

Maddie didn't know what to say. She just stood there silently wishing she could bite back her words. But what did it matter? Her decision was made and it might not be his baby anyway. The silence was a poisonous presence in the room.

Virginia didn't mean to eavesdrop but they were shouting so loudly. She was afraid they would wake her husband and she didn't know if she could prevent him from interfering. The argument between Maddie and David seemed to be turning into something mean and vindictive. The words they were throwing at each other could never be taken back. She wasn't sure what to do. She wasn't sure if she wanted to hear any more of their angry, bitter words. Maybe they didn't belong together if they could hurt each other so much with their careless words. She stood still outside of the door seemingly glued to the spot. She felt an overwhelming sadness sweep over her.

Finally, in what seemed an eternity David turned around to face her. "A baby?" He asked incredulously. The anger in his voice seemed to have been replaced by a deep hurt. "Did you know you were having a baby before you left me?"

"First of all I never left you!" She shouted. "I told you I needed some time away from you to think about us. I needed to think about our relationship or whatever the hell it is we have, *had* together." She looked into his wounded eyes and she felt something pull at her heart. "No I didn't know I was pregnant when I left. I just found out tonight. That doctor you saw me with is the one who confirmed what I already was thinking for the last few days." Her voice softened. "I wasn't going out with him David. How could you think that?"

Virginia finally felt her feet move. The fight seemed to have reached its peak. She knew that tone in Maddie's voice and was hopeful they would start talking *to* each other instead of screaming *at* each other. She moved away from Maddie's room and made her way downstairs. She said a silent prayer that they would work things out.

David didn't know what to think. He was at a loss for words which was a rare phenomenon for him. He just stared at her with his probing eyes hoping to see inside her mind, her heart to see what she was really feeling. She could hide things so well.

"Say something David!" Maddie snapped. "Why are you just staring at me?"

David shook his head. "I was just trying to figure out what the hell you may be feeling. About me. About the baby." He shook his head again. "A *baby*?"

"Is that all you can say? A baby?" She snapped again. She hated that her anger was slowly draining away. She wanted to be angry. It was a safe feeling.

David ran his hand through his hair. "It's just I don't know." He couldn't help the half smile that was creeping up his cheek. A baby! He wanted her to know that he wanted to marry her. Wanted them to be a family. He was happy! Yes, happy! Now, she would have to come home with him.

"Why are you smiling? Why are *you* happy? It might not even be your baby." Maddie's voice was cold. She hadn't meant those words to come out so meanly but they sounded cruel even to her ears. She wished she could bite them back.

David's head snapped back. He couldn't believe she say the baby may not be his in such a cold, detached voice. "What?" It was all he could force out of his mouth which felt like it was filled with cotton.

Maddie sat on the bed. She looked up at him with blank eyes. She didn't want his pity or for him to feel he had an obligation to her or to the baby. "I told you. It might not be yours."

"But it might be *mine*." He flung at her. "I mean you were with Sam for one night. We were together a month and how many times did we do it during that month? Chances are it's mine."

She shook her head. "Chances? You know me better than that I don't take chances. You are off the hook Addison. I want nothing from you."

"Really?" David's voice was low; anger and hurt coated every word. "Well if it is mine sister you bet I'm gonna be there for him or her."

Maddie wouldn't meet his eyes. "I decided to stay here. Sell the agency and stay here." Her voice was so low David could barely hear her.

"What did you say?"

"You heard me."

“No, I couldn’t have. I thought you said you were going to sell Blue Moon and stay here. But you couldn’t have said that.”

“That’s exactly what I said David. I’m sorry but I think it is best for all of us.”

“All of us?” David didn’t believe she really believed that. He thought she loved him. Maybe he was wrong. “No, that’s not best for any of *US*.” He sat down next to her. “I love you Maddie.” David pushed a stray tendril of hair off her forehead.

“So why would you go with another woman if you loved me David?” Her eyes were wet with unshed tears. “I wanted to trust you.”

“Maddie you can trust me!” He wiped away with his thumb the tears that were falling from her eyes. “I regret what I did. I don’t know why. Maybe I wanted to get back at you. Maybe I wanted to see if I could forget you if I was with someone else.” He looked deep into her eyes. “I only felt worse after I did it. I missed you so much more. I want only you. I was stupid to try and get over you with another woman.” David saw the hope in her eyes.

“I don’t know.” Maddie didn’t want to forgive him so easily.

“Maddie, *I won’t go home without you.*”

“Oh really?”

“Really? If I have to I will pitch a tent in your backyard.” He smirked. “And I’ll hang my underwear on a clothes line to dry.” You wouldn’t want to embarrass your parents. You have to come home with me.

“I will have you arrested.” She told him half serious.

David pulled her into his arms. He was overjoyed when she didn’t pull away. “I will serenade you every night.”

“Oh no.” She told him flippantly. “The poor neighbors. My parents will have to move and leave town.”

David nodded. “See. That’s why you have to come home with me. I love you baby.” He kissed the top of her head. “I was miserable when you left. I missed you so much.”

“I missed you too David.” Maddie admitted in a small voice.

“Well here we are. Two people who missed each other.” David needed to ask her some questions. “Why did you leave Maddie?”

Maddie shrugged. “It was too much. I don’t know what you expected to happen between us David. Was it just for fun for you? I mean you said you loved me but you never talked about the future.”

“Maddie how could I ever bring up the future when all you said to me was that we need to make a pact that *it* never happened and I am not the type of man you are supposed to be with. What the hell was I supposed to do? And I told you I loved you. How could you think it was just fun and games for me? We’ve been friends and business partners for years. Why would I play with you like that? I thought you knew me better.” He shrugged. “What kind of man do you want to be with? Your doctor buddy? Luke Skywalker? Who?”

“This is all too much for me David.” She told him seriously. “I need to think.” She pulled away from him and stood up.

David wasn’t sure if he heard her correctly. *Think?* She *still* needed to think?

He looked up at her. “What are you saying?” His voice couldn’t hide the frustration and annoyance he felt inside.

Maddie began to pace around the room avoiding his eyes. Those eyes mesmerized her and she couldn’t think straight when she looked into them. “I’m saying that this is the biggest decision that I will make in my life! And this decision isn’t only affecting me! I have the baby to think of now.”

“I don’t understand. What the hell do you have to think about? It’s simple.” David jumped off the bed and stood in front of her.

She had to look at him. “Simple? No this isn’t simple. I can’t take the chance of making the wrong choice!”

“Wrong choice huh?” He shook his head. His voice was filled with contempt that he couldn’t hold in. “Guess that’s me huh. Well, Maddie.” He said slowly clipping each word. “You take your time. You think. But maybe honey one of your choices

will no longer be an option.” He threw her a look filled with disgust and annoyance as he fled the room.

"David please wait!" Maddie yelled after him as he fled her room and slammed her door.

Maddie fell back onto her bed. She could feel the tears falling on her face. What was she supposed to do? What was the right thing to do? She needed to make a decision. In less than 7 months she was going to have a baby. She needed to figure out things long before that day arrived. She knew in her heart she loved David more than anything in this world but she had so many doubts. She knew he was a good man; a wonderful man but could he make a good husband? He came all the way out here for me she thought. She never thought he would do that; show up on her parents' doorstep and beg her to come home. Could she look past what he did? She knew she was wrong to have snuck away in the middle of the night without even telling him she was going. But she knew he could have talked her out of going. He would have talked her out of leaving and she needed to get away. She needed time to clear her head and think. She had called him the next day to tell him where she was. She still remembered how David had sounded on the phone that day. He was so angry and hurt. She knew it wasn't fair to ask him not to call her on the phone. She knew it wasn't fair of her to expect him to wait for her without any promises that she would be coming home. David had been wrong to go with another woman but she reluctantly admitted to herself she understood why he had. She had practically driven him in to that woman's arms. Of course, David could have called her too. Sure, she told him not to call but when did he ever listen to her? She was feeling lonely and sad these past weeks without him. She wished he would have called her. Every time the phone rang she hoped it would be him but it never was. But now he was here. David had traveled over two thousand miles to see her. She thought about how sincere he looked when he told her he wouldn't go home without her. What a mess! Why didn't she just tell him that night in the laundromat that she needed a bit of space; that yes she loved him and wanted to work it out with him but needed time to think. She touched her stomach and smiled. She hoped with all heart that the baby was David's. She prayed that she would make the right decision for all of them. Maddie thought about their latest argument. Why couldn't they just talk to each other? Why did they always wind up in a screaming match? She didn't like all this arguing going on in her parents' house. She needed to apologize to them.

Alex didn't like all this arguing going on in his house. He was just about to walk out into the hall when Virginia returned to their room.

"Alex where are you going?"

"Where am I going? I'm going to put an end to this! Our daughter should not have to deal with a man who yells at her. Where are his manners? How was he raised? He is not right for our daughter and I'm going to tell him to leave her the hell alone!" He shouted!

"And you don't yell Alex? What are you doing now?" Virginia could tell by Alex's red face that he was furious." Alex please you don't know the full story. They need to work this out on their own. David loves our daughter and he is the right man for her. So they yell a little." Virginia gave a small laugh. "Ok. A lot but they are crazy about each other. David has been taken care of our daughter for three years now. He saved her from losing her home and convinced her to try a career that she loves. Maddie has told me more than you know over the years and I believe that man is the best man for her. You know I hate that Maddie lives so far away from us. I use to worry that she was all alone out there but once that young man came into her life I felt like she wasn't alone anymore." She stared at her husband. "Your daughter takes right after you. She is stubborn as hell. She is a thinker like you. And a door slammer. So don't blame David for having to shout to be heard over her."

Alex stared at his wife. He wasn't sure what to do. "Virginia. Just let me see if she's ok."

"Alex, she is fine! They're talking now. Just give them some time alone. They're fine."

"What? They are fine? Don't sound fine to me! Fighting? Arguing loudly? I doubt that Ginny. Do they do this all the time? "

"Everyone argues Alex. We have over the years many times haven't we dear?"

"I don't know." Alex shook his head. "No I'm sorry I don't like this yelling. They need to stop! I need to put my foot down."

Alex was about to open their bedroom door to leave. Virginia had to tell him about the baby to stop him.

"Alex please there is something else you need to know."

Alex stopped with his hand on the doorknob. "What should I know that could change my mind?"

"Maddie is having a baby."

That stopped Alex in his tracks.

"Did you say baby? Maddie is having a baby? David's baby? Then I really need to speak with my daughter and her young man! That young fella needs to do right by her!"

"Enough!" Virginia yelled this time. "It's complicated Alex."

"Doesn't seem complicated to me at all. You make a girl pregnant you do the right thing and marry her."

"Well, maybe David isn't the one who made her pregnant." Virginia said quietly.

Alex stared at his wife. "What are you trying to say?"

"Alex, Maddie told me it may not be David's baby."

Alex was shocked. "Are you saying my daughter sleeps around?"

Virginia shook her head. "No, not at all. Seems she had a visit from Sam Crawford."

Alex made a face. "I never liked that one."

Virginia laughed. "Me neither."

Alex walked back into the room and slumped on the bed. "So what do we do?"

Virginia went to her husband and put her arms around him. "We do nothing. Maddie and David need to work this out between them." She kissed the top of his head. "I know Maddie wants to talk to you and tell you. She will when she is ready. Go get dressed. I'm going to go start breakfast."

"Ok. Fine." Alex told his wife squeezing her hand. He knew Virginia was right and they needed to work it out together but it is so hard to butt out when your child's happiness is at stake. Alex shook his head and headed toward the shower.

What was I thinking coming outside David thought to himself? He was standing outside in sweatpants and a sweat shirt on the Hayes' deck overlooking their closed pool. It was freezing but David needed time to think about the bombshell Maddie just dropped on him. He thought the cold air would clear his mind and help him see things more clearly but it wasn't helping. He wasn't seeing things any straighter he was just cold. He breathed in the cold Chicago air. He looked around the nice size yard. Maddie grew up like a princess in a beautiful house and when he was a model she had the best of everything. And here I am. David Addison the kid from the working class end of Philly. Maddie grew up cherished by two parents. He grew up with an absent father and a kooky brother. He remembered before his mother died things had been different but soon as she passed away the family fell apart. His dad was hardly home and Richie was a kid himself. David realized he had practically raised himself. Suddenly, he wondered if he was good enough for Maddie. What could he offer her? But then David stopped himself. Hell yeah he was good enough. He was a man with a good heart who would do his damn best to be the greatest husband and father in the world.

David thought of the child who would soon enter this world. Was this child a part of both of them? He hoped she would give them a chance to be a family. Hell if she only told him that she needed some time to think. If she would have told him she wanted to work things out, he would never have looked at another woman. David knew he should have picked up the phone and called her but he was too proud. So instead he bedded another woman. He knew Maddie wanted reassurance that he would never stray if he was with her. He knew that she was the only woman for him and that he would never look at another woman for the rest of his life. Ok, maybe he would look but that was it. Now, he hoped she would give him the chance to convince her. They had to think about their baby. David knew there was no way in hell he wasn't going to see his kid every day of his life. He believed deep in his heart this baby was his. But even if it wasn't he would love this child cause it was a part of Maddie. He was sure of that. How much time did she need? He shivered from the cold. David walked back into the house through the back door into the kitchen where the smell of coffee and food cooking consumed his senses. He couldn't remember the last time he had eaten.

Virginia was at the stove cooking what looked like bacon and an omelet. Alex was sitting at the table drinking coffee and reading a paper. They both turned and looked at David when he walked back in the house.

"David what were you doing outside without a jacket? Oh my you must be so cold let me get you a hot cup of coffee." Virginia grabbed a cup and filled it with coffee and set it on the table. "Sit please David I have a ham and cheese omelet cooking and bacon too. Hope you are hungry."

David sat and nodded. "Thanks Mrs. Hayes. I mean Virginia." He poured cream and put two sugars in his coffee and stirred it.

Alex continued to read his paper.

Virginia placed dishes on the table and then her omelet and bacon.

"Please David don't be shy help yourself." Virginia smiled at him.

"Thanks I am hungry." David dug in. He started eating.

Alex made himself a plate but didn't say a word.

"I'm going to go upstairs and let Maddie know breakfast is ready." With that Virginia left the kitchen.

David was getting uncomfortable with the silence at the table. He wasn't sure if he should say something. Suddenly, he lost his appetite.

Alex looked over at David and decided to give him a chance. "Um David since we are still snowbound I was wondering if you could help with some minor things I need to do around the house today?"

David nodded. He was happy Maddie's father was talking to him. "Sure, of course. I would be delighted." David began to eat again as the two men made small talk.

Virginia stood outside Maddie's bedroom door and knocked. "Maddie may I come in?"

"Sure mom. Come in".

Maddie was lying on her bed watching a soap opera on TV but her mind wasn't really on the drama unfolding on the screen. She had her own soap opera to deal with in real life.

"Maddie do you still watch soap operas?"

Maddie laughed. "Not really mom. I don't have time for much TV in LA. But well I thought maybe if I could see how messed up their lives are I would feel better."

"Oh sweetheart your life is not messed up! Things will work out. You'll see." Her mother told her. Maddie wasn't so sure but she kept silent. Virginia motioned to her door. "Now come on downstairs I made breakfast. Your Dad and David already started eating and I don't know how much David eats so we better get back down there before it's all gone." Virginia chuckled.

Maddie shook her head. "No that's ok mom I'll pass on breakfast. My stomach doesn't feel much like eating yet."

"So just come and sit with us and talk."

Maddie shook her head. She just wanted to be alone. Why was it so hard for anyone to understand? "No mom really I'd like to stay here if that's ok."

"Maddie you can't hide out here forever. Didn't you and David talk and work things out? "

"We talked mom but I just need time."

Virginia was starting to get annoyed with her head-headed daughter. "Time? What's this time business?" Virginia pointed her finger at Maddie's belly. "Maddie don't wait around too long with this time nonsense. You need to start thinking of the baby."

"I am thinking of the baby mom. That's all I'm doing is thinking of this baby. What if the baby isn't David's? I don't want to get involved with Sam. I don't want him in my life. David says he'll be there for me no matter what but how do I know he won't change his mind?"

Virginia shook her head. "Maddie there are no guarantees in love. *In life*. You have to take a chance." Virginia didn't know why Maddie was so afraid of taking

chances. She had been like that since a little girl. "Maddie I don't think David would do that. Most men would run the other way if they thought the baby wasn't theirs. If David says it doesn't matter I believe him. In your heart who do you think the father is?"

"Well, I think it's a better chance it's David's baby since we uh..." Maddie's face turned red with embarrassment. "Well let's just say there is a much better chance the baby is David's child." She looked up at her mother. "And in my heart I feel it is David's." Maddie smiled. "But maybe it is just wishful thinking."

"No, Maddie you should always follow your heart dear." Virginia turned to the door. "I hope you change your mind and come down and join us but now I need to get back before your father comes up here looking for the both of us. "

"Thank you mom. You told daddy about the baby? "

Her mother looked her in the eyes and nodded. "Yes I did."

Maddie was ashamed. "What did dad say? Is he disappointed in me?"

"No, of course not. He is just worried about you. We both are."

Suddenly Maddie had a thought. "Wait Mom did you leave him alone with David? Are you sure he won't kill him?" Maddie looked worried.

"No dear I'm sure all is fine" Virginia laughed and held Maddie's hand tightly.

Maddie wasn't as sure. "Ok mom. Well tell them I wasn't feeling well with my stomach."

"Yes I will dear" Virginia kissed her daughter's cheek and left her bed room.

Maddie lay back down on the bed thinking about what her mom had said. She touched her stomach. She wished to whoever was listening to please let this baby be David's.

Virginia came back into the kitchen pleased to see Alex and David talking.

"Where is Maddie? Alex asked his wife. David looked up at Virginia to see her answer.

"She's not feeling well with her stomach. Morning sickness I presume." Virginia said as she sat down. "And by the looks of it it's a good thing I came back down when I did. I see the both of you have been enjoying breakfast." They all laughed together.

"Well for myself I can say that I'm not used to a home cooked breakfast or dinner for that matter." David laughed. "I'm lucky if I pick up a donut on the way to the office. And as for dinner and lunch it's mostly eat out or take in."

"I hope my daughter eats better." Virginia laughed.

David smiled. "Not much. Maybe a muffin instead of a donut but we've shared quite a few Chinese take outs and pizzas together when we were caught up with work at the office. And I think Maddie is more into frozen dinners than cooking." He chuckled.

"Well I hope she will change her habits now that she is pregnant with our grandchild." Alex remarked staring at David. David fidgeted. He still wasn't comfortable with the Hayes' stare.

Virginia patted David's arm. "Well I'm so glad you are here David. Just wait till dinner."

David smiled. "I can't wait!"

David and Alex started to work on some small projects around the house. David was a busy man. He changed light bulbs around the house, hung a few pictures, and other small things that Alex had no time to do. David also volunteered to shovel the mounds of snow outside the house. Alex told him they had a powerful snow blower to remove the snow as the two men trudged out to the front of the house. David shoveled the walkway to make a path while Alex used the snow blower. The two men made small talk during the day and seemed to forge a bond. David hoped he was making a good impression on Maddie's father.

"So anything else I can help you with Mr. Hayes?" David asked as they made their way back into the warmth of the house. It sure was cold.

"Oh no David. I think we are done here. Thank you for your help. Virginia was bugging me to do these things myself but I'm not as young as I used to be so. I appreciate your help son. Good to know you're handy."

David liked being called son. It made him feel like part of the family. Could he really be one day? He thought of the baby and wondered if Maddie would marry him? Hell what was he thinking? He didn't even know if she wanted him in her life and here he is thinking of getting married. Slow down Dave, he told himself.

Alex saw David was wool gathering. "So Virginia told me about the baby. I want you to know that I wasn't very happy to hear my daughter was having a baby without any husband in sight. I thought when I first found out that you weren't ready to live up to your obligations. But Virginia explained things to me and I understand that this might not be *your* obligation." Alex looked hard at David. "But from one man to another I can see how much you do love Maddie. I just hope you will do right by her. I don't want to see her hurt do you understand that? "

"Yes sir I understand. I would never do anything to hurt her." David gulped. "And yes I love her very much. All I've tried to do is take care of her and make her happy. And from one man to another." David looked at Maddie's father. "She hasn't always made it easy. But I love her. If she gives me a chance I will stand by her. Hell. I'd marry her tomorrow if she'd have me. But she still needs time to think. She thinks too much I think. You think?"

Alex laughed. "Yes I think I know what you are trying to tell me. And yes she may think too much but she is a good woman. And I think you two would make a fine couple." Alex patted David on the back.

"Yes, I do too." David scratched his head. "Now, if only she can see it too."

"I'm sure she does. She will. Now, son what do you say we take a lunch break and see what my beautiful wife has made for us?"

Maddie snuck downstairs to get some crackers for her upset stomach. She still wasn't feeling very well. Her morning sickness sometimes lingered throughout the day. It seemed to be better by early evening and she was usually able to eat dinner. She heard muffled voices and peeked into the garage and saw David and her father talking. She smiled. They weren't yelling and David was still standing and alive so that was a good sign but she wasn't ready to talk to either of them yet. She tip-toed into the kitchen grabbed a can of ginger ale and went back up to her room.

Later that afternoon Maddie was awakened by a knock at her door. She sat up and looked at the clock and couldn't believe she had almost slept the day away. She

hoped it wasn't David coming to see if her thinking was done. He wasn't very patient. "Come in."

Maddie wasn't that surprised to find her father at the door. She had been wondering when he would come to talk to her. "Daddy" Maddie said simply looking shy almost like a little girl.

Alex walked over to his daughter sat down on her bed and enveloped her in a big bear hug.

"Oh Daddy you always gave the best hugs to make me feel better."

"I can't believe my little girl is having a baby of her own."

"I'm not so little anymore daddy. I'm almost 37 years old." She looked up at her father.

"Yes I know that but I just wish you may have planned it a bit differently."

"Daddy I didn't plan this. But I am happy that it happened."

"Oh Maddie don't get me wrong. Your mother and I are thrilled to finally know we will be grandparents. Now, my girl you have to do what's best for that little one you are carrying. And I think I know who will make you happy and take care of you and my grandchild."

"You do?"

"Yes I do. I believe David is a good man. He loves you very much. It's obvious how much he loves you. I really believe he will make you happy if you give that young fella a chance. And if he doesn't he knows he will have to deal with me." Her father let out a laugh.

"Oh Daddy I am so confused. I know David probably isn't who you imagined I'd end up with but I do love him."

"Maddie I hope you didn't keep him at arm's length because you didn't think we would approve of him? Why wouldn't we approve of him? He is a decent hard-working man who truly loves you. That is all we have ever wanted for you; someone who loves you and will make you happy. Do you think that we are snobs? I'm

sorry if you thought that. I want you to be happy and if David makes you happy then we are happy too.” Alex kissed Maddie on her forehead. “Now stop hiding out in this bedroom and come out and spend time with that boy ok? I'm sure he's anxious to talk to you and well I'm sure he's hoping I don't have any more projects up my sleeve. I can tell you he is very handy to have around.” They both laughed.

"Ok I will. I just needed some....."

"*time.*" Maddie and her father said together and laughed again.

Alex headed for the door. “Just don't take too much more time. Ok?”

Maddie nodded thoughtfully as she watched her father leave her room.

Maddie was happy that her parents loved David. Suddenly, she remembered the dream she had while she had napped.

She dreamed of a happy family. The family of four was playing in the park laughing, filled with happiness. At first she could only see a little boy of about three being pushed on a swing by his dad. The young boy was screaming with glee as the father laughed with him. The mom was walking with a little girl with blonde pig-tails who looked to be about a year and a half old. The little girl was toddling along as the mom smiled down at her. She saw the mom look up and smile with love at her husband. Maddie realized the couple was her and David. She woke up with a start but filled with hope.