Snatched Groomsman

by andlat

A missing flower girl is a bonafide wedding emergency

The Costume Box
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Chapter 1

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“Great to see you, Timmy. Oh, sorry. It's Tim now?”

“Yeah, Tim.” Tim agreed, still returning his cousin James's fist bump.

“Excited?”

“Can't be more excited than you!” Tim replied, chuckling. James was the groom after all and he was just a groomsman.

“Excited, nervous, freaking out, all of the above.” James said with a chuckle. He had always been Big Cousin James, but had never really held his twelve years over Tim. “Suits are in the other room, uh Kevin!” He waved another cousin over. Kevin was barely even two years older than Tim, but he was a senior while Tim was a mere freshman thanks to skipping a grade. “Can you show Tim” he emphasized Tim as if still getting used to it. *I changed it to Tim like a year ago! *“Where the suits are? Figured you'd be heading there yourself.” He eyed Kevin's casual clothes pointedly.

“Yeah, yeah. Let's get ready, dude.” Kevin patted Tim's back in greeting and then led the way. “Have you met Sophia?”

“She's the one I'm walking with, right?”

“Yeah.” Kevin waggled his eyebrows.

“Yeah, we kinda chatted last night at the groom's dinner.” Tim said. “Maybe I'll get her number by the end of the night.”

“You dog.” Kevin teased. They kept chatting as Kevin led the way to the side room that had been designated for the groomsmen. A woman ran by, trying her hardest to hide how panicked she was, but they were too busy chatting to notice her stop and stare at Tim as if trying to recognize him.

“So, yeah. Suits are right here.” Kevin said. “You got measured and all that?’

“Months ago. Mom was so worried I'd grow before the wedding, she kept measuring me and calling the tailor.” Tim laughed.

“You didn't though.” Kevin said, eyeing him up. Tim shrugged. He had been a little self-conscious about it, but he wasn't even close to the shortest boy in his class.

“Doctor says it's nothing to worry about.”

“Sure.” Kevin laughed. “You got armpit hair, right?” Tim snorted.

“Totally.” Kevin chuckled.

“Ok. Anyway, we better get ready.” He undid his belt right there. Tim felt his face grow a little warm. He had not realized he would be changing with Kevin. Sure, they were cousins and did it a lot, but…

“I'm gonna go piss real quick.” He said, quickly rushing away. He had seen a bathroom on the walk here and it would

at least buy him some time.

Leaving the bathroom, he still did not have a plan. Kevin should have changed by now, so maybe he could send him on a quest or something? He just didn't really want his coolest cousin to know about his-

“There you are.” A hand fell on his shoulder. He turned, expecting some aunt or other relative. He had never seen the woman before in his life.

“Uh, hi?”

“Yes, hi.” She said. “You've been playing hide and seek all day. We need to get you ready.”

“Uh, I was just about to go to the room. My cousin Kevin-” The woman was not listening. She grabbed his hand and began to pull him along.

“We should still have time, but we need to hurry.”

“The wedding's not for hours!” Tim protested. “Do I even know you?” It felt rude, but this woman was holding his hand and pulling him. “My suit's the other way.”

“I do not have time for games, young lady.”

“Young lady?”

“Yes.” She said, pushing open a door and bringing him inside. “Found our wayward flower girl.” He looked around the room at female face after female face.

“Flower girl!?”

“Inside voice, Isabella.” The woman said. “Let's get her ready.”

“I am not the flower girl!” Tim proteste as at least half a dozen women came toward him. “My name is Tim, I'm a grooms-” his mouth filled with cotton as his shirt went up in the same instance that his pants were tugged down.

This had to be a nightmare. Not even five minutes ago, he had been worried about his cousin seeing his tighty whities. Now he was in nothing but them in front of a small crowd of strange women.

“You have to listen to me!” There was a slight whine to his voice.

“We don't have time for games, Isabella.” He felt a swat on his butt.

"Games?” They maneuvered him into a chair as his arms were raised for a lacy camisole. “I'm not a little girl! Look, I have hair in my pits!” They did not seem to notice and they definitely did not care as white tights were pulled up his legs and he was yanked back up to his feet.

“Bring the petticoats, Em. I've got the dress in this bag here.”

“Seriously! Someone listen to me!” For the second time in what felt like mere seconds, Tim's mouth filled with fabric as petticoats descended over his head, followed impossibly closely by the dress itself.

“Oh, for cute!” One of the women gushed as the dress settled

on the embarrassed teen's frame.

“Isn't it just? White to match the bride, of course, but the pale yellow on her sash matches the bridesmaids.” Tim felt someone zip the dress up as the sash tightened around his waist.

“Is this some kind of joke?” He demanded. “I'm a fifteen year old boy! I'm one of the groomsmen!”

“You can play for a bit after we've gotten you all dressed, Isabella.”

“That's not my name!” He screamed, but they just chuckled.

“She's going to be a hit.”

“Isabella, I need you to be good. We’ve got to do your hair and makeup yet, but I promise we’ll make you look like the perfect little princess. I just need you to promise to be a good little girl.”

“Little girl? Beth, she’s in first grade. She’s a young woman! Aren’t you, Isabella?”

“My name is Tim Beckett, I’m fifteen and I am a guy.” He said as they pushed him toward a waiting salon chair. He realized no one was actually holding onto him. He spotted a slightly ajar door. This was his chance! He took off as fast as he could, but once he hit the tile on the far side of the room, his feet in their tights slipped out from under him and he began to stumble, the dress restricting his stride. He waved his arms to catch his balance and his wrists were grabbed.

“No, no, no!” He yelled as he was dragged back to the salon chair.

“Normally the rope doesn't come out until the wedding night.” One of the women remarked to raucous laughter as Tim’s wrists were tied to the chair.

“There’s no reason to be afraid of makeup, Isabella.” A woman patted his cheek. He did not know who any of these ladies were! “In a few years, you’ll be begging Mommy to let you try hers.”

A barber’s cape was thrown over Tim, hiding the horrible dress from sight. Then they attacked his face just as a handful of hairbrushes hit his scalp.

Tim kept trying to turn away, but any direction he went, his face was poked and prodded. Every time he got a glimpse in the mirror when two women happened to move in just a way to clear his line of sight, he realized they were making him look nothing like himself. He looked every bit like a little girl.

“Please!” He begged, but the closest thing to acknowledgement was a hand squeezing his cheeks to force his lips to pucker so they could be slathered with pink lipstick. “I’m a groomsman!” He mumbled.

“I'll have to keep this in mind the next time I need to do my girls’ nails! Isabella can't ruin her nail polish when she can't even move her hands!” The room echoed with laughter. Tim could not even see his hands, but he knew it couldn't be good. What was he going to do? Would Kevin help or die from

laughter? He couldn't go through with being the flower girl! There had to be two hundred people coming and he didn't want even one to see him like this!

“Alright, Isabella, hold very, very still for your hair extensions, kay?”

“Seriously! My name's Tim Beckett! I'm one of the groomsmen!” His head felt heavy as they ignored his futile pleas and added hair extensions. Mom had insisted he get his hair cut for the wedding and now they were making it longer than it had ever been. Why were they not listening? Why did they think he was a little girl! He wasn't even short for his age, let alone short enough to be mistaken for a little kid! Hadn't they said the real flower girl was in first grade?

“I think she's all set!” Tim felt as if he was a million miles away as he felt the barber's cape unbutton. One of the women whisked it off him with a dramatic flourish and it was as though he was seeing the dress he wore again for the first time. What was he going to do? The wedding was any minute now. How could he fix all this?

His now long hair hung down, framing a perfectly made up face with pink lips in a perpetual pout. His fingers with their expertly painted nails trembled against the skirt of his white dress, the petticoats pushing it out around him in all directions. He pushed down on it just enough to spy the shiny black shoes he wore, mostly open except for a black strap that crossed yellow socks with large white lace frills on the cuffs. His knees felt weak as they rubbed against each other,

reminding him of his tights. Layer upon layer of femininity covered the only masculine article of clothing he still wore. In every way other than his height, Tim looked like the quintessential flower girl.

“I wish all my clients teared up when they saw how beautiful they looked!”

“We'd better get her where she needs to be.”

“No.” Tim said, finding his voice. “I… you… you can't do this!”

“This is a very important day and we cannot have you ruining it with temper tantrums. So I want you to promise to be a good little girl, okay?”

“I am not a girl!” Tim protested as they pushed him along. “I am a fifteen year old boy! My name is-” his voice failed him as he saw the groomsmen a short distance away. He made a sound like a squeak. Did he call for help? Did he try to hide? What was the best thing to do? Would they even recognize him or would they, like his captors, see only a little girl? “Hey!” He managed just as the last of them disappeared into another room. He was stuck. In a dress, in tights, as a girl.

One of the few pluses of being perceived as a little girl was he was able to stand shyly in the corner, staring ahead. This was so unfair! He was supposed to be wearing that suit that made him feel like a secret agent, but instead he was wearing a dress and makeup, clutching a basket of flower petals! He almost felt jealous of the bridesmaids. Their dresses were

more simple, more mature than his, but he knew just enough about hair to know that their updos had probably taken a tortuous amount of time.

The groomsmen came back in and Tim stared down at his feet before realizing what a mistake that was, reminded once again of his nails, his dress, his shoes. He returned to staring ahead, but tried to avoid Kevin's gaze once he spotted his cousin among the sharply-dressed men. Kevin scanned the group of women, his eyes crossing over Tim multiple times without recognition as he searched for someone. Kevin walked over and struck up a conversation with Sophia. He's gonna get her number before me! Tim realized, but what could he do? Dressed how he was, there was no way he was going to go over and reveal his ordeal to Kevin. He felt his chest tighten as he realized he was trapped and would almost certainly just have to play the part of a happy little flower girl.

Rather than anyone announcing it was time to line up, there was a general buzz in the air. Tim only had enough time to contemplate escape before he found himself gently nudged to the back of the line.

“You'll be second to last, Isabella. The last one before the bride!” Her tone made it seem like an enormous honor. Tim felt like he might be sick.

“Try not to upstage her.” One of the bridesmaids teased. Tim stuck his tongue out at the back of her head.

Earlier that day, he had thought he would be able to get Sophia's phone number. Now as Kevin walked down the aisle

with Sophia on one arm and Madysen on the other, all he could do was stand there numbly in his flower girl dress, his fingers with their painted nails wrapped around the basket of flowers, waiting for his turn to go.

As the music began to play, he became aware of a mass of white duchess satin brushing the back of his legs. He turned and looked right at the bride.

“Sorry, still trying to get the hang of this-” she looked up and right at him. “You're not- Oh! It's your turn, sweetie!” Tim wanted nothing more than to stay, his heart racing as he realized the bride knew he was not the flower girl, but he found himself pushed forward, being reminded to smile big and throw his petals and be a pretty little girl. Forcing a smile on his face, Tim took his first step down the aisle.