atticus doesn't look entirely convinced, but he does seem to loosen up a little bit.

"Thank you for being so understanding." He says after a few minutes of deep thought.

I nodded, but my heart was still in pain from his earlier words. It's always been like this; I've always had to suffer because of how much I loved him, seeing the man you love be so deeply in love with another woman was excruciating. Knowing that woman was willing to destroy your marriage to get him didn't help either. Atticus could give in to her one day, and then I'll be left with an even bigger broken heart than this.

There were many times I tried pretending like I didn't care about him, many times when I tried to forget about my feelings. It only came back stronger. Now that I was spending so much time with him and having conversations, it became harder to ignore what I felt.

Atticus's body suddenly tenses next to mine; it's only then that I notice Anya joining the dance floor with Damon. Shouldn't she be resting if she'd just fainted? Where is she getting the strength to dance?

Anytime Atticus showed any attention to me, Anya always showed up out of nowhere. She wasn't backing down. She was fighting for him even though he was now a married man. I didn't think that she would ever let him go.

Atticus loosens his hold on me, and before the song can even finish, he pulls me out of the dance floor with him.

"I just need a moment to clear my head." He apologizes as he disappears once more.

I look at Anya and am surprised when she looks at me as though she'd just won.

Won what exactly? Was this a game on who could get a reaction out of Atticus?

"You did well out there." My mother congratulated me. "The videographer must have gotten some good footage of the dance. If only that girl didn't come in and spoil the ending for everyone. She has no shame."

Anya was still on the dance floor with Damon, and people from the crowd were also joining in with their partners. I was glad the attention was away from me, at least for now.

"We are getting the yacht ready," Dante informs us. "I have the names of all the guests going to the island with us. If any guests are not in here, add them in now."

They were continuing the ceremony in one of the Fawns' many private islands. I knew this part of the ceremony was meant to be more intimate than the wedding. Only a selected few were invited.

Anya joins us suddenly with Damon by her side, "congratulations on marrying my mate." She tells me. There is no hiding the sarcasm in her voice.

"Thank you," I responded, even though I knew she wasn't trying to be kind.

"And will you be joining us on the yacht?" Clarissa asks. "I'm not sure if Damon told you, but there is minimal space. You may not be able to come with us."

"Clarissa," Damon growls in a warning,

"Don't you worry about me; my name is already on the list. My mate made sure that it was there." She looks at me while speaking, and it makes me wonder if she was implying that Atticus was the one that placed her name on the list.

"Well, good for you," Clarissa says with a fake smile. "Autumn, you're a part of our family now; you don't even need to be on the list."

I smile and hug her, "we should have been good friends a long time ago."

“Better late than never.” She grins. “And I can assure you that I will be a good friend, unlike certain people I’m forced to be around.”

Anya stares at her nails, pretending she isn’t listening to her, “has anyone seen Atticus?” She asks suddenly.

No one answers, and she looks around us, “should I go look for him? Maybe he needs me. This marriage has not been easy on him.”

“Autumn can do that.” Clarissa intervenes. “She’s his wife.”

Anya sighs, “and she’s the reason he’s already depressed. Sending her to look for him won’t make this easier on him. She will only make things worse. I know him more than anyone else. He needs me.”

Griffin joins us once more, and he must have heard her.

“Atticus is doing just fine. He doesn’t need you as much as you think. I just saw him. He’s organizing Autumn’s bag, packing it in his jeep, getting ready for tonight.” He informs her.

I’m not sure if he was lying or telling the truth. I guess I’ll find out if I found my bag in his jeep.

“I have a few friends I need you to add to the list.” He says to Dante, stopping Anya from saying anything else.

“A few friends?” Dante asks as he quirks a brow.

“Just Austin and his entire family. Including some of their friends. Nothing we can’t handle.” He answers him.

Dante sighs, “Are there any other guests we should know about?”

“No, sir!” Griffin teases him.

“Should we change in the yacht or right here?” I ask Clarissa.

She smiles, “it’s a tradition that Atticus picks you up in your wedding dress and carries you onto the yacht. We can change after.”

“It’s time to leave.” Atticus’s father announces suddenly. “We can’t reach the island late. They need to be in that spring by midnight.”

Spring?

What spring?

Before I can ask any other questions, my mother is rushing me towards the garage where Atticus is supposedly already waiting for

me.

Everyone starts moving so quickly that it's hard to keep up. And it's not just our families; everyone getting onto the yacht with us is getting into their vehicles and leaving as well.

As Griffin said earlier, we find Atticus near his jeep; I'm not sure if he's waiting for me. He looks so good, leaned up against the door staring down at the ground. He looks up when he hears us, and I try to keep a clear head.

The first thing I looked for was my bag, and Griffin was telling the truth; it was already here, waiting for me.

Atticus opens the door for me and even holds my wedding dress as I climb onto the jeep. His small gesture touches my heart. He didn't have to do that, but he was a gentleman. I gasped when he leaned into me and buckled my seatbelt. I can smell him. His perfectly styled hair, the smell of his cologne, and the scent that only he carried on his body.

It takes all my self-control not to lean closer and take a bigger whiff.

"Tonight may not be easy for you," he whispers.

What does he mean by that? He looks into my eyes as he continues to explain, "our traditions aren't the easiest for couples who aren't in love."

And what about couples where one person was in love, and the other wasn't? Because that was what we were, he didn't know it yet. And if I had a say, he would never find out about my feelings for him. I was too scared of how he would react if he knew the truth.

"What are you two still doing here?" My mother demands. "We're late."

Atticus pulls away from me before he could continue his explanation and walks over to the driver's side. Clarissa joins us in the backseat, and Atticus and I don't speak again after that.

I was curious about these traditions, however. Did it have anything to do with the spring his father had mentioned earlier? Or was he referring to the tradition Clarissa had told me about a few minutes ago? The one where he would have to pick me up and carry me onto the yacht. That wasn't something that would be too difficult for me to handle. It might make me fall more for him, but that wouldn't be any different from every typical day of my sad life.

“Why are you not with Damon?” Atticus asks his sister. “That was the car arrangement we made and agreed on just yesterday.”

“Anya was being ab***h as usual.” She snaps. “I still don’t understand why she was invited to such a private event. She spoils everything.”

Clarissa looked at me apologetically as soon as Anya was brought up. She realizes that reminding Atticus of her right now isn’t the best decision.

She doesn’t have anything to be sorry about. I couldn’t avoid conversations with Anya; she was too involved in everyone’s life not to be brought up. She wasn’t someone that could easily be ignored. The Fawn brothers loved her too much for that to happen. Well, not all of them, but enough to ensure she couldn’t be kicked out of the family.

“Don’t you think Autumn looked beautiful today?” Clarissa says. “I think she’s the most beautiful bride ever.”

Atticus glances at me, and the look in his eyes makes my belly do a little flip–flop. Did he agree with her? Did he also think I looked beautiful today?

He doesn’t respond, however, and Clarissa doesn’t try to bring that up again.

“We’re here!” Clarissa says with excitement. “It would have been the perfect night if someone wasn’t invited, but I’ll still try and make the most of it.”

“I know you have to pick me up and carry me into the yacht,” I tell Atticus; that was probably the tradition he was referring to earlier. “I’m not uncomfortable with it. It’s okay.”

He scratches the back of his neck, and I wonder if Atticus is nervous, that’s unlike him.

“It’s not the tradition that I was speaking about Autumn.” He informs me. “I’ll explain it to you in a bit.”

I nod even though it’s klling me, not knowing what he’s speaking about.

We all gather at the entrance of the yacht, and I try not to let my fear of water spoil this moment for me. It’s supposed to be special having Atticus lift me and carry me into the yacht. We would be the first to board it, other than the crew members.

Everyone around us begins to chant Atticus’s name as they wait for him to pick me up into his arms. He waits for my nod of approval, and the moment I do, he wraps his arm around me and picks me up bridal style.

Atticus looks straight ahead as he walks with me in his arms while everyone cheers behind us. I, on the other hand, can’t stop staring at his face. I wanted to pull myself

closer so that I could kiss his neck. I've never wanted to kiss it as much as I do right now at this very moment.

I didn't just want to kiss him there; I wanted to bite down hard on it as well, to leave my mark on him. My cheeks get red at the direction of my thoughts. What was wrong with me? Why was I thinking like this?

The drone is flying around us, and I blink at the flash from the many cameras around us. This was going to be all over the magazines tomorrow. Not to mention all the messages and videos that will be sent to my phone. I'm sure it was already blowing up. That's why! I decided to stay away from it tonight.

There are so many things I want to say to Atticus, so many things that I wish I dared to confess to him.

In a perfect world, I would confess my love for him, and he would tell me that he had loved me all along. I want to laugh at how ridiculously impossible that is.

Atticus stops walking, and this time I have no control over my body as I lightly touch his left cheek with my hand. His eyes narrow and turn dark as he watches me like a predator watches its prey. I gasped, unsure what to think of his reaction to me touching him. Was that good or bad?

The cheers get louder, and it's only then that I realize we are already on the yacht.

Atticus seems to realize the same time because he lets go of me so quickly that I almost fall.

I steadied myself and tried to act normal even though my heart threatened to explode.

Why couldn't I have more control over my own body?

I almost made a fool of myself. That wouldn't be anything new for someone like me. I was accustomed to doing that.

"Congratulations to the happy couple!" Everyone shouts. I noticed Anya in the crowd; she was the only one that wasn't happy for us. And she didn't try and hide her unhappiness.

I'm not the only one to notice it; Atticus also does. She also looks at him, and the longing I see in his eyes almost kills me on the spot.

I will never be able to get over him being in love with Anya. Never.

He even admitted to how much their lives and emotions were intertwined. It's something I'll never be able to compete with.

“Should we leave and change into different outfits now?” I ask Clarissa. I felt overwhelmed with all the attention and almost embarrassing myself for the hundredth time this month; I needed some time away from everyone.

“You don’t need to tell me twice,” Clarissa said as she linked our arms and guided me to the changing room.

“Did you see the look Anya gave you?” she asks as she shuts the door behind us. “I don’t know how you ever remained friends with her. To me, it always looked like she was jealous of you.”

“Anya jealous of me?” I ask. “She had no reason to be. She had everything.”

And to me, Atticus was everything.

“If I were you, I would stop trying to salvage your friendship with her. It’s not worth it. She seems like the type of girl that would pretend to be your friend and then backstab you.” She points out.

I knew that Clarissa was most likely right. Anya has always said things to hurt my feelings in the past; they’ve only gotten worse since I agreed to marry Atticus. I don’t think there was anything I could do now to make her change her mind about this entire situation.

Anya wasn’t going to make my marriage easy either; she was determined to break Atticus and me up. I saw it in her eyes; it wasn’t something she even bothered trying to hide from me.

“I should inform you of an important tradition in our family,” Clarissa says suddenly, breaking me out of my thoughts. “It happens when we arrive at the island.”

This is the second time this tradition was brought up. It must be a big deal if everyone kept trying to warn me about it. My curiosity had just doubled in seconds.

“Atticus mentioned it to me but was never able to explain what it was about,” I tell her.

“It’s supposed to be simple for newlyweds to do, but since you and Atticus are not in love, I know it’s going to be a little awkward for the both of you.”

Oh no, I didn’t like the sound of this. What exactly was this tradition that was supposed to be uncomfortable for us?

“There is a special spring found in the middle of the island.” She explains. “That island was purchased by the Fawns solely because of that spring. The myth is that whoever bathes in that spring with their partner at exactly midnight, completely naked, will never separate from each other for the rest of their life together. It’s supposedly true. It’s a

secret passed down for generations. And it's worked so far. At least that's what I've heard from Griffin."

N*ked? I didn't mind bathing in a spring with Atticus, but NOT COMPLETELY N*KED. Clarissa was right; for happy couples, that would be a special moment, but for Atticus and me, it would be t0rture.

I thought that I would be able to relax my mind and enjoy my time at the island, but now I understood that this entire wedding, from beginning to end, was going to t0rture me. It wasn't going to get any easier for us, just quite the opposite.