

The Big Day

Six months before the Big Day:

Carly steps out of the dressing room to the delight of her mother, Iris, and future bridesmaids.

‘This is the one. It’s perfect,’ she beams. She twirls and strikes a red-carpet pose—hands on hips, back to her audience. ‘What do you think?’

‘Oh, sweetheart,’ Iris says, dabbing her eyes with a handkerchief. ‘It’s lovely, and you look absolutely radiant.’

Her two sisters and closest friends nod in agreement. ‘You look amazing, babe.’ ‘Stunning!’ ‘Ethan doesn’t deserve you, you sexy beast!’

The shop assistant steps forward, lacy veil in hand. ‘And for the final touch . . .’ She places the veil gently on Carly’s head. ‘*Voila!*’

Everyone *oohs* and *aahs*.

‘Shall I box this up for you?’ the shop assistant asks.

Carly checks herself in the mirror. ‘Actually, I would like this same dress, but one size smaller. I plan to drop a stone before the big day.’

Iris frowns. ‘Sweetheart, you have enough on your plate as it is, what with all the planning and such. Don’t put that kind of pressure on yourself. You’re beautiful, just as you are.’

‘I’ve got a fitness coach, mum, and a nutritionist who will help me achieve my weight loss goal. I won’t go overboard, I promise.’

‘You can put the dress—one size down—on hold for up to six months. Why don’t you come again a month before your wedding for a fitting?’ the shop assistant suggests.

One month before the Big Day:

Carly steps out of the dressing room to the delight of her mother and future bridesmaids.

‘This is even more perfect than the last time,’ she says. She twirls and strikes a red-carpet pose—hands on hips, her slender back to her audience. ‘Can you believe it? I’ve lost two stone! I’m down *two* dress sizes!’

‘You look more beautiful than ever,’ Iris beams. ‘I’m so proud of you, Carly. You set your mind on a goal, and you achieved it.’

Her sisters and friends nod in agreement. ‘You look amazing, babe.’ ‘Wow!’ ‘Ethan better watch himself!’

The shop assistant steps forward and gathers the fabric around the waist. ‘You’ve got some room to spare, but only just. Would you like to have the waistline taken in, or shall we leave it as is?’

Carly laughs. ‘Let’s leave it. I plan to eat cake at my wedding.’

The Big Day:

Carly steps out from behind the dressing screen with tears streaming down her face. Her mother and bridesmaids furrow their brows.

‘I don’t know what’s happened. It fit perfectly a month ago, but it feels tight,’ she says, then raises her hands to her chest. ‘Here. In the boobs.’

Iris steps forward and caresses her daughter’s bare shoulders. ‘When was your last period, sweetheart?’ she whispers.

Carly’s eyes widen. ‘Oh, my God. You don’t think ...?’

Iris beams as she cups her daughter’s face. She then turns to the bridesmaids. ‘It appears we have another reason to celebrate today.’