

### Ethan's POV

I was so furious about what Tess did to me this whole time that I had to hold the overwhelming urge to film her walking out of the room's door and through the crowd of guests at our rehearsal dinner. She was ushered out by the policemen and her face was crimson with humiliation and stained by the tears that fell from her face.

Honestly, there were not words enough that I could use to express my joy at seeing her like this. One could say that I was exaggerating in my revenge but considering all the damn things that she made my family and I go through, I just thought about my revenge as a way for her to pay for her sins, and that all that I did was to retribute it.

The whole commotion made all the rehearsal dinner guests look at her with confused and scared faces. Because when the police entered, they were amazingly discreet, and no one had noticed that there were some people that nobody there knew at the party. Especially because everybody was eating, drinking and having fun

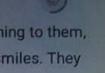


among themselves. But by the time she left, she was escorted with her hands handcuffed behind her back. There was a dead silence as she passed, and people avoided to be on their way like the plague. Nobody dared to say a thing while she was passing by. You could hear a needle drop to the floor.

That lasted until the policemen left the building, and the door was closed again. But when she left, everybody started to comment on what had just happened to one of the hosts of the party. It didn't bother me, because the central piece of the gossip was her and nobody was talking about me actually, but since I promised her that I would take care of the invitees, I started to work on this task.

"Hey, kid, what the hell is going on?" One of my partners asked loudly. Anthony Jameson was a friend of my grandpa's, and he still remained on the council even after his friend Michael passed. When Anthony asked me this, all the looks went from the door to me.

"Oh, my God! Can you believe in this scandal?" I heard a voice whispering behind me. When I turned towards the voice, it was Alissa Thomson gossiping again. There was a woman by her side, and she had a smirk on her lips as if she knew of



something. As they both saw me turning to them, their faces dropped their ridiculous smiles. They looked apologetic, but never verbalized not even a "I'm sorry."

Finally, the event organizer appeared and tried to organize the end of the event: "Ok, ladies and gentlemen, I'm sorry for what happened here today, but now I'm going to ask you to calm down, ok?" She told us

And when people started to take their seats, she walked over to me and said: "Hello, Mr. Brown. I'm sorry to bother you, but what the hell is going on?"

I raised my eyebrows and asked her: "Well isn't that obvious? My fiancé just got arrested just before the rehearsal dinner."

I bet that the wedding planner never had this kind of trouble before, because she opened and closed her mouth as if she was a fish fighting to breath outside water. But suddenly, she put on the best smile on her face to disguise her shock and murmured: "Well, that is a first at a rehearsal dinner, and I've seen my share of crazy things happening in these events. But that is not the time to tell you these stories. This is time for crisis management," she said, but I didn't know if she was talking to herself or to me.

Suddenly, she turned to my direction and said: "Sir, I normally respect any decision that the couple has, but for that, I need to know how to act regarding your guests," she advised.

"Dismiss everyone, please. I'm still processing what the hell just happened," I mumbled to her, and she nodded. There. This way I would still look like an interested fiancé. But I want everybody gone because I wanted to go to the police station fast and arrive there before Alexander arrives.

"And are you okay, sir?" She asked me.

I gave her a tight smile, and murmured: "I'll be fine, " and left her to deal with all these people.

On the way to the police station, I called Vincent.

There was no time to waste now, and he had a crucial task in this whole story. I didn't have time to catch up with him at the rehearsal dinner, but as my best man, he was there, obviously.

"Hey, man, what the hell just happened?" Vincent asked me as soon as he answered the call.

"Hey Vince, yeah, that was exactly what you think.

The plan is on. I hope you have the thing that I asked you for, because now that Alexander has taken a heavy blow and Tess has finally been arrested, they will regroup and be prepared for my





next attack or they may even consider launching one against me," I told him.

"Yeah, yeah, I know. Listen, Ethan, I got the authorization, but..." Vincent said a little



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uncomfortable.

"What is it, Vince?" I asked.

"Are you sure you're going to do this?" Vincent asked me uncertainly.

Sometimes, I didn't understand Vincent's hesitation, but he needed an affirmation, so I told him: "I need to make sure my grandfather's death

was of natural causes. And if it wasn't, I need to make sure the culprit pays for what they did."

Vincent sighed and then muttered, "Then if you're absolutely sure, let's go ahead."

"Thanks, Vince. I'll catch up with you later," I said and killed the call.

When I got to the police station, I didn't see alexander's car around, which was a good thing. It meant that he hadn't been notified yet or was on his way, but that also means that I could have a good conversation with Tess alone. So, I walked into the station and detective Pratt received me immediately.

"Mr. Brown, I knew that you should come up at any time when we left the hotel," he told me.

I nodded at him and asked: "And how is she?"

Detective Pratt sighed and mumbled: "Well, she entered the station and was processed. You know, the regular stuff. And now, she is in her own cell," he told me.

"But was she supposed to be in an exclusive cell or are you guys giving her special treatment?" I asked him.

"That's not the case, sir. She is in an exclusive cell



because even though she agreed to come with us back at the hotel, she continued to cause a huge scandal along the way and here at the police station. So, as she was causing trouble and this is not a correction facility, we had no other options but put her on a cell by herself, otherwise she could incite other women to cause trouble too," he told me.

"Got it," I told him, and then, I asked: "Can I see her?"

"Of course, sir. She is your fiancé after all. Please, follow me," Detective Pratt told me and led the way through a long corridor.

I thought that I would hear the same Tess making a fuss as big as the one that she did at the hotel, but instead, all I heard was a low, desperate cry.

And then, detective Pratt turned to her and said: "
You have a visitor, Miss Astor."

Tess looked up unsure, but when she saw me, she sighed with relief. "Oh, there you are, darling! You are here, it makes everything so much better!" she exclaimed.

"Well, I'll leave you two alone," detective Pratt told us and left towards the main room of the police station.



I looked at Tess behind those bars and murmured:
"Well, I won't ask you how you are all right now,
Tess, even because it's obvious that you're not
doing fine," I told her.

"Oh, Ethan, I'm so glad that you understand me!"
She said and cried once again.

"You're going to help me to get out of here, aren't you?" she asked unsure.

"Well, I will hire you a good lawyer, but that's all I'll do," I told her.

Tess had a watery smile that faded when I answered her like that. She I frowned and said: "I'm sorry, darling. I'm a little confused, so I don't think I did not understand you. Did you really say that's the most you'll do is to hire me a lawyer? How about talking to authorities, doing anything that is possible...?" She asked to confirm again what I said.

I looked at her and said: "Yes, that's all that I'll do, and that's more than you deserve," I told her, and her face suddenly turned pale.

"Are you serious, Ethan? You are the father of my child! You need to protect me no matter what!" she pleaded with desperate big eyes.



I smiled at her ironically and said: "But we both know that there is no the child in your womb, isn't it?"

At that moment, any other expression that she had on her face was swept away by the despair. "
Ethan, what are you doing?" she asked me.

"Well, Tess, we both know that this is not my fault, is it?" I asked her. "This is your own doing," I told her.

"What do you mean? I didn't do anything!" She exclaimed to me.

"You're reaping what you've sown," I answer her as if I was a teacher trying to be as didactic as possible with a student who couldn't understand the subject being explained.

Tess turned her head and said: "No! You're wrong! I didn't do anything!"

I remained staring at her with arched eyebrows and said: "So, if for you it's nothing, for me, you tried to deceive me, you have threatened my wife's and my son's lives and treated me as if I were an i\*\*\*t for all these years. And as if this wasn't enough, you hurt Patricia and possibly could have made it even worse if you had achieved your goals, isn't it, Tess?" I asked her angrily.



"Ethan, this whole thing is a huge mistake! It's not what you're thinking!" She exclaimed.

"Well, that's exactly what I'm thinking, Tess. I know that you're guilty. The forensics don't lie, and the investigation is over already. It was you who took the gun that day to my house, and it was you who threatened the lives of Patricia and Hannah, and even though you pretended to be innocent and I really I should have been worried about you because you were shot, I should have been worried about my wife, the baby she was carrying and poor Patricia who was the one who got the worst of this whole damn thing and was still being sedated by people that you and your lover hired, isn't?" I asked her.

Suddenly, Tess's face transformed from that innocent façade that she put often to something else, and she said: "Patricia was just in the wrong place at the wrong time, and as for Hannah, nothing actually happened to her, and honestly, I really wish it had happened. Oh, and by the way, I really wish Hanna hadn't happened in our lives, then we'd still be at peace," she confessed to me.

I c\*\*\*\*d my head to the side, squinted my eyes, and murmured: "Hey, so there is the real Tess who finally decided to show her claws! You know, Tess,



no one can live their whole lives pretending to be someone else, and your mask just fell off. So, this is the end of your conversation. I came here just to



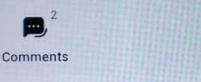
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say good luck, and that I've waited for this day for a long time," I told her, and then, I turned my back on her.

"Wait, Ethan! Don't turn your back on me! Don't you dare to leave me here!" she threatened.

"What is it?" I asked her. "What can you do against me, Tess? You are already in jail, anyway," I told her and left.

However, at that moment, I realized that we weren't alone. Alexander was already in the building because it was completely foreseeable that his lover would call him first thing when she got arrested. Too bad that I couldn't say a word to him because when I opened my mouth to talk to him about my contempt towards their attitudes, all that I could do was watch his fist close coming in my direction, and less than a second later, I felt the impact of the punch he gave me.



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