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Wedding Day

by Carey Raupp

(English 1101)

I never thought I would be a pregnant soldier, but here I am. It has been two weeks since taking the home pregnancy test to confirm the paralyzing fear and joy that had been hovering overhead. The blood rushes into my face, to spin and warm my head. I have to sit down to keep the room from spinning before Brad comes in to find out what the test results were. The storm clouds have begun to form and I must do my best to hold back the rain. When he returned to the room he just looks at my face and then the test. Without hesitation, Brad drops to his knees and asks me to marry him. Now here we stand in The Little Wedding Chapel by the sea, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

I have no idea if he is as certain about getting married as I am, but I know by his smile that he is here for me. That warm, soft, smile that he smiles just for me reaches into my heart and like a seamstress repairs all the tattered rips and tears there since my childhood. As he softly touches my hand and small of my back, he calms my nervous giggles and confirms that he will be the anchor to keep me in place even as the ocean rises and the winds blow. The brown jacket, probably one size too big for him, we had just purchased for the day, matches his soft brown eyes with flecks of copper and gold in them. His skin, as smooth as a rose petal, is glowing from his happiness and youth.

The weekend before the wedding we went shopping for a dress that would make me feel more like a woman and less like a soldier. When I tried on this dress I knew it would be right. It was dark, midnight blue with large, pale pink and blue roses, and the dress rest just above my ankles. The dress came with a soft, pale pink cashmere sweater with mother of pearl buttons.

When we woke up on this morning he took me to a small flower shop where he had a bouquet waiting for me to have for walking down the aisle. His thoughtfulness and attention to detail show in the arrangement of flowers. The beautiful, white roses that have just been kissed by pink, the baby's breath is fragrant and smells of a spring morning after the rain. The green fern fills in the rest of the arrangement to balance it with the extra touch of pink ribbon cascading down from the handle.

The chapel itself in the corniest way was most likely supposed to resemble the ocean of the Carolinas. The carpet is like the sky about an hour after the sun goes down. On the alter is a brass candle stand with thirteen, long, skinny, white candles with dancing flames on top. Behind the altar is stained glass that catches light the same way the blue ocean does. To the sides of the altar are white pillars that reach for the ceiling. The flowers and ivy that adorn the altar are fake which just adds to the cheesiness of the chapel. In all the gaudiness of the chapel, I feel comfort from the uneasiness of the day and our critics.

The wife of the old Southern Baptist minister that officiates the ceremony most likely designed this chapel. Her southern pride shines through when showing us the chapel. She is our only witness on this day in the empty chapel. Looking out over the pews to pose for a photograph the only two faces looking back are the tall, old minister and his short, happy wife.

The two of them seem to have faith that we will make it through the storm and I think that is all that my fragile heart needs today.