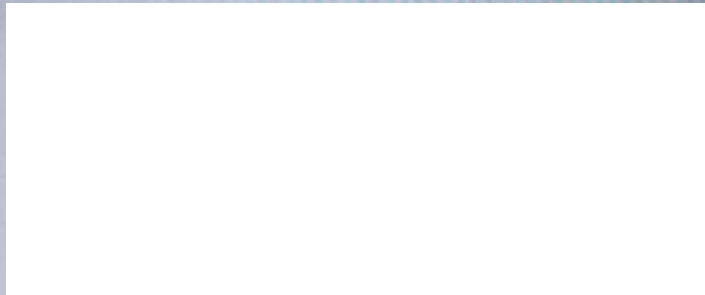


Chapter 107: Bugging my own house.

Ethan's POV:

"It's done," Piero, the guy Dante sent me to help with my plan of blackmailing Tess and Alexander,



[Ads-free >](#)

said to me over the phone the next morning.

"And did you observe her reaction?" I asked him curiously.

"Yes. There are many blind spots in that manor, you should know," Piero told me.

"And how did she react?" I insisted on the question.

"She was desperate, of course. Any plan she had against you was completely forgotten, at least momentarily," he told me. He had a chuckle in his voice. Surely he was enjoying the despair of others. "And then she made a call, but I couldn't hear who she was talking to," he said.

"Excellent. Her desperation was all I needed at the moment. Eventually she'll do something stupid," I told Piero.

"Well, you have my direct number. Whenever you need me for a similar job, just call me," Piero said.

"Okay, I'll keep that in mind," I told him. Not that I needed a blackmail service all the time, but talking to Piero was far more advantageous than talking to Dante, his boss. Although this is probably due to hierarchy. Dante also had a lot more power than he did, after all.

"Oh! Before I forget, Dante asked me to remind you that the p*****t for the service done to your wife is long overdue," Piero reminded me. Speaking of the devil...

"Tell him not to worry. I'm sorting out the legal status of the matter and that as soon as the whole

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process is cleared, he'll get what he asked for," I told Piero.

"Okay, Ethan. If I may say it, if I were you, I wouldn't take long to fulfill your part of the bargain. The entire community knows that Dante isn't very... patient," Piero told me.

"That's fine. I'll keep that in mind," I told Piero and killed the call.

There was a lot to do today. Due to my running away to visit Hannah and baby Michael I had a lot of work overdue and now I had to balance Tess in the city as well. The woman just wouldn't let go of me. There were already half a dozen messages from her on my cell phone. That's because she promised me that she would give me space and not press me for a decision.

In fact, my decision was already made and agreed with my legitimate wife. The hard part had been appeasing her fury when it all started. But I put that thought aside, and went to work, because I had so many clients that I should appease their fury right now.

*

In the afternoon, I received the lawyer responsible for my grandfather's inheritance.

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+10 Points

"Mr. Peabody, it's nice to have you in my office," I told him as I shook his hand.

"Mr. Brown, good to see you too. How have you been?" Mr. Peabody asked me.

"Well, sometimes it feels like life is a real tornado passing over us, and unfortunately I'm in one of those moments," I told him laughing at my own joke.

Mr. Peabody laughed with me too, and said, "And who hasn't felt that way, right?"

"Well, I hope all is well with my grandfather's estate," I told him in a questioning tone.

"Everything is in order. It's practically time to call the whole family in for the reading of the list of assets and the will," he told me.

"Excellent. Could you do me a favor?" I asked him.

"Of course, Mr. Brown. If it's in my power, I'll do it," Mr. Peabody told me.

"Well, among the possessions my grandfather left is a Fabergé egg on the farm where he lived when he retired. This egg is very important to my wife, but I don't know who he left this piece of art for," I told him.

"Oh, I understand, Mr. Brown. But unfortunately

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+10 Points

that's out of my hands what your grandfather desired." Peabody told me.

"What do you mean? What's out of your reach?" I asked him tensely. I could feel my stomach sinking with despair at the prospect of not giving Dante what he'd asked of me.

"Well, the egg is part of the inventory, like many works of art, and it's divided evenly between the family and closest loved ones of the late Mr. Brown," Peabody explained it to me.

"So you already know who the egg will be, right?" I asked him hopefully. I just needed this information. Among my grandfather's closest relatives were me, Hannah, my uncle, my aunt, and probably Patricia. With that information I would be able to trade the egg for some other work of art.

"Yes, I know who will inherit your grandfather's Fabergé egg, but I am strictly bound by the contract I was hired for, which includes complete secrecy of the details of the will until the probate is completed and absolutely all heirs are present for the reading of your grandfather's last will," Mr. Peabody explained it to me.

I sighed in frustration. "Is there at least something I can know about beforehand?" I asked him.

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+10 Points

"Well, he gave this to me before he passed away, and told me to pass it on to you as soon as he could," Mr. Peabody reached into one of his pockets and pulled out a small object. Then he reached out to me and dropped a small, ancient key into my palm.

"Wait a minute. I think I've seen that key with my grandfather," I told Mr. Peabody.

Mr. Peabody shook her head and murmured, "Well, your grandfather told me he already gave you this key in life. He said this key would open a box, which would be with your wife. Unfortunately it seems to me that the contents of the box are not of significant monetary value to be part of the inventory, but he asked me to give this key to you again, as I knew that the first time he gave it to you, you had ignored the gift he gave you," Mr. Peabody explained it to me.

"Thank you very much, Mr. Peabody," I told him.

"Would you do me a favor?" I asked.

"Of course, if it's in my power, I will," Mr. Peabody told me.

"Can you let me know immediately when all the probate is ready? That way I can summon all the heirs immediately to find out about the division of

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+10 Points

the inheritance," I requested of him.

"Of course, I'll definitely do that, Mr. Brown. It's a shame I can't help you with your application, Mr. Brown." Peabody lamented and said goodbye.

Ads-free >

Damn it! My grandfather's stupid decision. That would mean I had Dante around my neck for a while longer. Although asking for his help with other services would also have its price. Would I ever get rid of him and his shady connections?

I went back to the manor to retrieve the damn little box my grandfather had instructed Hannah to give

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me after her funeral. I had obviously ignored the box when it was offered to me. I was so focused on getting rid of Hannah that I didn't realize how important the box's contents could be.

I purposely went to the manor during the afternoon, as I knew the likelihood of finding Tess at home was slim. She liked to take walks in the afternoons, especially when those walks involved spending on the card I had given her, be it in entertainment or goods.

Piero had given me some devices to install in the house so we could hear what was going on inside. So I started with them. There were strategic points that Piero had indicated for me to place. As soon as I got all the points in, I called him.

"Good afternoon Ethan," Piero told me over the phone.

"It's done," I told him directly.

"Great! Give me a minute to test and see if everything is okay," he asked me.

A minute or so later, Piero confirmed, "Okay, we're online," he said. "I'll call you if we catch anything interesting."

"Right. I'll talk to you later," I told him and killed the

call.

So, it was time for my second mission in the house. I went straight to my office to retrieve the box. It wasn't hard to find it, after all I put it on a certain shelf in my office and had never touched it since. If it weren't for the occasional cleaners, it would have been creating dust in the same place for months.

So I found myself thinking, what the hell was Tess doing here yesterday? She never visited this room in the house. She said my business was extremely boring, and she'd rather stay away from any of it. In this she was completely different from Hannah. Hannah always fought for her place and proved to be an extremely competent professional.

I then proceeded to check what she could have been looking for besides an envelope, and I didn't miss any important documents or deeds. I looked in the safe and everything was as it should be. I flipped through some books and everything was normal.

Then, I saw it. An ajar closet door. That's where we used to keep our photos and memories. I picked up the first album and flipped through a few pages. Then I noticed that there were some pictures missing. That was weird, but since I didn't

have a photographic memory, it was hard to tell which ones were missing.

I figured that was where Tess was messing around, but I didn't know what exactly she was doing with those pictures. But I didn't have much time to find out because I soon heard the noise of her car approaching the manor's driveway.

I didn't have the time or energy to talk to her and listen again to all the crap about her asking me to consider marrying her. So I discreetly took the box back and slipped out the back exit of the manor.

Thank heavens I had left my car out of sight, otherwise she would probably press me with questions I didn't want to answer.

The funny part about this story was that I had my adrenaline pumping from doing all of this: breaking into my own house, planting bugs, fetching an item that was mine, and checking what Tess was doing by going through my stuff. So, I decided to go back to my room in the hotel and lock myself in a "safe" environment before finally knowing what was inside that little box.

When I arrived at the apartment, though, I decided to call Hannah first.

"What is it?" She answered the phone. Something

was wrong with her.

"I guess I called at a bad time, didn't I?" I told Hannah. "Do you want me to call you later?" I proposed to her.

"What I would really like is my child's father present in our lives, not plotting some crazy revenge on a slut like his ex-lover," She told me, annoyed.

"Okay, I can see you're really mad, but I can't and I won't fight you right now, Hannah," I told her cautiously because I didn't want to start a fight.

"I don't want to know what you can and what you want, Ethan. I want you to know what I need," she exclaimed. And then, I heard Michael's voice crying. Okay, she was annoyed because of the baby and I was absent.

"Do you want me to hire someone to help you with the baby?" I suggested. Maybe an extra pair of hands would help her for the time being.

"You think you're going to solve all our money problems, don't you? Thanks, I already have enough help," She told me ironically.

"It's hard to know what you need when you talk like this, love," I told her.

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"Well, you call yourself my husband, so find out,"
She told me. "Why did you call me anyway, Ethan?"
She asked me.

"I called to say I miss you," I told her. I just wanted
to be at peace with her.

"Well, there are times when a simple phone call
isn't enough," I told him.

Oh! So that's what she was talking about! "I
understand you need me right now. I'll come back
as soon as possible," I told her and hung up.

I didn't care if it was late or not. As soon as I killed
the call, I called Eric and requested him to make
arrangements so I could travel again.


I left the apartment half an hour later, but I forgot
the small wooden box there.



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