

Chuck vs The Bridesmaid

by Steelejay

A short little "what-if" applied to a particular scene in S2E22. How easy would it have been for Chuck to change Sarah's mind? Canon compatible.

Rated: T · Genre: Romance

“Chuck, I’m leaving in the morning. The details are classified, but I’m working on the new Intersect project. With Bryce,” she said softly, hesitantly.

“Bryce...” Chuck whispered so quietly he wasn’t completely sure he’d spoken aloud.

Sarah’s voice wavered with suppressed emotion as she continued. “I’m so sorry, I wanted to wait until after the ceremony to tell you.”

Sarah’s words affected him on so many levels, in so many varied aspects of his psyche that for a moment the hallway seemed to blur at the edges, his reality becoming indistinct, transfiguring into an unexpected waking nightmare. Once again Bryce was there to insinuate himself into Chuck’s hopes and dreams, even just the simple ones.

He was angry which was not a comfortable or familiar emotion for him. He was deeply hurt, an emotion with which he was well acquainted, but the most dominating feeling by far was a profound confusion. It had only been a couple of days since their interrupted embrace in Barstow. Less time since her 'two beds' question while they were in lockup together at Castle. It seemed they were right on the cusp of finally figuring their shit out and now she was leaving with Bryce?

A vacation felt like a perfect compromise to him. He’d asked the question fully expecting her to say yes. He’d even imagined she’d be excited by the idea. Why not? She’d seemed pretty excited the other morning in Barstow. This was a different approach for him. There was no pressure, just some time for them to be Chuck and Sarah, not a spy and her asset but simply two people who obviously had feelings for each other. An opportunity to figure out what those feelings might mean. He wasn’t asking her to quit

the spy life, he wasn't pressuring her to make any commitments or answer uncomfortable questions. Just a couple of weeks to decompress and maybe get to know each other when fate of the world wasn't resting on their shoulders.

They'd been running full steam ahead for over a year and a half. They'd finally taken out Fulcrum on top of an untold number of other arms dealers and terrorists. His oft stated goal of getting the Intersect out of his head had finally been realized. If anyone was due a vacation, it was them. He was no longer her asset. He was fully and completely his own man, finally free to pursue the life he'd always wanted with the woman that he loved. The barriers between them had finally fallen away.

His instinct was to withdraw into his confusion and pain. It was a well-established, familiar habit. For once he rejected his initial reaction to fall into self-pity and let himself look at things separate from his own ego. Sarah was looking at him with her own mix of obviously painful emotions and he thought maybe he understood what was happening. She was scared. She was also retreating into familiar patterns of behavior to avoid dealing with the questions that spending time with him would invariably raise. As he realized this, he smiled at how ridiculous the two of them really were. It proved that they were their own worst enemies. Here they stood with all barriers finally removed, and still unable to really connect. If they weren't two of the most ridiculous people who ever walked upright, they were surely near the front of that unfortunate parade.

Sarah saw his smile and couldn't help one of her own as her features relaxed. "What's that smile, Chuck? I have to admit, that's certainly not the reaction I expected," she said, still speaking softly.

He felt his smile get bigger and knew he was on the verge of giggles at his realization. "I know. I had a sort of minor epiphany I think," he said.

She was obviously intrigued and surprised by his reaction. "Can you share your epiphany with me, Chuck?"

Chuck nodded but felt his smile diminish as he knew what he had to say might be difficult for her to hear. "I can, but I should give you a little context first." He paused as he gathered his thoughts, then grabbed her hand pulled her into an alcove in the

hallway.

He wasn't sure how to articulate his thoughts and ended up just blurting the raw truth. "We are ridiculous. Both of us. You are ridiculous and I'm insanely ridiculous. We should be wearing clown makeup and huge shoes. You should have a fake flower that shoots water and I should be juggling or making balloon animals. It's appropriate to how ridiculous we are, the two of us," he grinned at her as he said it, but his tone was serious.

"Is that the context or is that your epiphany?" Sarah asked with her own smile, obviously amused at the scene he imagined for them.

"That's the context. That's to soften the blow for the epiphany," he said as his smile faded. Sarah's smile faded as well, and her expression became anxious.

"Sarah, from day one, I've never made it much of a secret how I feel about you. I've never been able to disguise how amazing I think you are. Can we agree on that point?" She bit her lower lip as she nodded, the anxious look deepening. "And given what you and I have been through over the last few days, the... choices... you made to protect me. Going on the run. Barstow. Our conversation while Casey had us locked up. I think it's pretty safe to say that you have feelings for me. That maybe you've had feelings for me for a while. That maybe the thing under the under-cover thing was always real. As crazy as that thought is to me, that's what the evidence points to."

"Chuck, I... We..." Sarah tried to speak but her thoughts could seem to find purchase with her mouth.

"Sarah, it's OK," he said softly. "I get it. You're scared. You're scared of what you're feeling, of what it might mean for me, for you, for your future. And you're not used to being scared, especially if the thing that's scaring you is something you can't beat up or shoot. Since you can't beat up or shoot this thing that's scaring you, you're choosing to run away from it. You're in fight or flight mode, Sarah, and I completely understand. I'm genuinely terrified, but my fear is that I'm going to lose the most amazing woman I've ever met. The one who's ruined me for any and all future women that might come along. No one will ever measure up to you, Sarah Walker."

“You’re right, Chuck,” she said finally. “I do have feelings for you. I... have very strong feelings for you. But I’m a spy. All I know how to be is a spy. I don’t know how to be anything else.”

Chuck’s features hardened slightly at her statement. “See, that right there. That’s an example of the ridiculousness I was referring to. That’s your fear talking, and no offense, Sarah, but that’s bullshit. You and I both know you could be or do any damn thing you set your mind to,” Chuck sighed his frustration and ran his hands through his hair. “Sarah, more than anything, I want you to be happy. I would love it if being with me is at least part of what could make you happy, but if that’s not possible, well, that will suck for me, but I will eventually be able to accept it. But let me just ask you this; does the idea of leaving with Bryce, going off to DC and working with him, being the Andersons once more... never seeing me again... Does that thought make you happy, Sarah?”

Sarah could feel her eyes filling up, betraying the agent mask she was trying so desperately to keep in place. She remembered her confession to her video log a couple of weeks earlier. *I love him. I love Chuck Bartowski and I don’t know what to do about it.* She felt a traitorous tear spill past her eyelashes and roll down her cheek, speaking the truth that her voice couldn’t.

“No, Chuck,” she said softly, finally finding her voice. “That thought does not make me happy at all. The thought of never seeing you again makes me very, *very* sad.” Another tear spilled down her other cheek and he gently wiped it away with his thumb as he ran his fingers gently across her jawline.

He leaned down and kissed her so softly and with such tenderness that she imagined she could feel his love for her pouring out of him, filling her heart. Her agent mask shattered as she leaned into the kiss and pulled him in, wanting to feel him pressed up against her as she wrapped her arms around him. He’d started the kiss with tenderness, she ended it several moments later with raging intensity. They were both panting, their foreheads pressed together as they held each other close. She could still feel his lips on hers, could still taste him. She felt slightly drunk.

“Yes, Chuck,” she whispered finally. “I will go on vacation with you.” The man she loved smiled at her with such genuine affection that she found it hard to breath. It filled her with so much joy, she couldn’t have suppressed her own smile if her life had depended on it. Her smile was so wide she felt Chuck kissing her teeth when he leaned in again, causing her to giggle. She very quickly started kissing him back.

She had a minor epiphany of her own as she felt all her fear and anxiety fall away. She loved Chuck Bartowski, but now she did know what to do about it. It was ultimately the only thing she could do. She would choose love over duty. She would choose what she wanted, perhaps for the first time in her life. She chose Chuck.