

Chapter Twenty-Five



Ice

Just like most girls, I have always imagined what my wedding will be like—the church will be decorated in everything white except for the carpet which will be in red and littered with flowers; I'll be wearing a strapless pearl and diamond encrusted gown with a veil that's lacy and long which will trail behind me as I walk towards my groom. My groom will be wearing a black tuxedo in contrast to my all-white motif. Dad will walk me to the altar and we will be smiling happily as the orchestra plays the Wedding March.

“Do you, Irina Ysobel Tan Samonte, accept John Fitzgerald Kennedy Fournier Zamora, as your lawfully-wedded husband?” the judge, who's also my godfather, asked and I looked at my groom - he was wearing a dark gray cargo shorts, a red shirt that says ‘Too Hot To Handle’ and a red *Skechers* loafers.

“Oh my God, are we really doing this?” I whispered.

It's almost funny how Dad, who's not a fan of my boyfriend, seemed so eager to marry us off.

“Tinatanong ka ng Judge o, nakakahiya naman talagang ire-reject mo ako sa harap ng family ko?” I heard John say and I noticed for the first time how nervous he looked.

It was as if he expected me to throw a tantrum and ruin the wedding.

Itong boyfriend ko talaga di mo maintindihan. Kung ako ang lalaki, tumakbo na ako as soon as I got the chance.

But John is not just my boyfriend, he has become my best friend and number one fan who's a good kisser and who has

mastered the art of making me fall for him harder everyday.

My Prince Charming who rides a Ferrari instead of a horse. I thought.

“I do. I’ll take him,” I replied and I nearly laughed at how relieved he looked.

Someone looks excited for his wedding night, I thought and blushed. *What the hell, wedding night? Surely, he will not demand for a wedding night, right? Right?!*

“Do you, John Fitzgerald Kennedy Fournier Zamora, accept Irina Ysobel Tan Samonte as your lawfully-wedded wife?”

“I do,” John replied smiling and I suddenly felt shy.

Why do I have the feeling that I’m going to get screwed tonight? Literally, I mumbled to myself as we were pronounced husband and wife.

“Irina,” he whispered and I looked at him. “Ayan, pwede na, ha.” My hunch was confirmed.

Sabi ko na, I thought.

“I officially welcome you to the family, Iha,” John’s mom said as she hugged me close. “Don’t worry, we will have a grand wedding for you and JFK.”

“Thank you po,” I replied as I hugged her back. She felt my stomach and got teary-eyed and I felt very guilty. “Hindi naman po talaga ako buntis.”

She shook her head. “Poor baby, you must be in shock, sixteen and pregnant. But don’t say those kind of things, Iha, kasi kawawa naman ang apo ko. You have to take extra care, do not stress yourself out,” she said and I just nodded my head in defeat.

Ano ba to, wala man lang naniniwalang di ako buntis? Mukha ba akong buntis? I grumbled. “Son, come here,” she called John and he moved closer to us. “Do not give your wife something that

will trouble her, ha. Mahirap ang magbuntis. I remember when I was pregnant with you, the slightest provocation would bring me to tears!”

“I’ll take care of her, Mom,” John replied smiling as he put his arms around me.

Everyone congratulated us as we went around to shake their hands - which was a lot kasi lahat ng katulong at staff sa bahay ay witness. John steered me to the right and I came face-to-face with Dad.

I didn’t know but I felt like crying when I saw his face. I didn’t notice earlier that he looked older than the last time I saw him, I didn’t notice that there were lines of stress along his mouth and brows and I didn’t notice that there were gray hairs near his temple. He stared at me and my eyes instantly watered so I looked the other way. John took the initiative and bowed his head before he took Dad’s hand and touched it to his forehead.

“Mano po,” he said and Dad looked surprise.

He hesitantly put his hand on top of John’s head. “Kaawaan ka ng Diyos,” he whispered.

“Magmano ka,” John whispered against my ear and I followed suit. But he didn’t say ‘kaawaan ka ng Diyos’ just like what he said to John instead, he cupped my face with both his hands before he pinched my nose. Just like what he used to do when I was younger.

“Irina, Irina, Irina...” he said and I tried to blink my tears away. “Such a rebel.” There was no anger in his voice, only *regret*. He sighed before his hands fell to his sides. “May pasok kayo bukas?” He directed the question at John and proceeded to ignore me.

“Meron po,” John replied and he nodded his head and left. He stopped after a few paces and turned to look at my husband.

“Welcome to the family,” he said before he turned on his heel to leave.



I left with John’s family after a few hours. We were both quiet as we drove home. I suddenly miss Dad and I regretted a little that I chose to live with the Zamoras during weekdays. I had thought then that seeing Dad everyday, if I chose to live with them, would be uncomfortable considering that I was supposed to be pregnant.

“Want to watch a movie?” John asked and I glanced at him.

“No,” I replied with a sigh.

It felt surreal. I am married. I was quickly married off. It was so quick that I don’t even have a ring on my finger. I looked at my left hand.

“Irina, ano yun? You can talk to me,” John said and I suddenly burst into tears. He quickly stopped the car and signaled for his parents to go ahead when they stopped too.

“It’s so bizarre. You, me, being married. Look at us, mukha ba tayong bagong kasal? It’s so heartbreaking that Dad loathes me so much that he won’t even believe me even if I told him the truth,” I said sobbing. “Am I so hateful that my family would rather marry me off than believe me?” I cried and he moved his seat back.

Without being told, I unsnapped my seatbelt and crawled to him to sit astride his lap. Instantly, his arms wrapped around me.

“Dad’s too much.” I wept.

“Shh...” he said as he hugged me to his chest. “Kahit ako ang nasa lugar ng Dad mo at yung anak kong babae ay nagsabing buntis siya, I would probably magically acquire a nuclear bomb and threaten to blast the guy off the face of the earth kung di

niya pananagutan ang anak ko. Your Dad's reaction was very normal and natural, Irina," he mumbled as he soothingly ran his hand up and down my back.

I cried for a few more minutes hating my Dad. But what John said made sense.

"I'm so pissed at him right now for cheating me out of my dream wedding but you're right, his reaction was normal," I replied finally calming down.

"Well, I will give you your dream wedding, but for the meantime, please make do with marrying the man of your dreams," he said with a wink and I laughed as he wiped my tear-stained face with the back of his hand.

"Ang lakas!" I said and he laughed. "Grabe ang lakas ng hangin."

"Ayaw mo bang makasal sa akin?"

I frowned. "Sa guwapo mong yan, akalain mo, may insecurity ka pa pala sa katawan?" I teased and he chuckled.

"Gusto ko lang malaman," he replied seriously after a minute.

"I want to be your wife although that wish was granted a couple of years early."

He chuckled me under the chin. "We'll make the best of it, okay?" I nodded my head. "I love you," he whispered.

"I love you too," I replied before I leaned forward to kiss his lips.

He laughed softly before he kissed me back. He looked amused when we parted for air.

"Are you feeling better now, Mrs. Zamora?" he asked smiling.

"Yes," I replied.

"Good. Kasi kanina pa tayo pinagtitinginan ng mga

neighbors n'yo," he said and I looked around and found people I know and grew up with, staring at us. "Although baka guwapong-guwapo lang sila sa akin kaya sila nakatingin," he joked as I immediately scrambled to go back to my seat to snap my seatbelt in place before we laughingly drove off.



When we arrived, John said he had to run an errand for his Dad and immediately left. Their house staff congratulated me on my wedding and they even managed to bake a small, white heart-shaped cake for me. I ate dinner with his parents and politely participated in their conversation.

"Iha, are you feeling ill?" his Mom asked and I shook my head. "Ayaw mo ba yung pagkain? You've been pushing the food around your plate for the past ten minutes. Ano'ng gusto mong kainin at ipagabili ko?"

"Ay, hindi po. Masarap po ang food," I replied with a smile. "Anong oras po babalik si John?" I asked and they smiled knowingly.

"Hon, ang sweet! Di makakain si Irina kasi wala ang asawa niya," his mom chortled and I blushed.

"Hindi naman po sa ganun..."

"Naku, Iha, that's okay. Pinagdaanan ko yan. You have nothing to be ashamed of. If you want, you can go ahead tapos sabay na lang kayong kumain ni JFK mamaya pagdating niya," she added and I politely excused myself.

Ano ba to, di naman ako buntis, pero parang pinaglilihian ko yung boyfriend ko, I thought to myself as I headed to my bedroom. *Asawa pala, di pala boyfriend,* I amended in my head.

Shucks, asawa. May asawa na ako. Kaloka.

I decided to take a bath because I love taking baths. Mommy used to say that I may be a fish in my past life. I was too lazy to

blow my hair dry so I decided to lie down and have it hang on the edge of the bed. I didn't realize that I had fallen asleep until someone kissed me awake.

"Let's have dinner, sleeping beauty," he said as he nuzzled my neck. I pulled his head up and kissed him on the cheek.

"Bakit ang tagal mo?" I asked as I wrapped my arms around his neck and he grinned.

"Miss mo agad ako?" he teased kissing my forehead.

"Ayaw mo?"

"Syempre gusto." He got off me and gently pulled me to my feet. "Kain na muna tayo, baka malipasan ka ng gutom."

I left him for a minute to wash my face and brush my teeth.

"San ka nagpunta?" I asked as we took the stairs.

"Nang-chicks," He replied and I shrugged.

"Buti na lang. Na-guilty ako kanina kasi I was flirting with Dave, at least, nang-chicks ka naman pala kaya patas lang," I answered nonchalantly and he stopped walking.

"Di ako natuwa sa sinabi mo." He stared at me.

"Ako ba mukhang natuwa sa sinabi mo?" I replied arching my brow.

"Bawiin mo," he grumbled. "Bawiin mo yung sinabi mo."

"Aba, ikaw kaya nauna tapos ako ang babawi?"

"Sorry, binibiro lang kita kanina," he replied quietly like an errant boy and I laughed.

"Sorry, natulog lang talaga ako kanina and besides I won't flirt with anyone but you," I said but he didn't look pacified.

"Sorry na."

He continued to frown.

"Bigyan kitang all-access pass mamaya but you have to smile in 3, 2, 1. Wala na nag-expire na," I flippantly said and he stared at me in surprise. "Better luck next time." I said as I continued

to walk down the stairs.

“Teká, I was caught off-guard!” he complained. “Ulít, ulít!”

“Wala ná,” I retorted when we reached the last step.

“Ayoko nang kumain,” he grumbled but continued to follow me to the dining room.

I couldn’t help but smile as he pulled a chair out for me.

“Thank you,” I replied but he continued to mope. “Wag kangang sumimangot, baka akalain ni Manang Lina ayaw mo luto niya.”

“All-access pass!” ungot niya.

“O siya, síge. Limited offer. Ten minutes,” I said.

“Ten minutes? Ano yan?”

“Fine! Twenty,” I replied.

“Twenty-four,” he answered seriously.

Tumawad ka pa, four minutes lang pala. Sheesh.

“Sure,” I said.

“Twenty-four hours. Walang bawian,” he answered grinning. “Plus the timer stops when we’re sleeping, in school, traveling, eating, studying or doing something else,” he added victoriously.

“Nahiya naman ako sa timer, ano to chess? So ibig sabihin, yung timer gagana lang pag nasa kama tayong dalawa?”

Wow, ang perv nitong pinakasalan ko.

“Parang ganun na nga. Payag ka na.” He grinned.

“Nakakahalata na talaga ako sayo, katawan ko lang talaga habol mo!” I said scowling. “Siguro di mo talaga ako mahal!” I teased but his expression changed and he grew serious.

“Síge, wag na,” he said sighing. “Kain ka na. Sorry.”

We ate dinner in silence and it was very awkward, I wished I had eaten dinner earlier. He finished his dinner ahead of me but he waited for me to finish. We walked towards the stairs without saying a word to each other. I went inside my room and

he went inside his.

Ano ba to, ako nga tong ide-devirginize niya, tapos ako pa daw yung nagi-guilty. Badtrip! I grumbled as I took another bath and brushed my teeth.

When I got out of the bathroom he was already inside, sitting on my bed and leaning against the headboard waiting for me. I self-consciously tightened my bath robe around me.

“Done sulking?” I joked and he just smiled. I waited for him to say something but he just stared at me. “Umm... Ano yun?” I asked and he motioned for me to move closer to him. “Um... Kailangan ko munang magbihis.”

He shook his head. “Di na, di naman kita gagahasain. May ibibigay lang ako sayo,” he said and suddenly an image of a naked John flashed in my head.

Wait, di naman siguro yung katawan niya ibibigay niya sa akin, di ba? I nervously thought as I moved slowly towards him. I sat on the edge of the bed and he comically arched his brow.

“Closer,” he said and I followed as I scooted close to him. He sighed before he pulled me into his lap.

Teka lang naman, wala akong suot na kahit ano! I thought in panic.

“Bakit ka namumula?” he asked. “It’s not as if ngayon ka lang kumalong sa akin. Kung kelan tayo kasal, tsaka ka naman nahihiya?” he kidded.

“Kasi wala akong suot na kahit ano,” I told him. “Itong robe lang. Gets?” I said and he blinked.

“Wala kang kahit anong suot?!” he exclaimed as his eyes roved from my head to my toe.

“Oo, kaya kung may sasabihin ka, bilisan mo naman.”

He groaned. “Ano ka ba naman, Irina, nawala tuloy yung sasabihin ko. Why do you have to say that?”

“Didn’t you ask?” I retorted. “Besides, halata bang galing ako sa shower? Alangang isuot ko chastity belt ko dun?” I mumbled and he laughed. “O siya, ano’ng sasabihin mo?”

“Cute mo talaga.” He pulled something from under the pillows. It was a small box that says ‘Cartier.’

Hmm... I thought as he opened the box.

In it were three rings; two of the rings were similar except that one was bigger. He took the third ring first and slipped it into my left hand’s ring finger.

“Engagement ring mo, kahit di tayo dumaan sa engagement. I cannot ask you if you’ll marry me instead, I can say thank you for marrying me.” It looked almost similar to the two rings inside the box except for the lone, large diamond adorning it. “I wanted something simple so you can wear it everyday, baka pag flashy, ayaw mo nang suotin.”

I was tongue-tied so I just nodded my head. *Naman, ang sweet, sweet mo! Gosh, made-devirginize nga yata talaga ako ngayon.*

“Do you like it?” He sounded so unsure that I felt my eyes water. I was touched.

“Yes, I like it. A lot,” I murmured. “Thank you.”

“Good to hear,” he replied.

Grinning like a little boy and that instant, I realized that it didn’t matter if I got married early or late or whenever, as long as I’m married to him. I cupped his face and kissed him and he sighed and kissed me back. We parted for air and he cleared his throat. I questioningly arched my brow when he looked anxious.

“What is it?” I asked.

“I’m not much of a poet,” he answered. “I’m not sure if I’ll be able to express what I wanted to tell you but I hope you’ll see beyond the spoken words and the stutter.” He cleared his throat again. “I wish I was able to propose to you because you deserve

being proposed to, I wish I was able to give you your dream wedding because I know you are entitled to the grandest one I could give, and I'm sorry that didn't happen. I want you to know however, that regardless if we were married by a judge and not by a priest; regardless if you were wearing your denim shorts and not your lovely wedding gown, the value of being united in matrimony with you does not diminish. I want you to be my wife, Irina, regardless of the time, place and circumstances," he muttered as he slipped the wedding band into my ring finger. "Sorry, medyo nauna ang kasal kesa singsing," he apologetically added.

When he said he was asked to do an errand, he went out to buy a ring? Waaaah! Ang sweet mo! Okay, fine my hymen is yours to take!

He expectantly looked at me and I realized he must have been waiting for me to slip the other ring into his finger while I was thinking about giving him my hymen.

I reached for the box and took out the last ring.

"I love you," I started to say. "Not because you're smart, funny and you smell so freaking nice that I want to burrow my nose on your neck forever." He laughed. "I love you not because you're so goodlooking, hot and sexy as hell, that I sometimes have these weird thoughts of you running naked in my head," I added and stopped.

What the freak, Ice?!

He looked stunned as I blushed from the roots of my hair down to the tips of my toes.

"Go on, we've just reached the good part," he teased as he made me sit astride his lap.

"I love you because you're perfectly made to love me. I love you because as imperfect as I am, I feel perfect when I am with you. I love you because this heart wouldn't beat for anyone else

because it's in complete rhythm with yours. I love you because 'I love you' didn't mean anything to me until you came," I said.

He stared at me for a second before he pulled me towards him for a kiss.

"Alam mo bang mahal na mahal na mahal kita?" he asked when we parted for air and I just nodded my head.

I suddenly felt hot all over that I was nearly panting as his hand blazed a trail from my stomach to the curve of my hip.

"Alam mo bang yung kamay mo nasa loob ng robe ko?" I breathlessly whispered against his ear as I sagged against him.

One of his hands moved up and traveled to cup my breast while the other slid lower into my thigh. *Shit*, I inwardly groaned as I made a move to get off him. He thwarted my action by rolling over and pinning me beneath him. I stared at him in a mixture of excitement, surprise and want.

"Alam mo bang di ako papayag na walang mangyayari sa atin ngayon?" he whispered as he moved to untie the knot holding my robe together. "Di ba, sabi ko sayo, akin ka?" he murmured before he lowered his head to claim my lips.