

Most Likely To Score

A special bonus scene

By Lauren Blakely

Jillian

"It's perfect."

The declaration comes from Katie, and I don't disagree.

My dress rocks hard.

"Vera Wang mermaid style dress for the win," I say, shimmying my hips so the fabric swishes in the trumpet style skirt. The scoop neck bodice is embroidered with little pearls and lace. "Do I look like a fish girl?"

My maid-of-honor makes a fish face and nods exaggeratedly. She grabs my shoulders, and I meet her smile in the mirror. "A hot, beautiful, fish girl bride. Also known as, a raven-haired mermaid in the most perfect wedding dress in the history of wedding dresses."

I smooth a hand over the skirt that clings tight to my hips and thighs, then give my reflection a thumbs up in the gilded mirror in this hotel room overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

"How can you be so calm?"

"I'm designed that way." But truth be told, I'm not entirely calm. I might appear calm only because I know the man I'm marrying is right for me in every way. Some people feel nerves on their wedding day. I'm learning I'm not one of them. I just feel excitement. Honestly, I kind of want to run down the aisle and jump into his arms and say "take me away."

But we have a ceremony planned here at this hotel, with a perfect view of the Golden Gate Bridge, and more than 200 guests waiting for *here comes the bride*.

Katie hands me my bouquet of red tulips.

I run a finger over a petal. “Red for luck,” I whisper, mostly to myself.

It’s a tradition – red symbolizes prosperity, good fortune and luck.

“You don’t need luck. You have love,” Katie says softly.

“I know, but I’m a fan of luck as well.”

A rap on the door draws our attention at the same time. Katie raises an eyebrow, and the look on her face says that better not be Jones.

“Don't worry. It’s the father of the bride.”

Katie wipes a hand dramatically on her forehead. “Good thing it’s you, Mr. Moore.”

She opens the door and my father enters, looking dapper in a charcoal gray suit, and a red tie.

“You look handsome, Dad. Did you stop by so I can help you tie your tie? Please say you haven’t forgotten how in your five years of retirement.”

He laughs, and pretends to punch my arm. “Still witty on her wedding day, mocking her dad. And I can still tie a tie, thank you very much.” He runs a hand down the red silk, and I nod in approval. Then, he clears his throat, and holds out his hand, opening his palm. “I have a gift for you.”

The mood shifts when he gives me a small white jewelry box, weather worn and faded. For a moment, I can’t place it but it feels terribly familiar. When it hits me, I gasp, and my throat catches.

“Don’t cry,” Katie warns.

But it’s too late. The waterworks are threatening. A tear wells in my eye. “I haven't seen this in years.” My voice breaks as I open the box and remove an elegant silver chain, with a tiny red dragon on it.

It was my mother's. Her symbol of luck, and of love.

My dad’s voice wobbles. “She wanted to give it to you on your wedding day. I gave it to her on the day we were matched with you. She figured it brought her the best luck in the world since it brought her you, and she always intended for you to have it as a wedding gift.”

A tear slips down my cheek. “Put it on me?”

My father fastens the necklace, and when he’s done, I run a finger over the red dragon, remembering my mother fondly, and feeling like a bit of her is here today.

Katie jumps in. “Okay, Mr. Moore, I love you, but go away, because now I have to fix her makeup.”

He holds up his hands in surrender.

Katie pushes him out the door, grabs a tissue and dabs at my cheek. She reaches for the powder and quickly erases the evidence of tears.

“There. Ready?”

“Like I’ve never been ready before.”

A few minutes later, I watch her head down the aisle, with the best man escorting her, Jones’s brother Trevor. They join my other bridesmaids as well as the groomsmen, Cooper and Harlan.

The wedding march begins, and my father walks me down the aisle. Everyone is here, filling the aisles, but I only have eyes for Jones Beckett, the most handsome man I’ve ever known, who looks even handsomer in a tux, his blue eyes on me the whole time.

I can’t wait for him to be my husband

Jones

In my line of work, falling is par for the course. Only you don’t want to fall too hard or you’ll get hurt.

But in love, falling hard is a damn good thing. Every day I fall a little more in love with the woman I’m about to marry.

When Jillian reaches the front of the room, the Pacific Ocean behind us, I whisper. “Hi.”

“Hi.”

"You look so beautiful."

“You do, too.”

Someone chuckles in the front row. “Hey guys, save the compliments for later. Let’s get to the ceremony.”

And we do as the justice of the peace takes us through the vows. When it’s time for the rings, I turn to the aisle, whistle and call my boy.

“Cletus!”

On cue, my little Chihuahua mix takes off from my sister's lap, since she's been holding him. Trotting down the aisle, he's met with bigger cheers than the touchdown I made in the Super Bowl.

He reaches me and parks himself in a perfect sit, wagging his tail.

"Good boy," I tell him, then take the rings from the pouch around his collar.

I slide the wedding band on Jillian's finger, and she does the same for me.

"You may kiss the bride."

That's what I intend to do every day of my life.

Later, after photos and cake, we dance. It's our first spin as husband and wife. "Remember that time at Sierra's wedding. When we danced?" I ask.

"Of course. How could I forget? I was pretty much buzzing with desire for you."

I arch an eyebrow. "You're not buzzing with desire for me now?"

She flashes a sexy smile. "Yes, Mr. Beckett, I am buzzing with desire for you now."

"Well, Mrs. Beckett, we really ought to do something about that."

"It's called a wedding night, and we'll get to it later. Wait till you see my lingerie."

I groan, ready to take her now. "How about the coat closet? Maybe sneak off in the limo?"

She laughs. "You are a troublemaker."

"But you like that about me."

"I do."

"Besides, I'm pretty sure you also like me naked."

"Do not get naked here," she says in a warning, and I laugh, because there's a part of her that thinks I would.

I yank her close, and kiss her neck, whispering, "This is your fair warning. I might wear my birthday suit a lot with you. Are you okay with that, Mrs. Beckett?"

She taps her chin. "Let me think. Orgasms. Wedded bliss. The best-looking guy. The biggest heart. Why yes, I'm amenable to how buck naked you want to be."

And I kiss the bride yet another time.

