

Emily's Perspective

My mother and I went to dress store after dress store.

Each one tailored to a very specific clientele – namely those who were about to tie the knot. Wedding dresses surrounded us in each of the stores we visited. Some stocked dresses for bridesmaids, some had suits and tuxedos for men. But all of them were stacked full with elegant and expensive wedding dresses.

The last one on the list was smaller than most of the others, barely more than a display room with white-clad mannequins lining the walls. There were two small changing rooms, a counter with a cash register. But, other than that, the building was barren save for the lines of mannequins wearing beautiful wedding dresses.

Mom immediately went in search of a nice dress, scanning the ones on display with a critical eye. I held back, though. A riot of emotions brewing in my chest.

We been to over a half-dozen of these wedding dress stores. Seen hundreds of beautiful, elegant dresses. And yet, for all the browsing we'd done, I *still* hadn't found the right dress for me.

Every girl growing up pictures their wedding day. Their perfect dress and their perfect husband. And I'd been no different. For as long as I could remember, I'd had this little image in my head of what I'd wanted my wedding to be like. Surrounded by family, wearing a radiant dress right out of a fairy tale. In my imagination, there was dancing and flowers and cake, my friends surrounding me, my and my husband-to-be's families celebrating together.

Reality, it turned out, wasn't what I'd imagined.

Not that my current wedding plans were bad or anything! I was over the moon, excited and giddy and happy. Marrying Daddy was a dream come true. A dream I'd never known I'd had.

It was just... My old imaginings of my perfect wedding didn't fit any more.

I wouldn't be surrounded by a large family – it'd just be me and Mom and Dad. And my friends wouldn't be there for me. There would be no giant reception, no party, no big buffet, no wedding cake. Even the wedding dress of my old fantasies didn't work any more.

Any of the dresses surrounding me now, in the wedding dress store, would've satisfied the old me. They were all beautiful and refined and stunning.

They just weren't *me*.

Not any more.

Somehow, I knew I wouldn't find what I wanted in this store. Just like I hadn't found it in any of the others. As long as me and Mom were searching in places that sold traditional, elegant wedding dresses, we'd never find the perfect one for me.

No, I wouldn't find my wedding dress in a display room on some old mannequin. Deep down, I knew that.

The dress I envisioned for my wedding, the dress perfect for the me I'd become, would be found elsewhere. Somewhere out of sight. The lingerie section of a wedding store, if such a place even existed. A dress meant to be seen by the bride's husband and her husband alone.

I stared at myself in the mirror as Mom did my hair.

My heart wouldn't stop racing. A constant, never-ending pounding in my chest. My stomach churned with nerves and anxiety even as I trembled with excitement.

I looked beautiful.

The subtle amounts of make-up Mom had applied brought out all my best features. A hint of mascara to bring out the natural, icy blue coolness of my eyes. Red lipstick to match my flowing red hair. Pink blush that, while mostly natural, was brought out by Mom's mastery of make-up. I was radiant, beyond beautiful.

More than that, I was sexy.

We'd found the perfect dress, Mom and I. Something that'd been intended to wear on a woman's wedding night, to titillate and tempt her husband. A wedding dress meant only for the bedroom.

It was mostly white fishnet. Revealing my smooth, silken skin to anyone whose eyes might stumble upon me. Hugging the curves of my body in aesthetic glory. The only parts of my body that weren't entirely visible were the treats I wanted Daddy to unwrap for himself. My breasts and my crotch, my nipples and my hole.

In a way, it was like my way of saying everyone else in the world could look, but only *he* could have what was underneath.

"And done!" Mom said happily, taking a step back from me.

We both stared at my reflection for a moment, our eyes meeting in the mirror. My mother was smiling so happily, a joyous tear in her eye at seeing me like this. On my special day, with my special man. A woman, not a child any more.

Her eyes told me she was proud of me. They told me that she'd always be there for me. I blinked back happy tears of my own.

Couldn't cry. Not right now. That'd ruin the make-up.

Instead, I rose to my feet.

It was time.

I stepped into the living room, Mom walking beside me with her arm in mine. Music was playing from the old stereo, traditional wedding music – Cannon in D, Pachelbel's everlasting masterpiece.

It was a short walk to where my father stood, dashing in his tuxedo. Handsome and regal, eyes hungrily roaming my body – just as I knew they would. Others, if they knew, might've frowned on our relationship. Father and daughter as lovers? I'd have probably questioned it myself a year ago. But now? I couldn't imagine life any other way.

My Daddy was the perfect man for me. As far as I was concerned, I was the luckiest girl in the world.

When we reached where Daddy stood, Mom slipped away from me, went to go stand in front of where me and Daddy stood side-by-side. She was going to be the one performing the ceremony. The one binding us together.

In a way, it was the perfect role for her.

She was passing on the torch. Handing over her husband to the only woman in the world who'd love him more than she did.

Mom wouldn't just be giving us our vows. She'd be giving me permission. Permission to take her husband as my own, to have him and love him until the end of my days.

And for that, I would forever be grateful.

"Dearly beloved," Mom smiled, eyes moving between her husband and daughter. "We are gathered here today to join this man and this woman in holy matrimony."

I stared into my father's face, tears brimming in the corners of my eyes as he stared right back at me.

The joy was overwhelming.

"Do you, David Monford, take this woman to be your wife, to live with in matrimony; to love her, to honour her, to comfort her, and to keep her – in sickness and in health, forsaking all others – for as long as you both shall live?"

"I do," Daddy said, his eyes never leaving mine.

My heart swelled at the words.

"And do you, Emily Monford, take this man to be your husband, to live with in matrimony; to love him, to honour him, to obey him, and to keep him – in sickness and in health, forsaking all others – for as long ad you both shall live?"

"I do," I said, beaming the biggest, happiest smile of my life.

I sat on the toilet, staring at the little stick without blinking.

Could it be? Could I really be...

Just the thought made me giddy. The prospect of having a little family, me and Daddy and little kids running around the place. It was *amazing*. If I really was pregnant, it'd be a dream come true.

But...

I'd be giving birth to be own brothers and sisters, wouldn't I?

Oddly, the thought wasn't as off-putting as I'd thought it'd be. I wasn't disgusted with myself, wasn't worried. I wasn't the slightest bit concerned. How *could* I be, with all the excitement and happiness bubbling up inside me?

I was going to be a mother!

Maybe. I had to remind myself of that. Maybe I was going to be a mother. Maybe it was a false alarm. I'd had late periods before. It wasn't impossible that I was just over-reacting.

I crossed my fingers and hoped as I stared at the pregnancy test.

Me and Mom had been so close ever since me and Dad started having sex. We'd been more like sisters than mother and daughter. In many ways, she was more my best friend than anything else. And she'd been through pregnancy and child-birth and parenting before. With me. This – me potentially being pregnant – could only possibly bring us even closer together.

She could show me the ropes. Teach me.

That would be amazing!

If – and I had to keep reminding myself of that, 'if' – I was pregnant, Mom would be so happy! She'd finally have a new child to dote on, since I'd gone and grown up on her. She'd been pestering me about grand-kids for a while now.

Odd to think of her like that. A grand-mother.

She looked young enough that you'd never expect she already had an adult kid. Let alone a grand-child.

Would it be a boy or a girl? I didn't know which I wanted more! And names! What about names?

I might not be pregnant, I had to remind myself for the millionth time. Getting my hopes up now, only to find out it was a false alarm, would be gut-wrenching. Better to take it slow, prepare myself for the worst, not get too excite-

The marking showed up.

The pregnancy test was positive.

A loud, screeching, happy scream burst from my lips. Tears of pure joy came flooding out.

I was pregnant.

I was *pregnant!*

I could barely keep my eyes open. Sweat coated my entire body, caused the medical gown to cling to my skin. The nurses and doctors had left, giving me some space with my newborn baby boy.

He was cradled in my arms, sleeping soundly.

My son.

I was a mother.

Even through my exhaustion, I felt pride and joy swell up inside me at the thought. I was a mother.

Staring down at my little baby, something amazing blossomed inside me. An unparalleled love. A soul-binding affection that I knew would never leave me. I'd never

imagined I might love another human being more than I loved Daddy, yet here I was.

Where was Daddy, anyway?

He'd disappeared after the birth – gone to get some supplies from home, let Mom know the good news. He should've been back by now.

I pushed down the momentary panic.

No, I was sure nothing bad had happened. I'd have *felt* it if he'd been in some kind of accident. I'd *know*.

No, Daddy was probably just exhausted. Maybe he'd sat down and fallen asleep at home, or gone for a quick celebratory drink with some of the guys he knew. Maybe he was just having trouble finding everything he wanted to pick up and bring to the hospital.

It didn't matter, he'd be here soon enough.

My Daddy.

The love of my life.

"Come here David," I smiled, waved encouragement. "You can do it! Come to Mommy!"

The toddler wobbled forward, outstretched hands groping the air. He took another step, another. Then he fell into my arms giggling happily.

"You did it!" I laughed, picking my son up and cuddling him tightly as I stood. "When Daddy gets home, you can show him you can walk now. I bet he'll be so happy!"

I carried my son to the kitchen, set him down in his special chair. He watched and listened as I got to work preparing dinner, telling him stories and gossiping about any random topic that came to mind. Interesting how that worked. Before having a child, I never spoke to myself. Now, I seemed to do it all the time – just because I had a one-person audience.

"I think," I spoke my thoughts aloud, "I wouldn't mind having another baby soon." I turned to look at my beautiful baby boy, who wasn't in any way listening to what I was saying – even if he was, I doubted he'd be able to understand. "What do you think, David Junior? Do you want a brother or a sister?"

I stopped, asked myself the exact same question.

What did I want; another son, or a daughter?

A brother or a sister?

"You know," I smiled, "I've always wondered what it'd be like to have a little sister."