

Chapter 113 Arsenic.

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Ethan's POV:

"Mr. Brown! Good to see you again," Detective Pratt greeted me the next morning.

[Ads-free >](#)

I shook his hand and mumbled, "Good to see you too, Detective, but I guess you've got your day as busy as mine, right? You can skip the formalities," I told him.

Detective Pratt nodded and then motioned for me

to sit down: "Yes sir, then let's get down to business. We're almost done with the forensics, but the preliminary result is that there was a struggle over the weapon in question between Miss Astor and Mrs. Brown. Just a few traces of her skin, probably from scratches from the fight she had with Miss Astor," the detective told me.

"Right. And do you already know who shot who? Was there any conclusion from the gun prints?" I asked Detective Pratt urgently.

Detective Pratt shook his head and said, "The gun prints are inconclusive, sir. There are many different prints. Some are only partial. Some of them are Miss Astor, some are Mrs Brown, which we collected from the police database. I didn't know before that, but your wife was booked earlier, wasn't she?" Detective Pratt asked curiously.

I scowled at him and said, "That was a mistake and beside the point," I told him and the ridiculous little smile he had on his face instantly withered, but I didn't give him time to recover from it. "So, did you come to any conclusions then?" I insisted.

"We conclude from the gunpowder traces on Miss Astor's hand that we collected that day that she had her hand on the trigger when the shots were

fired. She is highly involved in this story, sir," Detective Pratt told me.

I nodded at him and mumbled, "I expected that. And what's missing for the investigation against my wife to be dropped and you to proceed with the investigation against Ms. Astor?" I asked him.

"Well, we're still looking for Ms. Keeney. She was supposed to give her statement after she woke up, but she can't be found. She's gone off the map as has your wife has, sir," Detective Pratt told me.

"Well, it wasn't supposed to be news to the local police, but apparently none of you were able to put all the pieces of the puzzle together, were you? Patricia Keeney is in hiding for her own safety," I explained to him.

"And why wasn't it reported to us that the witness needed protection?" Detective Pratt asked me in an offended tone.

I walked over to him and muttered, "Because apparently whoever is after her has contacts at the hospital where she was staying and was paying some professionals to sedate her. That way she couldn't testify anytime soon. We assume there's someone else in the police who might be helping whoever wants her quiet," I explained to him.

"One good thing is that because of its high profile, this case hasn't been publicized extensively. We're keeping the investigation pretty much under wraps, so very few people inside this police station know about it," Detective Pratt told me.

I nodded in approval. Finally the detective was hitting one. "How does a recorded or internet testimonial sound to you?" I offered it to him.

"Can we get a taped statement?" Detective Pratt asked me excitedly.

"I'll talk to some lawyers so that the statement has all the characteristics to be considered valid and I'll give you the recording a few days later. Just send me the questions the police would want to ask in a normal interrogation," I told him.

"That will help a lot," Detective Pratt told me. "But just to help bury the case against your wife. There is another witness to the events who didn't come forward that day, but who came forward later," Detective Pratt told me.

"Another witness? What are you talking about?" I asked him curiously.

"Well, your wife had the phone on at the time of the conflict, and whoever was on the other end of the line overheard the conversation between the

women in their home. He volunteered to testify what he overheard, and this statement will also be considered valid," Detective Pratt explained to me.

Why hadn't Hannah told me that she had called someone that night? And why wasn't it me she called? I was already on my way to the manor that night. I was perhaps the perfect witness for the case!

Well, these were questions I should ask her. For the detective there were others more urgent: "And who is this person?" I asked him.

"I'm sorry, sir. This witness has asked to give his statement anonymously at least until the case against Ms. Brown is dismissed," Detective Pratt told me.

"What the hell! I'm her husband! I'm a person authorized to know about the case that happened in my own house, aren't I?" I protested.

"I'm sorry, sir, but contrary to what you may think of Ms. Keeney, we protect our witnesses who request anonymity," Detective Pratt told me.

I huffed and said, "Okay. Is there anything else you can share with me?"

"Yes sir. About the gun itself. The gun has the

Chapter 113 Arsenic.

+20 Points

numbering scraped off. We were only able to retrieve some of the digits from your registration. We're trying different combinations to find out the possible owners, but we haven't come to conclusions yet," Detective Pratt told me.

"I see. Can you keep me updated on all this, please?" I requested the detective.

"Of course, sir," he told me promptly.

"Ah! Is there a deadline for the completion of investigations and possible arrest of the guilty party?" I asked him.

"About two weeks," he told me.

"Perfect. You guys let me know about the arrest? I want to be there when it happens," I asked him.

"I will, sir," Detective Pratt told me.

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Later in that morning, Eric told me that Mr. Welch from AC Audit has been looking for me to talk. So I returned his call.

"Mr. Welch, I got your message. How can I help you?" I asked him.

"Hello Mr. Brown, it has been do long! I was speaking directly to the lovely Ms. Brown about

Chapter 113 Arsenic.

this year's auditor, but unfortunately she is no longer to be found," Mr. Brown said. Welch started the call by justifying why he was contacting me directly.

"Mrs. Brown has had...er...engagements," I told him

[Ads-free >](#)

without wanting to go into detail. "Tell me, what can we do for you, sir?" I asked him.

"Well, as you may be aware, I am only responsible this year for auditing the satellite companies of Brown Enterprises, and something has come up in my findings that is worthy of your attention," he told me.

Chapter 113 Arsenic.

"Really? And which company are we talking about?" I asked him intrigued.

"Well, we're talking about Axel Corp, sir," Mister Welch told me.

Just Alexander's company. Something wasn't looking right at all.

"What did you discover?" I asked him.

"Well, I must confess that I feel a little uncomfortable discussing this matter over the phone, sir..." Mr. Welch told me.

Oh no! Another in-person meeting I couldn't fit in today!

"Just so you know, I don't mind, sir. If the matter is so urgent, this is a safe line. Trust me," I assured him.

"Well, if you insist, Axel Corp has been having cash problems lately..." he said.

"That much I know, Mr. Welch. That's why I bought the company, to help a 'friend'," I explained to him.

"Yes, but the problems didn't stop with your acquisition, sir. You see, the normal movement for companies acquired in this way is just one: the acquisition and later the judicial recovery. But in this case, there was no recovery. The company's

money is still bleeding," he explained to me.

"Bleeding? What do you mean bleeding?" I asked him. "I'm watching this company closely. How can there be leaks?" I asked absurdly.

"Sir, the numbers are being fudged. I can send you a technical report with more detail, but I thought you should know, as this directly affects Brown's bottom line," Mr. Welch told me.

"I need that report right away, Mr. Welch," I asked him.

"I'm sending it now. Good luck sir," Mr Welch told me and killed the call.

How the hell was Alexander still managing to embezzle the company's money? I knew his problem was bad management. His line of business was interesting enough, but he didn't know how to manage the company's costs, and wanted to live a life of luxury at the expense of Axel Corp's cash. I jumped in to help him out, but it seems like all the financial help and guidance was going down the drain along with the recovery of results we were getting. Damn Alexander!

Once the report arrived, I spent a good hour looking at the numbers and realizing that it could only be his rotten finger at business and his

Chapter 113 Arsenic.

willingness to spend that was greater than his desire to accumulate wealth.

As I was finishing up, I received an anonymous courier with an unaddressed envelope. He insisted that the content was for my eyes only, and that it had been sent by Piero. Knowing what it was, I received the package, and inside was a divorce certificate that looked completely authentic. I'm not one to praise illegal work, but Piero's friends had outdone themselves.

In the afternoon, I already had a meeting scheduled with Simmons, who arrived on time and with a huge report in his hands.

"Sir, you demanded speed and here it is. The whole investigation into Mr. Thorn-Ramsey." He proudly told me.

"Any points of attention?" I asked him as I scanned the report.

"Some sir. There is a constant flow of money from Mr Thorn-Ramsey's accounts to an anonymous trust in the Cayman Islands. This flow has been repeated every month for a year or so," Simmons explained.

Around the time Axel's Corp was acquired?

"Interesting," I murmured to him. "And how much

Chapter 113 Arsenic.

are we talking about?" I asked.

"A few tens of millions as seen on page 12 sir,"
Simmons replied to me.

I nodded at him and asked, "Okay. Is there
anything else I should know?"

"There was a small purchase that would go
unnoticed by most people over that time, sir. But it
got my attention," Simmons said.

"What did Alexander buy that caught your
attention?" I asked him intrigued.

"It was arsenic, sir. Either Mr. Thorn-Ramsey has a
rat infestation to envy anyone or he used or will
use the poison to kill someone," Simmons said.



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