



Simply Being Iggy

Iggy likes his life being easy. However, since being online with a woman and finally setting up a meeting with said woman, his life has changed for the weird. When he was stood up for the meeting, he leaves and comes across a crime scene. His amateur sleuth mind ends up helping to solve the mystery that he stumbled upon. Iggy soon learns how lucky he is to have the family he has compared to the victim's. He knows he has all that he needs.

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Iggy is a simple man, never wanting much, never needing much either. He likes to live within his means and save for a rainy day or for something special that may come down the way. It is because he knew how to save that he bought his own car by the time he was leaving for college. It is also how he lost his wife. She wanted a man with drive and ambition. Iggy has always done well financially, he is no slouch in his field but she always seemed to want more material things than he was interested in. She demanded more than he could give her in many ways. His two children appear to be more like him than her so she willingly left them behind for higher ground and greener pastures. Those were her exact words when she ran out on them. It didn't take long for her to find a man who could give her the lifestyle she wanted.

Lately his daughters, now 10 and 14 have been telling him he should start dating already. They even decided to help him fill out his profile for an online dating service. His older daughter helped him answer some of the questions the women who reached out to him asked of him. She says he deserves only the best and nothing else will do.

His first wife he married right out of college, now at the age of 37, he feels young enough to still be able to start anew and his children have been encouraging him of that fact as well. Tonight he is supposed to meet someone at the café by the park. It is an hour passed that time already, he is beginning to think she saw him from the window already and left quietly. He sends a text to his daughter to let her know what is going on. She tells him that it is her loss but also that she heard there is a 45 minute backup on highway three and since they don't know where each other lives she could be coming from that direction. They agreed on him waiting another half an hour before he leaves the café.

Which is exactly what he did. He sent a quick message to this mystery woman, *'I waited until 8:30. I hope you're ok. If you want to try again, you know how to find me.'*

Now he is walking through the park to get home faster. Since he didn't eat dinner, he decides to stop by a street vendor to get a stuffed meat sandwich and heads towards the walking bridge over the creek, it is always a nice place to sit at night. He wants to gather his head before going home.

When he gets to the bridge, he sees two dogs both on their hind legs with their front paws on the edge of the bridge, trying to look over it. They keep barking and jumping. Reluctantly, Iggy walks over to see what has them so upset. He looks over the edge of the bridge and sees a woman lying there face up, her head on a rock, her body in the wet soggy grass and her legs in the water. This doesn't look like an accident. Quickly, he dials for the police, the dogs have calmed down and he looks to see why. They have found his dinner and are busily sharing it.

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Iggy sits down and waits. He calls his daughter so she won't worry about him being later than he said he would be. She tells him they are good and watching one of their favorite comedy movies. When the police come they get his statement. He shows them his receipts for dinner and the drinks he bought at the café while waiting for a date. He even supplied them with the name of the waiter who was there with him. He looks at the woman one more time before he leaves, she is a beautiful woman; someone is definitely going to be devastated tonight. Finally, Iggy receives permission to leave.

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Cassandra can't believe her luck. She went on this website to meet someone who is specifically not in her social circle. She is tired of the men looking for a pretty face and a nice figure to make them look good. Tired of the men who always ask about her portfolio and how they will take over all the money issues so she won't have to worry about such 'difficult' things. Cassandra has a Master's degree in business and finance and they still see her as a simpleton whose daddy gave her a job in name only. They all believe she is incapable of having her own thoughts and ideas. Little do they know her father runs everything by her before making any deals with anyone anymore. Sure they have their disagreements on it but they usually come to a compromise that they both like and they usually win together too. They make a great team. She is the one who saw how his accountant wasn't being truthful too. Since then coupled with the fact that she saved him thousands on another deal, she and her father work together all the time now.

The only problem she has with her father lately is his desire for her to get married to the 'right' people. Only his version of right and hers aren't quite the same. Cassandra wants a down to earth guy who will love his children and not think of them as deductions or liabilities.

In order to do this, she signed up on a website that lets you talk to people easily, no true identity given. No one can look you up or check you out anywhere on the internet because they don't know the real you unless you want to tell them. No one will know she is considered to be in high society. She is the same as anyone else on the site, regular people. Someone who works for her found her own husband through this site. Cassandra has met, the new husband, he is the kind of normal guy she is looking for, kind and generous with his heart and his money.

Tonight she is supposed to meet up with a man at a café. She is not sure how to dress though, so she calls the woman she works with. "Deb, it's me Cassandra." She says softly on the phone.

"Is everything ok? Is there a problem? I can ask Joe if I can get away hold on." Deb says.

"No!" Cassandra yells into the phone, "Sorry, no problem at work. Um, well, this is kind of funny to say but ever since you met Joe I've been kind of jealous. So, I went on the site you always talked

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about. I'm finally going to meet the guy tonight, but I don't know how to dress. All I have is business suits or high end gala dresses. Oh, I'm not cut out for this." She sits down on her bed.

Deb is still holding her breath. Jealous of her? Cassandra, the socialite of all socialites, in the paper anyway, is calling her for advice. Well, I'll be. She says to herself. I always knew she wasn't what everyone said. "Do you by any chance have a simple black skirt? Or even jeans?" she asks.

"Oh, yes, I have the one from the company picnic, remember? You said I looked too cool to be at a picnic." Cassandra remembers now.

"Ha, I did say that didn't I. Yes, that is the perfect outfit though. It was too much for a picnic but it will be perfect for tonight. So tell me about him." Deb says

Cassandra describes the man she has been talking to for the past couple of months, she tells her all about what she knows, how he seems to be so kind. How he has two girls of his own already and has been raising them himself. She explained how she and he easily have a chat session that lasts over an hour each night now.

"Oh Cassandra, I'm so happy for you. You'll have to sneak a picture of him and send it to me. Are you nervous?" she asks.

"Scared to death. I can crush any man I've ever met or been introduced to at any affair or gala I've gone to but I've never been so open with someone before. I guess the anonymity of it all makes it easier to talk to someone. What if he recognizes me and hates me?" she asks.

"What if he doesn't know you at all? Will that hurt?" Deb asks.

"I never thought of that, I don't know. I think I'll be happier with not being recognized. I'm barely wearing any makeup. I don't want to stand out. Hold on." Cassandra takes a picture of herself now that she is dressed and sends it to Deb. "What do you think?" she asks.

"Think? I love it. You should dress like that more often. You look very approachable. I love you hair down like that. Cassandra, when you go out on these kinds of dates, you always have to have an escape plan." Deb says.

"I do?" she asks.

"Ok, here we go. If the date goes well, but you don't want him to know where you live yet, give him the address of the hotel we use for business. He will get the hint easily that you don't want him to know where you live yet. Or worst case scenario, if it goes bad, you have a safe place to be and you can call me. I'll come pick you up. How does that sound?" Deb asks.

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“Well, that sounds rather logical. Ok. I'll call you in the morning to let you know how things went. Wish me luck.” Cassandra says.

“Have fun.” Deb says. She runs to tell Joe what happened. She can't believe that Cassandra chose her to confide in, she is sure Cassandra's family knows nothing of this.

Cassandra never realized how important it is to have friends, tonight she knows. Deb didn't talk to her like she does at work, she spoke to her with caring, like a true friend. If nothing comes of this evening with this man, she at least knows now she has a real friend. A friend, she repeats to herself and smiles.

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When the officers get there and start looking around, one of them gets a closer look at the victim. “Hey Fred! This is Cassandra Wiggs, look.”

“Oh no. Don't move a muscle, call the boss. Really, not one hair to be moved and if you take a picture I'll personally make sure you are dismissed.” Fred says sternly to his newest partner.

With a big name like Wiggs, they don't want any mistakes, and they don't want the press showing up either. They proceed to scour the area for clues and do it with the usual care and then some for the victim.

When the police commissioner himself as well as the head of the crime lab shows up, they are happy they called. Fred and his partner take a step back and relay all they know, which isn't much. They hand over the information on the man who called it in.

“Why did you let him leave?” the Commissioner asks annoyed.

“We had someone run quickly to all the places he said he was at. Alibi checks out already, poor sap was stood up at the café and was crossing the park to go home. Very cooperative. He held on to the stray dogs too. Said they weren't his so we called animal control. They're in the bus over there.” Fred points to the animal control van on the street nearby.

“Ok, everything checks here. Time of death seems to be while he was in the café. But things change all the time. Not sure why she'd be over here. No big social events tonight and the nearest place for her group of people to visit is at least eight or so blocks away” the Commissioner says to no one in particular.

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“Just an observation sir, but her outfit doesn’t look like anything you’d wear to a swanky place. Something tells me she was meeting some less fancy person or people. But I’m only guessing.” Fred says.

Her body is already on the gurney from the coroner’s office. “Good point Fred. Take her in we’ll go notify the family. They won’t be happy I’m showing up at their door at 10:30 at night unannounced, that is for sure.” He grumbles to himself. He turns back to the officers.

“Fred, you come with me your partner can start the paperwork. The rest of you had better scour this place like you’ve never done before. I don’t care if you get down on your knees and pick up each leaf on the ground. Find something!” he looks around at all the people there from the crime lab as well as the uniformed officers.

Pulling up to the house, the Commissioner takes a deep breath before getting out of the car. He has had his run in with Mr. Wiggs before and they’ve always been explosive. This part of his job is never easy. Last week he had to inform a young mother that her son was hit by a car, she couldn’t decide if she was overwhelmed by the news or by the fact that he came himself to tell her. She told him flat out that she assumed he was reserved for only those that can afford to pay higher taxes. He responded by saying, “Your son is a citizen as all the rest are.” It nearly broke his heart to see her cry, he held her against himself personally. It was a hard night for all of them. He is still haunted by the look on the dead boy’s face. He never knew what hit him. Dumb drunk driver.

He nods to Fred and Fred knocks on the door, waits a moment and knocks again then steps back and they wait. Mr. Wiggs himself opens the door looking pensive at the Commissioner and then at Fred and back at the Commissioner. “Is she with you?” he asks quietly.

“Is who with me? The Commissioner asks.

“Cassandra. I went to tell her something a few minutes ago and she wasn’t in her room, not answering her phone either.” For the first time the reality of who is in front of him sinks in. Mr. Wiggs crumbles to the ground before either man can catch him. He shakes his head no, “We had a fight over some business today. She said I had to learn to trust her more. I checked her angle, took me all day. She was right. I taught her well. Damn if I didn’t trust her fully yet. I’m such a fool. She has always been right, always you hear me?” he looks back at them. “Where is she?”

The Commissioner squats down near Mr. Wiggs to look him in the eye. “We need you to come down and identify the body. I’m sorry, she was found by a good semaritan in Brighton’s Park.” He says.

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Mr. Wiggs looks him in the eye. He looks over his shoulder up the stairs and shakes his head again. The Commissioner takes that to mean not to speak loudly, that he doesn't want the family to hear this yet. He helps the man up now.

"I should be screaming at you. Crying, something. But right now I'm not afraid to admit, I'm numb Eugene, completely numb." Mr. Wiggs says quietly.

"I hate this part of my job." The Commissioner responds.

"I know. We've yelled at each other before, had some pretty heated arguments as I recall but that is why I respect you Eugene. You don't take my crap at face value. You fight me, you tell me I'm wrong and I'm man enough to back away when I see you're right. Come let's go before it gets out to the press, things like this always do." He starts to walk out towards the Commissioner's car. They follow him quietly.

"It never gets out by my people, I'd fire them on the spot and they all know it." Eugene says.

"No, its not yours. It's mine. I'm sure of it. Can't seem to find out who though, making me crazy these last few months. I can't take a piss without someone knowing what color it is. Maybe that no good son in law of mine is behind all of this. He loves the spotlight. Always volunteers to handle the press for me." He turns to Fred, "Mind if I sit in the front with Eugene?" he asks Fred.

"No sir. Sorry for your loss. If you need someone to guard the body tonight, I'll volunteer. My shift ended an hour ago." Fred responds kindly

"You see that Eugene? My people would never volunteer for something unless they thought there was a payout for them somewhere. But then it's not volunteering then is it? You've got good people Eugene. Damn old fool that I am. Do I let people walk on me?" he asks looking at Eugene. Mr. Wiggs thinks long and hard about who could be behind all of this? His wife? His younger son? No he doesn't care enough about the family to try and he loves Cassandra the best of all. "Eugene, I meant what I said, get someone to trace my son in law's night and for the next couple of days can you have him followed? Watched? Get your best. I'm sure he is involved in something, if not this, it is something else I should know about. I think he pays people in the press. Feeds them tidbits of info about our whereabouts. Head to toe search him if you can justify it." Now this is the voice Eugene is used to hearing.

"Fred, its times like these we are on a first name basis. Call in to your supervisor and tell him to get the beaver out, he'll know what it means.

"Yes sir." Fred says.

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Mr. Wigg's phone rings, a very shaky voice says, "Sir this is Deb from Cassandra's office. Sir, my gut tells me something is wrong. I know where she was tonight and why but my gut is telling me something is wrong. She won't answer my calls or my texts, we had worked out a signal for tonight, that's not a good sign. I'm not afraid to say, I'm scared." She says.

Mr. Wiggs had hit speaker the moment she said Cassandra's name. Eugene looks to Wiggs, "Ms, this is Commissioner Sacks. I'm in the car with Mr. Wiggs. What can you tell us about where she was going?"

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Cassandra takes a cab to the beginning of the park. She didn't want anyone to see her so she decided to walk across the park for the rest of the journey, she calls Deb again. "Hi, I took two cabs already. One to the hotel, then I waited ten minutes and took another to the park. I'm going to cross the park and you said the café is on the other side?"

"Yes, you can't miss it. You are so funny. Hard not to be yourself?" she asks.

"The funny thing is I feel more like me than I have in a long time. I'm just being a woman who is out to meet a man. Simple, no frills, no expectations. I'm loving this. I really hope it was not all talk. I'm dying to be in a real relationship. Besides having a new best friend, a boyfriend would really make me happy." Cassandra admits to Deb.

"Well then maybe it is your lucky night. How are you supposed to know it's him?" Deb asks.

"Oh, he said he was going to wear whatever his daughter's tell him to wear so he wasn't sure, but he said he would sit at a particular table, it's his regular spot and that I should ask to speak to the mystery solver. How cute is that?" Cassandra asks.

"Funny, why would he say that?" Deb asks.

"Oh, he says it has to do with his business and when he sees me he will explain. Maybe he is a cop?" Cassandra guesses.

"Maybe, or a writer! Ooo, maybe he writes those mystery books everyone has been reading. That would be so nice. Someone so far from what you do. That would be an amazing balance don't you think?" Deb asks.

"Hmmm, I think you're right. Ok. I'm at the bridge. I'll speak to you later. Don't forget to send me a text in an hour or so, I'll let you know how things are going then." Cassandra says smiling.

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"You bet." Deb hangs up and begins to calm down. She called me a best friend? I heard that right didn't I? She asks herself.

A couple of hours go by and Cassandra hasn't answered her phone text. "Joe, I'm worried." She says.

"Hey remember our first meeting? We could have had bombs going off around us and we wouldn't have heard it." He smiles to her at the memory.

"I know but we're normal people. This is Cassandra. She doesn't do normal. She doesn't know who she is yet. Something is wrong, I'm telling you its wrong." She looks worried now and Joe knows that worry.

"Ok, sorry. I believe you. But it is only 10:00. How about we wait one more hour. She could be enjoying herself. But knowing how she works, she will most likely want to get to bed relatively early. So you can call one more time at 11:00. Then we will decide together what to do. Ok?" he assures her and pulls her back down on the couch next to him.

As 11:00 rolls around and she calls and receives no answer, her panic begins. "Damn it Joe. I should have gone with her." tears begin to fall and Joe melts, he can't deal with her being so distraught.

"Ok, make the call." He tells her. They had discussed earlier that when the time came if Cassandra didn't answer that he gave her permission to call her father, Mr. Wiggs himself.

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Through tears in her eyes she tells Mr. Wiggs and the Commissioner why Cassandra was there, how she got there and the fact that she had spoken to her as she approached the bridge and she said nothing about seeing anyone. She had hung up because she didn't want to approach the café on the phone, they both thought it was not nice.

"It's all my fault, as her friend I should have escorted to this. Mr. Wiggs, I'm so sorry. I should have been there for her. I should have..."

"Done exactly as you did. You were her friend tonight Deb. You really were. I've been a heel to her lately. You did everything right. Encouraging her to go out with this person she has been speaking to especially since it worked so well for you. You did everything right. Know that ok. Sleep on that. Now go hug Joe and I'll keep you posted." He hangs up.

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Mr. Wiggs looks at Eugene, "I couldn't tell her, let her think we are out looking for her." he says solemnly as they pull up to the morgue. Everyone gets out of the car slowly. They bring him down to see his baby girl laying on a slab of stainless steel. Her hair is down, she looks simply beautiful to him. She always told him she wanted simple. He will grant her this. He will do a quick burial tomorrow, no fanfare, no friends. Family only. "It's her." he says and bends down to kiss her on the forehead. He looks up at the medical examiner, "any guesses?" he asks.

"No sir, do you want me to do a full exam?" he asks not knowing their beliefs in such things.

"Can you keep it external? I don't think it was anything else." Mr. Wiggs says.

"Yes, yes we can. She definitely fought someone, I can tell by what is under her fingernails." He says simply.

"We will bury her tomorrow. So do what you need to now. Fred here is going to stand guard. No one but the two of you are to be in this room. Minimally invasive please, for her." he says.

Fred steps forward and nods towards the men he came with.

Eugene puts his hand on Mr. Wiggs' shoulder. "Come, let's go make the calls you need to and get you back home." He says.

As they get back upstairs and he brings the man to his office. Mr. Wiggs finally lets loose of his emotions. He sits down and cries a cry he didn't know he had in him. For some reason he doesn't mind if Eugene sees him. Eugene had already closed his door. He walks around his desk and grabs some tissues for the man in front of him.

"She is my everything, you know that? My wife is a figurehead in my life, hasn't been a wife to me in years. Whatever, not that important. I think I will go forward and look for a simple life like my daughter was doing. Can I have your phone?" he asks.

Eugene pushes his private phone over. Mr. Wiggs makes the first phone call. "I need to bury my daughter tomorrow. If word gets out that I'm doing this your reputation will be mud and it will be the last burial you ever do, do I make myself clear?" he says

"Good, now get working. Use one of the spots already paid for. No, nothing fancy, simple." He pauses, "which part of simple don't you understand!" he yells into the phone. "She is here in the morgue and will only be moved to you when I say she can be. Your job is to be ready and to work fast and quietly. Are we understanding?" he asks once more. "Good."

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Then he makes the next call. He takes a deep breath and hangs up. "I can't do it Eugene. If I even tell my wife, she will go into a tailspin and want all of what Cassandra wouldn't want. The beautiful casket, the fanfare, the press viewing the grieving mother. You may think I'm cold but I'm not telling them until breakfast. I'll text everyone tonight as I've done in the past and have them show up for breakfast, then we will walk out the door together to a waiting limousine and go straight to the cemetery. I think that is what my baby would want. What do you think?"

Eugene looks at this man, what a load he carries, he is glad for his simple life. "I think you're the best father a girl could ask for to go to such lengths to make it right for her and not for everyone else. She will be smiling down on you. I'm sure of it. Do you think people will show up at the cemetery? I mean it is an hour's drive from your house to the cemetery. Everyone can be on their phones and tell the world."

"No, I will take care of that. You'll see. I'll need a friend there though. I hope you will come. I don't have many." Mr. Wiggs says.

"I'll be there." Eugene says simply. "Best if you tell Deb though."

"Ah, yes, but in the morning, she has a right to know. Take me home now please, I need to get at least an hour or two." He stands and Eugene follows him out the door.

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Iggy has been bothered by last night. He couldn't believe who was in the water. Cassandra Wiggs, wow. He is distracted when his daughters come running into the kitchen. "Morning Daddy" they say in unison.

"Good morning. So, how about pancakes this morning?" he asks with as much enthusiasm they are expecting from him.

"Um, no." said his youngest. He looks to her in surprise.

"No?" he asks.

"Well, you see Daddy, we thought you might be sad because last night didn't work so we were thinking of asking you to take us out for breakfast for omelets and maybe a donut?" she asks.

"Hmmm, yeah, getting out of the house sounds like a good idea. When we are done we can go over to surprise Grandma and Grandpa and make them come out with us today for a day of fun." He looks from one to the other.

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“Daddy, we love you, you know that.” The older ones says and jumps into his arms.

“And I you, and I you.” He says softly into the top of her head.

They leave and have a great breakfast together and then they go and surprise his parents by showing up. “Surprise!” the three of them yell when the door is opened.

“Well, surprise is right. Hey Grandma, look whose here!?” his father calls.

The kids go running in to see her and he stands looking at his son. “You ok?” he asks.

“Had better nights but woke up to these two wonderful kids and decided to put it behind me and enjoy their day with them. We came to drag you two out with us.” He says simply.

His wife and the girls are in the living room now too. “Where do you want to go?” she asks the girls.

“A funny movie and then the zoo.” The older one says sure that it will be accepted.

“Yeah, funny movie no more action ones.” Her younger sister says.

“Funny it is then. Mom? Dad?” Iggy looks to his parents.

“Perfect. Let me go change my shoes.” His mom says. “Maybe your sister and her kids want to join us at the zoo?” she asks hopeful.

“You’d have to ask. I thought her kids were scared of the zoo.” Iggy says.

Ah, that is not a no. she thinks to herself. “Ok, we’ll call after we’re settled in the theater then. Oh, what a wonderful surprise.” She walks upstairs and takes a deep breath in her room. “Maybe the two of them will get along now” she whispers to no one.

~ ~ ~

Eugene shows up to Mr. Wiggs’ house to escort them to the cemetery. Everything, so far, has gone according to plan. Fred is still with the victim. He is one strong soldier that is for sure. He waits outside by the limo.

They see the family coming out and filing into the limo as if it is a normal thing to do. He looks horrible, Eugene can tell he did not sleep at all last night. Not one wink. Mr. Wiggs nods to Eugene who nods back. The driver closes the door and gets into his seat. The cars begin to drive. Mr. Wiggs looks around at his family.

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He knew if he told them to dress and be here for breakfast that everyone would be dressed nicely. He takes his son's hand in his and says "We're headed to the cemetery." He says, choking on his words.

"Why on earth would we do that? Oh, that is a dreadful place, don't tell me you want to talk to your dead relatives. That's creepy." His wife says with disgust.

He takes a deep breath again, "Anyone notice who is missing?" he asks half choking half angry.

His son that is next to him squeezes his hand and nods, then he sees the tears fall and he grabs him in. "Thank you for understanding" he whispers in his ear.

"What are you two blubbering about? Honestly, ever since you've let Cassandra work at the office you've turned into, oh I don't know what, but you're not the same." His wife says.

His son speaks for him, "God Mom you're a cold bitch!!!" he yells. "We're going to the cemetery, there is someone missing in this car are you so dumb!!!! Cassandra isn't here, she is at the cemetery. We're going to bury her, man I really hate you right now. I wish you were in another car." He spits out his distaste.

His wife looks at him, "What is the meaning of this? You can't simply bury a person without the proper things in place." She says.

"Things? You're worried about things being in place and not about burying your daughter? Trace is right, you are a cold bitch. And you! What is wrong with you? Your sister is dead, that means nothing to you? No one has even asked what happened." He knocks on the window of the limo and the driver opens it, "Yes sir?" he asks.

"Stop the car a moment, I need to breathe." He says.

The limo pulls over and Eugene sees this in his rearview mirror and pulls over too. He sees his new friend and one son coming towards his car, they get in. "Drive"

Eugene pulls back out to the road and the limo follows. When they get to the cemetery, Fred is standing there next to the hearse. Mr. Wiggs walks over to him and says, "Didn't you sleep last night?" he asks.

"On duty sir." Fred answers simply.

He nods. He walks over to the clergymen he called last night. "This is all that is coming. You can begin any time you want." He says.

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Deb and Joe run over to Mr. Wiggs, he pulls her in for a tight hug, they stay that way a while. When they let go he turns to his son, "This is Deb, she works, worked with Cassandra every day. Her best friend really. This is my youngest son, Trace, he was the closest to Cassandra, not in age but in connections. Come, the clergyman is waiting."

The four of them are now standing next to Fred and Eugene. His wife, daughter and son in law finally decide to get out of the limo and come over. After a second or two his wife says, "This is our plot, she isn't supposed to be here, if you did this right we would have found her a place of her own." She says.

Eugene puts a hand on his new friend's shoulder to keep him from killing his wife. "You're right, no one is supposed to bury a child, but today that is what is happening. If you don't want to be here, you can wait in the car." He says coldly to Mrs. Wiggs.

She huffs at his words, "Are you letting him speak to me this way?" she looks to her husband.

"Better him than me." He glares at her and that is what makes her silent.

He and his son Trace lean on each other during the whole service. Fred lost some of his stoic stature, either from being exhausted or from being at a cemetery he isn't sure. Maybe it was watching someone bury a child and watching another one stand there so coldly. Seconds after the clergyman stops talking Mr. Wiggs, Trace, Fred and Eugene began picking up shovels and helping to bury her. The rest of the family walks to the limo.

When they finished Trace looks to his father, "I'm not going back to the house with them. Can I go to a hotel?" he asks.

"No, we'll go to Cassandra's apartment. I own it anyway. I promised her the place and then she has been paying me back like a mortgage because she insisted that she own it at some point. I have the keys with me. I knew your mother was a cold fish, but not one tear? You heard her in the car, I'll bet they're in the car now planning a giant memorial service that Cassandra never wanted. I'm sorry son, this is really what she wanted. I'm sure of it."

"I think you're right Dad." Trace says.

"Eugene, I need you to take me back to the house. Trace and I are going to collect our things and go to Cassandra's." he looks to Eugene.

"Do you want them around when you take your stuff?" he asks.

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"I don't care. Fred will come and make sure no scene is made. I'll bet the press knows by the time we get back to the house." Mr. Wiggs says.

"No, they aren't. The roads are blocked to your house after you left. They can't get in and if they do I already have people around making sure they aren't getting close. At least not today, I can't keep that up though." Eugene says. "I called in a personal favor. For a friend." He looks at Mr. Wiggs.

"Today is fine, it will give the two of us time to go in and pull out what we want with as little drama as possible. I'm done there." He mumbles.

"Ok, let's go." Eugene says. Fred follows in his own car. They are all the way out of the cemetery and half way back to the house when Eugene's phone rings, he answers on his Bluetooth earpiece.

"Yes?" he asks.

"Um, we're still at the cemetery. They told me they aren't ready to leave, that they have to wait for some people." The driver says.

"Are they sitting in the car?" he asks.

"Yes, why?" the driver asks.

"You're being paid by Mr. Wiggs not by them, he said drive to the cemetery and back after the service, the service is over. Leave now. Don't listen to them. If they threaten you keep driving. I've got you covered on this. No worries." Eugene says.

Mr. Wiggs shakes his head. "Oh no she doesn't" he says. His next call is quite loud, "Melvin, whatever she says is not what we agreed on. You even think to touch my daughter's grave and I'll have your head on a platter, she can't do anything without my money and in about an hour, she won't have access to any of it. Do I make myself clear?!!!!!" his words are coming through his teeth, his voice is coming from deep inside him.

"Sir, have no fear, I would never touch your daughter. Your wife asked me already and I refused, she said her daughter was buried in the wrong place and I said she was buried in the ground where else do you bury people. She began to yell at me and I hung up, then I sent my security people over to the plot to guard Cassandra. I'm paying them overtime for the next 24 hours, they will not be leaving their post. I saw how she behaved today during the service, I was there in the back. I worked with Cassandra many times. I'm so sorry for your loss, please believe me." He pleads.

"Sorry Melvin, you understand." He says.

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“Of course I do, but if I were you I’d be careful about your wife. I think she plans on doing something about this. Clearly she passed her coldness down to her other daughter, either that or your other daughter is in some kind of catatonic state that doesn’t allow her to feel emotion right now. I’m sorry that was not my place to say.” Melvin says.

“You’re an honest man Melvin. I’m sorry I doubted you. I’ll pay for my own security, Even if I have to do it the rest of my life.” He hangs up the phone.

“Now what Trace?” he asks his son quietly.

“Like you said, we go back to the house, pack our things and leave. Your next call should be to Lee though. Freeze the accounts, even for 24 hours, it will have her raving mad and your son in law will freak out as well. Do it, call Lee Dad. Make sure it includes all her safe deposit boxes at the bank, I think she has three now. Not sure what she has in those. Better to freeze things now, then, when we have calmer heads, we will think of what to do for real.” He says still wiping tears from his eyes.

“Trace, you think like a real man. I’m sorry I doubted your loyalty ever. I’m wrong and I’m man enough to say so.” Mr. Wiggs says.

“I had to hide it at home. Cassandra knew the real me and I think part of you did too.” He smiles at his dad. He nods and Mr. Wiggs calls Lee, his lawyer and long-time friend to take care of things for him.

Because they had a half an hour start on the rest of the family. They arrived at the house without them. Mr. Wiggs and his son go into the house and start running from one place to another. Grabbing all he wanted to get out of the house, including all he had in his safe in his office, all he had in the second safe in his bedroom. An emergency amount of money he always hid in a few places in the house and enough clothes to last him two weeks. Eugene’s car is stuffed with luggage as well as one of the undercover patrol cars Eugene had in the area and Mr. Wiggs’ favorite car being driven by another officer. They begin to pull out as the limo is pulling into the driveway. The cars stop long enough to avoid each other, but they begin to leave as he sees his wife get out of the car, she doesn’t even notice he is in the car.

They get to Cassandra’s apartment within the hour and everyone helps to bring in all the pieces that were thrown into the cars. It’s amazing what adrenaline can do. Mr. Wiggs had no idea he could move so fast. The limo driver must have been driving slow to give them more time he thinks to himself as the last of his life is brought into this apartment. He will pay him well. A loyal man.

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Eugene looks around, this apartment is the same size the first floor of his house. "Mr. Wiggs, I need to get Fred home now. Are you good?" he asks.

Mr. Wiggs turns around and looks at Eugene, "How did I get here so fast? We still have to find the person who did this, but today I've done enough. Fred? You will receive payment for all your time and don't say no, you did a lot and I'm a man who appreciates these types of things. I don't even think they knew where Cassandra lived. No matter, I'll talk to the doorman in a minute. I know where to find you Eugene and if you have any leads, or questions you can call me. I promise." He reaches out his hand, "And please, if I call you Eugene, you can call me Peter."

Eugene nods and he and Fred as well as the other officer leave the apartment. "Come on Fred I'm sure your wife wants to see you." He says and smiles.

"We're going to find who did this, even without a full autopsy, we'll find him." Fred says with conviction.

~ ~ ~

The day after the funeral the driver of the limousine walks into the precinct and asks for Fred and or Eugene. "One moment, let me see who is available." The clerk says to him.

He waits patiently in the lobby, well, not so patiently really he hasn't stopped pacing. He has been a restless mess the whole night. His wife told him he was doing the right thing by coming here and also for making the recordings in the first place, but he doesn't feel good, none of this feels right. He doesn't understand how people's minds work.

No woman should die so young for no reason. There has to be a reason, has to be. Someone did this. He empathizes with Mr. Wiggs, they lost a child to illness, at least they knew what was coming; Wiggs had no idea. No one deserves this. A hand on his shoulder stops him from moving, "Whoa, that's a mighty heavy load you're carrying. Come in the back with me, the Commissioner happens to be here this morning, solving this is going to be a real challenge without a full autopsy." Fred says.

He follows Fred to the back room and they close the door, he looks around and sees the Commissioner in here as well as Mr. Wiggs. He is not sure the father should hear this, he should be home mourning. Peter looks up at him and takes a moment to recognize him, "You're the driver from yesterday right? The limo driver?" he asks.

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“Yes sir, I can’t tell you how sorry I am for your loss. My wife and I were devastated last night, it brought back memories of our own loss. But ours was to illness. I’m so sorry you have to go through this.” He says with sincerity.

“I know you think I’m cold for being here, but being here is all I can do. My son will be here soon too, he went for breakfast and is bringing it in. If we don’t work to help we will go nuts. It is helping us cope. I hope you don’t think less of us. We are doing a press conference when he gets back. We want to beat my wife to the punch. Tell the world the truth.” Peter says.

“Why are you here sir?” Eugene asks interrupting Peter.

The driver shakes his head a moment as if being pulled back into reality. Nervously, he pulls something from his pocket and sets it on the table. It is a small recorder. He takes a deep breath, “Often times I record my drives. Most of the time I erase them after the drive, on occasion, I have turned them in to the interested party. I checked with a lawyer and he says I am well within my rights to record the trips, something about Bergen vs. Wakefield. I don’t know, all I know is that I have helped people with them sometimes. This is one of those times. Go ahead, press play.” He says and slumps into a nearby chair and bows his head into his hands. This one is wretched. He had to play this for his wife, he was shaking so hard when he got home she had to know why and he couldn’t use his own words.

The beginning came as no surprise, it is when Peter and Trace were in the car with him. Then the mood in the car changed when he got out.

“What the hell does he think he is doing? Oh that man is on my last nerve.” His wife said.

“What is he hiding? How come we didn’t get to see her as proof she died?” his son in law interjects.

“Oh, you are a smart one. That is true, what is he hiding that he didn’t want us to see or know about? That son of a bitch, I’ll bet she got pregnant or something and he is killing her off so no one knows. I’ll bet he is shipping her off to our place overseas so she can live out her life as the princess he always treated her as.” His wife says again.

“I can find that out quick enough, I’ll send a note to the airport and find out if our plane is being used because he would never send her on a regular plane. I’ll check the accounts too to see if any withdrawals have been made.” His son in law responds.

“What if it is true Mom, what if Cassandra is dead? I mean really dead, shouldn’t you be upset even a little? Do you not love us enough to even shed a single tear?” his daughter asks.

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“Oh honey, tears will be shed in their proper time. You have to set the scene. If no one knows I’m mourning what is the point? You will learn to control your emotions, don’t ever do what your brother did. He looked like a pathetic excuse of a man this morning, and your father was no different. Really? Wow talk about putting on a show. The two of them know something.” She says.

The tape pauses and Eugene reaches over to stop it. He looks up at Peter for a reaction. Peter looks to the driver, “Is there more?”

“Yes, I’ll fast forward the blank parts while they were out of the car at the cemetery.” He says. He gets up and fixes the recording to the next talking area. He sheds a tear and hits play then he goes to lean his head into the wall, it was hard enough to hear it twice.

“Jason, did you hear from the airport yet?” Peter’s wife asked

“They said nothing has been requested as of yet and that he will let me know when he finds out anything.” He responds.

“Good, I’m glad they will tell you. Peter thinks everyone answers only to him. Ha, he doesn’t know that I’m really the one whom they respect. Everyone tells me what I need to know when I want them to. It’s always worked that way. Prissy honey you will see. The women in our family are the strong ones, exhibit A is right over there crying like a baby. So pathetic.” She says.

“What is the plan Momma?” she asks.

“Well, the way I see it, we play it his way for a day or two until we get the truth from our people. Then, once we know we can decide what to do. I’m thinking that a new diamond necklace might suffice in keeping me quiet and you two could use a new penthouse. One more suitable to your needs since you are now expecting. You’ll need an extra area for the baby and a nanny. He will pay, I always get him to pay to keep me quiet. It’s what we do. I could write a book about all that I know. Make my own fortune and leave him.” She says confidently

“What would you write about?” Jason asks her.

“All of those secret meetings at our house. All those so called conventions he took his secretaries to. Do you think I’m stupid? I know what goes on at those things. The eye wanders but he always comes home to me now doesn’t he. Where is that damn cemetery man, does he think I’m going to wait here all day? She has to be moved now while the ground is soft.” She says annoyed.

“Mom, Dad never did anything with those girls, if he did, they would be devastated when he dumped them as they got back.” Prissy says.

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“Oh Prissy honey you are so naive, no honey, they are paid off. Each and every one of them, so every time he left with them, I bought myself a piece of jewelry to pay myself with. Pay myself for keeping him around that is. I use a different jeweler than he does so he doesn't even know I have them. Don't worry Jason will make mistakes too, its what men do but they always come home. No offense Jason.” She says candidly.

“Non taken.” He chokes on his words. “Ah, a message from the cemetery owner. He says he would never in his life move a body after burial and that if you want to pick out a different spot for yourself you are welcomed to but he will never do it, not for any amount of money.” He reads out loud.

“We will see about that. Hey, why is the car moving? I didn't say to move yet. Driver?! Where the hell are you going?” she screams.

“My orders were to take you here and then back after the ceremony. I've waited long enough, I'm driving back would you like to get out of the car or go home?” he asked in a stern voice.

“You'll lose your job for this, you know that right.!” She screams

“No, no I won't.” he is heard mumbling.

The rest of the tape is only of her rambling on about how she is going to make Peter pay for this mistake. How she is the most important person in the family and in the corporation. If it wasn't for her encouragement he would never have made it to where he is in society. It is because of her actions that they are so respected and in awe of everyone around.

When the tape is over Peter looks to the driver, this took a lot of guts to do. Some others might have used it as blackmail. “You will never be fired. Never, you understand that?” he says. The driver only nods in despair.

“Trace call Lee, tell him to deliver the papers pronto this morning before the press conference. I'm going to announce everything, all at once. Eugene, get the picture ready of Cassandra, at least she isn't beaten up so people will see her last picture as looking somewhat nice. Then the circus will really begin. I hope Milly will be happy one day. I did love her at some point. Trace, you were not conceived in anything but love, know that for sure.” He says to his son.

“I do Dad, I do. Let me go call Lee.” He turns to the driver, “You're one hell of a man. Many would use that tape to bribe us. We've had it done before. But nothing she says has validity so each person was turned away when it was proved it was all her blowing smoke. Thank you.” He

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pats the driver on the shoulder and walks out to make the call. Part of him would love to be home when this news is delivered, part of him is happy in his new home.

~ ~ ~

Lee turns up at the Wiggs' residence himself. This one he has to deliver in person.

"Oh Lee, how good of you to come yourself. My mother in law just put in a call to your office. Come in, come in." Jason says.

"I'm not here to see anyone, only to drop off some papers. Can you get her to come to the door please?" Lee says.

"Why don't you come in, we will talk in the library." Jason says insistently.

"No, she can come to me right here." Lee says firmly as he stares down this young man he has never liked. The day he married Prissy he became a pain in the ass to Lee, thinking he can call him any time and make requests that he is not privy to. Acting as if he is in command of something which he is not and never will be. Lee didn't like him from the moment they met, neither did Peter but his wife bulldozed him on about the wedding of the century and he let her do it to keep her out of his hair for a while when he needed it most.

After waiting 20 minutes the Mrs. finally comes to the door, he would have waited the same amount of time if he was in the library so he is not surprised. "Lee what is the problem? I called your office, you're here now, come in, since when do we stand on ceremony?" she asks harshly.

"No ceremony, I'm not here on your request. These papers are for you. I'd advise you to turn on your television in about five minutes." He turns and walks down the stairs to his car. Behind him he hears her yelling at him, no, demanding him to come back. He smiles and gets into his car to leave.

Mrs. Wiggs looks down at the envelope but doesn't open it, she walks into the library where her daughter and son in law are waiting her arrival, "Turn on the television, Lee says to watch it."

They turn it on the usual station and wait, the show is interrupted for a special broadcast. They watch, what they see shocks them, Peter and Trace are standing at the podium together. Next to them is the police commissioner and a uniformed policeman. Behind them is a photo of Cassandra laying on the ground, looking, well, looking dead?

Mrs. Wiggs sits up straight and watches, "turn the volume up." She says stoically.

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Her husband begins to speak. "Ladies and gentlemen of this fine city. I'm here doing the hardest thing I have ever had to do. You see behind me a picture of my daughter Cassandra, she was found dead by this very bridge two nights ago by a good semaritan who called the police. We thank him profusely for only calling the police and not the press as well.

She is not posing, she is dead. She has been buried already as were her wishes her whole life, to keep things simple. It is how she ran her life as you know. Please don't take the next week and a half to plaster her name and pictures all over the place, I plead with you as a grieving father, she never wanted the publicity her life gave her, never wanted the limelight to be on her. So, again, I plead with you to respect her wishes.

The next thing I want to say, is that if anyone saw her dressed like this at the park, or saw her with someone at the park, please call the crime stoppers hotline and let them know, all tips will be kept anonymous. We do know she was killed by an injection of some sort, we found the puncture wound on her arm. This is all we know. We don't know why or by whom. If you have any information, any at all, please let us know.

As long as I'm airing my dirty laundry I will tell you one more thing. You might as well hear it from the horse's mouth so to speak. You will hear it from me directly so there will be no rumors, there will be no need to pry and probe, the long and the short of it has been there all along. You've followed my life more than I have, recorded every last detail that no one really wanted to know so you might as well get this one right for a change.

I'm sure you've noticed that my wife is not here, there is a good reason for that. Due to irreconcilable differences we are divorced. Hence the reason you have not seen the two of us together publicly in a long time. We have gone our separate ways quietly for quite some time now. You see, you don't know everything people of the press nor do you need to. Learn to leave people alone once in a while. We only want to live our lives simply, same as you would and do.

Thank you." He finishes and steps back to allow Eugene to come to the microphone. He stands near Trace and he pats his father's back and nods to tell him he did a great job. Peter is shaking on the inside. It was harder to say out loud than it was in his head when he practiced the speech.

Mrs. Wiggs looks down at the envelope now. She slowly opens it up. The front letter is very simple,

Milly,

You never loved me, the idea of me maybe but never me. You showed that in the car and at the cemetery. As per our pre-nuptial agreement, the house is yours and everything in it. The items you

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stole from me, ie the jewelry you purchased under false pretense and the money you siphoned from my account to a private one of yours? Well, that all comes back to me.

Don't call me, I won't answer. Don't show up at the business, you won't be allowed in, a bank account has been set up for you and you will receive all that you deserve and not a penny more. The enclosed papers are not papers that say I want a divorce, they are papers that state we already are, it has been signed by a judge as per our pre-nup. You should have read it, it clearly states that all the little tricks you have been doing all these years go against that agreement. I could have called you on them years ago, but I didn't have the time to deal with it, or you.

Especially the part about you getting an abortion without ever telling me. 30+ years' worth of lies, very nice bed you made for yourself, now lay in it.

Ps, I know which kids are actually mine.

Peter

Mrs. Wiggs sits there, her composure no longer can be controlled. Her shock is so great she doesn't know what to do. She stares at the paper in front of her. Jason takes the paper from her and reads it.

"He can't do this! You need representation! Get a lawyer have them go over the agreement, you can't let him stonewall you like this." Jason is angry for her but when he looks back at her he sees, she is no longer angry, in fact, he is not sure how she feels. He reads to the end, and is curious as to what that means. He looks to his wife and wonders if she is a real daughter or not, that may pose problems for him in the future, he thinks to himself.

~ ~ ~

The press is calling out questions one after the other the Commissioner stops them quickly. "I believe you have all the information you need. There is nothing left to say here." He looks out to the crowd and he sees one man texting on his phone very quickly, he signals with his eyes to one of his men to stop that man and bring him back to the precinct. The officer nods and walks to the man in question.

~ ~

Milly walks through her house and realizes it is very quiet this morning. She had her breakfast already laid out in the breakfast room and only now sees that the dishes are still there. She walks to the back of the house; the area where her staff lives and sees that it is quiet here too. She goes from

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one room to the next, each one has been cleaned out. They are all gone too. What has she done? How did he find out?

She paid a lot of money to those doctors to keep her abortion quiet, they betrayed her. It was their fault, she will sue them for slander! No, she stops in her tracks, if she does that she will have to admit why she was there. If she does that, the person whose child it was will know too. This is bad, very bad.

She will have to figure out a way to hold her head high when she walks into the club later today, she is sure everyone has heard by now. She will have to laugh it off. Her phone buzzes and she looks down to see a text from her bank.

As of 8:00 this morning, all assets have been frozen. You will be notified when they open again. Thank you for your patients.

It's all in the agreement, she knew this was coming. She knows the exact amount that she is supposed to get from him in the event of a divorce. She is the one who made up the number. He agreed readily when they were young and in love. She has her own account though, one she has on the side. Mrs. Wiggs is confident that he isn't smart enough to find that account. It is in a small bank near the club, he never goes out there, he would never know about it. It is her nest egg. Along with the amount he is supposed to give her, that means she will have double the amount she was originally allotted. "Damn fool, you don't know who you're fighting with." She says out loud.

"I will go about my regular day, the club, the salon and over to the gala meeting this afternoon. If he is conducting business as usual, so will I. He will see I won't crumble. He will regret this, then he will pay even more to get a reconciliation." She nods to herself feeling like she has solved all of her problems.

Mrs. Wiggs goes about her morning routine and is about to leave for the club when she hears a lot of commotion outside her home. She looks out one of the windows and sees the press, lots and lots of them. All vying for her attention. She sends for a car to be brought out front and realizes no one is around to receive that note. She will have to drive the car herself, only she hasn't done that in years, she is not sure she remembers how.

"Jason!" she calls to her son in law.

"Yes," he says.

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“Jason, bring a car around, I need to be taken to the club. We need to make life look normal. You’ll have to drive me, apparently all our staff has left during the night, and Prissy you’ll have to go through the house and make sure nothing was stolen by them while I’m gone.

Jason, why aren’t you moving?” she asks.

“Um, I have to go to work, I can’t drive you all around today, call for a car. How do you think it will look if I don’t show up to work? I still have a job at your husband’s business.” He says seriously.

“Oh, good point. Ok, I’ll call one, I hope they can get through this crowd. I’ll call the same company that drove us yesterday.” She says confidently. “That driver was good and quiet I might ad.”

She finds the number and calls, “Hello, this is Mrs. Milly Wiggs, I’d like to order a car to come in the next half an hour, you can put it on my account.” She says.

“We don’t have an account for you here. We only accept payment as the drive is done. Would you like to give us a credit card now or pay in cash when the driver is done?” a woman asks.

“Do you know who I am?” she asks condescendingly.

“No, and I don’t care. Do you want to pay now by credit card or in cash when the drive is done?” she asks again firmly.

Not having many options she gives the woman her credit card number and waits a moment, “Maám, that number has been declined, do you have another one?” she asks.

“Declined!! You must have put it in wrong, give me your manager!” Mrs. Wiggs demands.

“I am the manager, and I repeated the number back to you as is our policy, the number clearly says declined. Do you still want to order a driver and pay him in cash for the drive?” she asks equally as firmly as Mrs. Wiggs spoke to her.

She fumbles through her purse and sees she has a couple hundred dollars on her, “sure I’ll pay in cash. How much for multiple trips?” she asks a bit calmer. He froze her credit cards as well?

“Each trip is based on how far a driver has to go, and whether or not he has to stay in between.” She says.

“Well of course he has to stay how will I get from one place to another?” Mrs. Wiggs asks

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"You can let us know when you will be ready at the end of each place and we will send a new driver over each time." She says.

"What if I want to pay for a driver for the day?" she asks.

"We don't do that, it wastes my driver's time. No one likes to sit around and do nothing, they prefer to go from one job to the next and we respect that. In the two hours a driver waits for one person, he can potentially run two or even three other small runs and still be back in time to pick you up. It is more productive." She says.

"So, I have to call each time I need a ride?" Mrs. Wiggs asks.

"Or you can give us a timeframe and we will send someone to be there each time." She says.

Mrs. Wiggs tells her the three places she needs to go and approximately how much time she will be at each place. "That comes to \$450 plus tips and tolls." The woman says.

"Oh, well then." She looks at her wallet again. "Let's go to the first place and we will see if I need to do all of the rest today or not." She hangs up the phone realizes for the first time, he really has the upper hand.

He got her right where it hurts most. Her spending days are done. She will only have what is in this house and her side account. She begins to walk around the house, remembering that he has a safe in his office, she walks in there and sees it is open. He cleaned it out already.

The bedroom, she thinks to herself and runs upstairs to their bedroom safe, open, empty. Her jewelry drawer? She opens it to find a note *these heirlooms are mine, from my family, the rest is yours*. She looks down and sees only a few small items in there. Enough to keep her looking good though, she also has her diamond ring still on her hand.

"Cassandra's room. He probably hid things there since she moved out." She walks proudly to her daughter's room and opens it up for the first time in years. She never walked in here since Cassandra declared she wanted to live on her own somewhere else. Damn fool, see where that got her? Mrs. Wiggs picks up everything there is to move, pictures on the wall, drawers, even the mattress. Nothing. Empty again.

She tries Trace's room. Also empty, he must have left with his father and their staff last night. Only a few scattered socks on the floor. She rummages through his drawers, nothing of importance. She finds the ivory box she had given him one year for his birthday. Inside there is a note, *I knew you'd open this up and look in here, you're so shallow. What did you think you'd find? Treasure? Money? Hate is not a strong enough word for how I feel towards you.*

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The pounding on the front door startles her and she goes to the door to answer it. "Yes?" she says to the man in front of her.

"You called for a car? I've been outside for ten minutes waiting. I'm on the clock, are you ready to go?" he asks unceremoniously.

"Let me grab my bag, yes, yes I'm ready." Mrs. Wiggs runs to get her pocket book. No one came to tell her he was here, she is on her own. She has never been on her own. Never. She went from listening to daddy to listening to her husband. There has not been any alone time at all.

"I'll be back in two hours as instructed, if that changes, call the office and let them know in enough time for me to arrange for the change." He says as he opens her door at the club's front door.

"Thank you." She hands him some money and holds her head high as she walks in to her club, her space, the space where everyone adores her and loves her.

"Oh Darling! Thank god you're here. We never knew, why didn't you tell us? We're your best friends. We would have been there for you." A woman says with fake sincerity, it is all they know how to give.

This is the right medicine, this attention will be good for me, Mrs. Wiggs thinks to herself. "You heard Peter, we wanted that part of our lives to be kept separate from the public. No one really cares about these things anyway. No worries girls I still have the house and the jewelry." She smiles.

The women around her laugh as if she won the lottery. "Ohhh we knew you would get it all. We knew it all right. So, who do we set you up with now? You can't stay single for long; it's not good for you socially." One says.

"Oh, but there are so many to choose from now aren't there?" Milly laughs and puts her hand on her chest to flatter herself. The woman laugh.

~ ~ ~

Jason shows up at work and heads to his father in law's office. "You can't go in, he isn't there." His secretary says.

"What did you say?" he asks.

"I said you can't go in when he is not there, it's not a new rule Jason, only maybe it's the first time you heard me say it. Besides the door is locked. I can't get in either and damn it he has a contract I

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need to work on in there.” She says knowing it will aggravate him thoroughly and make her smile to watch him squirm a little.

“He can’t stop business because of his daughter’s death. Life goes on, that is why I’m here, to make sure things keep going.” He says smugly thinking she will relent and let him in. He knows she has a key.

“Do you have children? Oh right, you haven’t been able to make that happen have you?” she says equally as smugly.

“I know you have a key, if you value your job you’ll hand it over to me.” He says.

“Are you threatening me? That sounds like a threat. Maybe I need to call security I could be feeling my safety is at risk here now.” She says to him looking him straight in the eye daring him to say it again. Meanwhile she has already pressed the button to call them.

“What the hell did you say to my secretary?!” Peter’s voice bellows behind them both.

“Exactly she is a secretary and needs to know who to listen to and whom she can speak to.” Jason says feeling sure of himself as he always does.

“Get out of my space Jason, and if you’re smart you’ll leave the building as well.” Peter says.

“Sir, I know you’re talking from grief, I’m here to help you concentrate. Even your secretary says you’ve locked some contracts in your office she needs to work on. See, you need my help.” He says.

“I need you to leave. Oh good security is here. Take him out quickly. Straight to the front door, not his own office and change the locks to his office immediately.” Peter says.

Jason shrugs the gentlemen off of his shoulders and walks himself out. This is all his mother in law’s fault. She will pay for this. She can’t get in his way of doing what he has to do. He is so close to making a killing, one that will allow him to earn the respect of others.

~ ~ ~

Iggy sits at his desk and contemplates his past week. The poor woman from the park, it is so sad to him. No one should ever have to lose a child. The thought sickens him, he can’t get her out of his mind. There must be something he can do, he solves riddles all the time, it’s what he gets paid to do. Maybe he can help them? He sits back and sees four men standing in front of him. One of them, a police officer he recognizes from the night at the park.

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“Come in, come in. Oh please have a seat this instant. I was just thinking about you and how I can help.” He walks to his door.

“Margaret hold my calls and I mean all of them *nothing* is more important than this meeting you hear me?” he says sternly.

“Yes sir, not even Elizabeth?” she asks.

“Not even.” He says closing his door. “Gentlemen, I’ve been wracking my brain all morning wondering what I can do to help you. It’s what I do for a living. Please make yourself comfortable. I don’t know you sir, but I saw you on television the other day and I almost melted.

When my wife asked for a divorce I thought for sure she was going to run off with my girls and I nearly died. But I’m rambling and that is not why you came. Why did you come?” he asks finally sitting down.

Fred speaks first. “Do you remember me?” he asks.

“Yes from the night at the park, you were the first to respond. You had asked me to hold on to the dogs so you all could get a closer look. Side bar, what happened to the dogs?” Iggy asks.

“The dogs were taken to the pound, they are good dogs, abandoned is all. They seemed to be ok with you, I thought they were yours at first.” Fred says staying calm and keeping the room calm.

“No, not in my house, my baby girl is highly allergic, I had to come home and shower before I even kissed her goodnight that night. Then I threw the clothes in the machine by themselves and ran an extra rinse load afterwards. Highly allergic, don’t want to do that again.” He says. “Sorry, I keep rambling. Please, tell me how I can help.”

“Well, for one you can tell me how you can say you don’t know the victim when you’d been writing to her on a website for the past two months.” Now Fred is using his policeman voice.

“Well, that explains why I was stood up doesn’t it. Let me open my computer, please look on the screen on the wall. I’ll project my screen there. You see, ah yes, here we are. At the top of the screen you can see the website name and a place to click on to see my profile. This is what people look at. Here is mine, I’ll sign in.

As you can see, no one can see my real name, address or any other personal information. This is what Cassandra saw. Something about it she liked so she started a conversation with me. I’m probably the only one on here that tells the truth to people.

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We sometimes would chat for over an hour at night. I'm sure you saw that when you looked it up. Have you spoken to her friend Deb? She told me she was on this site because Deb found her true love and even got married through this site. I don't know if Deb is the real name or not but that is what she said.

So, yes, we talked for two months before finally deciding that maybe we should meet in person. Here if we go to the end of our communication you can see I asked her to meet me at the café by the park at 6:30. At 8:00 I called my daughter to say the woman was a no show and then I found her after that.

If I were to guess, I'd look up to find out who runs the site. Someone on here knows the true identities, they have to, we paid for the site, our record is in here somewhere. As I said, I'd start there, look for who has access to real records.

Oh, how would they know we are meeting up you're probably wondering. Look over here on the left side. We are asked to check here if we are meeting a chat-mate. I'll bet someone saw who she was or simply saw where we were meeting, not sure which. Was there anything under her nails? Any DNA you can get?" Iggy comes up for air and looks around the room. When he gets started, there is no stopping him. It is a personality flaw, he knows. "Rambling?"

Mr. Wiggs looks at Eugene, "Did we find anything under the nails?" he asks.

"We don't have a match in the database, doesn't mean we don't have the DNA, we do, but we have to find the person first and then prove it. Sir, can we get a DNA sample?" Eugene asks.

"Um sure, I'm already in the database though, had to get a security clearance for my work here. But if you need it again, I can give it to you. My prints are there too, by the way." Iggy says.

Peter looks at Iggy, "What exactly do you do that you asked her to ask for the mystery man?"

"Funny story with that one, my friends and I are all amateur sleuths for fun. In college we would dream up mysteries and solve them around campus. I had to work through college so when I saw things amiss at the place I worked, I would work extra hours for free in order to figure out the problem. Once I caught the store manager taking product at the end of the night. He was caught two nights later. Another time the numbers on a report I was handing to the boss didn't look right. He let my friends and I look through all of his books, everything can you believe it? Well, believe it, someone in his office thought he was clever enough to embezzle a boatload of money. My boss rewarded all of us with a steak dinner and in college that was like winning the lottery.

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Anyway, the idea of what we all did and did together blossomed into the business you see here today. We are a word of mouth only business. We don't advertise, it wouldn't make sense to. For the past 15 years we have been steadily working. Ok, the first five were pretty rocky but we kept at it. We've overturned whole corporations without anyone knowing we were in there. Elizabeth and I run the office here and our third partner runs an office out of Greenland County, north of here; that is where his wife works.

If I had known this website was less than on the up and up I would never have signed up for it. I'm sure your daughter wouldn't have either. But if her close friend got married through it, I can see the draw for her." Iggy once again comes up for air and looks around the room.

Peter, Eugene, Trace and Fred are all looking at him with surprise. "That's a very good point. The website is closed to everyone but someone knows the backdoor. Someone always does or they wouldn't be able to show content on it. Mr. Commissioner, do you have a staff that can do this? Get into the backdoor, figure out who can on that site? If not, I have a great guy. We don't ask questions, he does what he does and hands us the information. If you're ok with that Mr. Wiggs as a private citizen, you can hire us to find out." Iggy says putting the word hire in finger quotes.

"Dad, if he did it once, he will do it again, to another woman, or maybe he already has. Fred you need to check into any unsolved murders or assaults of women who have been part of this site." Trace looks to the officer and back at his father. The grief is so big, the two of them have not had time to really give her thought; they've been too busy cleaning up all the messes.

There is a knock at the door. Iggy gets up. He opens the door and ushers in Elizabeth and another man. "This is my partner Elizabeth, this is Mr. Wiggs, the one whose daughter was killed, the one I found, the one I was supposed to meet that night." He says looking at her and at the man next to her.

He looks up and sees a website open, Iggy gets out of the way and the man is clicking away at the computer. Eugene and Fred are astonished by what they see. Mr. Wiggs is looking heartbroken and so is Trace, for the first time, they are thinking about Cassandra and no one else.

"Not a very good firewall. Three different people got into her account. One is the owner or administrator of the site. Here is his name and address." He slides over a piece of paper to Eugene. The second is also an inside person, but here, this third one. He is not. He got in to her site via a satellite computer, one outside the business. Ah, what is this, oh you sloppy people, you always think you're smarter than me. He tapped into her phone as well, he was tracking her and knew exactly when she would get there.

Does the name Jason mean anything to anyone?" he asks.

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The room stops, Peter's fists are forming and he has them slammed through a nearby wall before anyone can stop him. "Eugene!" he screams.

"On it."

Iggy and Trace pull Peter back to his chair. "That son of a bitch. He wanted her job, he told her he would have it, he thinks he is better at business than she was. She had more knowledge in her little toe than he has in all his head. String him up Eugene, by everything you can. If he didn't do it himself because that would actually require effort, I'm sure one of his people did." Peter calls his partner, "Shut it down. Now. All of it. Tell everyone there is a computer problem, a generator problem, I don't care. Shut it all down. I'll tell you later. Oh, and make sure my son in law is nowhere near anything you or I own. ANYTHING." Peter says and is now completely out of breath.

"Peter, he has been annoying everyone around today. Security kicked him out twice. We've got this. Done, I hit the switch. Hold on." He puts his friend on hold and calls downstairs to where the generator is.

"Hello boss, we don't know what happened. I'll get it up soon." A worried man says.

"No, you won't, leave it. For as long as I tell you to. No one else is allowed to authorize you to do anything. If you get calls ignore them. I will call you when the coast is clear. Understood?" The partner asks.

"Not sure what is going on sir, could take hours for this to be fixed." He says.

"That's my boy." He picks up his cell phone again, "Ok, Peter done. How much time do you need?" he asks.

"I don't know, send everyone home, say you aren't sure. Give them the day off, no dialing in because if the network is down they can't get to any files anyway." He looks to the computer guy in the room and he nods.

"We're coming over through the back door. Vacation day, in fact in light of what happened with Cassandra tell everyone to take the next two days off. Paid of course. We will see them back on Thursday."

"Done." He says quietly, now worried for his friend. The intercom system was set up to be used in case of emergencies, this is one of them. It has its own wiring so it has less of a chance of being out when the regular lights are. "Ladies and gentlemen. This has come at a strange time but maybe a good one. Mr. Wiggs has just called and is asking that everyone go home. Take the day off, in light

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of Cassandra's death we should all take a moment to reflect. We will see everyone back on Thursday, by then the system will be up."

No need to be told twice. The whole building is filing out single file, as they would in a fire drill for the building. The emergency lights are on along the floor to help them leave, everyone must take the stairs; the elevator is out as well.

Security is checking bags on the way out. No one is allowed to take their computers home today. One man begins to argue with the security guard and tries to tell them how important his work is to the company and that Mr. Wiggs himself ordered him to take it home.

They called Peter, "I did no such thing. Whoever he is must be hiding something on his computer, put it aside and mark it. We're on our way over. Call the police if you have to, they will come." He looks to Eugene and he shakes his head.

Iggy is driving everyone over in their non-descript van they use for such purposes. He parks where Peter tells him to park. The whole group gets out and walks into a door that is also hidden in the back of the building. The emergency lights are still on all around the building.

"Mr. Wiggs sir, I'm so sorry about Cassandra." The security guard says with his hand out. Peter pulls him in and pats his back. "We all are, but we are getting to the bottom of this right here and now. Where is that computer you took?" He asks.

He hands it over to the computer guy. No introductions made. "Where can I work?" he asks.

Peter takes them all up the stairs to his office and sees his partner waiting. Trace takes a moment to explain everything to the partner. "Jason? I mean I knew he was a rat but killing?" he shakes his head in disbelief.

Every time Jason tried to use his supposed authority, Peter's people showed their loyalty and would tell him they would have to discuss this with Mr. Wiggs. This would make him even angrier but they all stood up to him. He must have found one mole though, one guy who needed whatever it was that Jason claimed to have and be able to give him.

~ ~ ~

Mrs. Wiggs answers her door once more today. "Hello, can I help you?" she asks the man in the suit outside her door.

"This is for you maám. I was told to hand deliver it. You are Mrs. Milly Wiggs am I right?" he asks.

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“Yes, yes I am.” She stands a little taller. Not everyone knows about the divorce yet. Her friends have all been calling telling her to stay strong and that will support her through everything. One even laughed and said, “Honey I’m on husband number three, HA, divorce is no big deal. You got the house anyway. That alone is worth a fortune. You could sell it, buy a small penthouse and have plenty to live off of for the next ten years. Trust me, I’ll teach you how. Kiss, kiss we will talk tomorrow.”

Mrs. Wiggs shakes her head back to the present, she opens the letter in her hands:

Dear Mrs. Wiggs,

Due to the fact that you have an account at Lawry’s Bank on 45th street with a total balance of \$750,000, the following check has been issued to you as the balance owed you from the pre-nuptial agreement you signed with Mr. Wiggs before your marriage.

Should any other monies be found in the future, monies that didn’t belong to you but to your husband, a full refund will be expected. Your bank box # 503 and its contents have been transferred to your current bank. Please call us if you have any other questions.

“Damn it. Damn it!” she screams. “His children, he’d never deny them anything. I’ll bet Prissy still has her account. Prissy! Prissy!” she calls her daughter.

“Yes mom, what do you need, is everything ok?” she asks.

“Prissy darling, I was wondering if you still had your bank account that your father gave you. With all that has happened we need to make sure we are all financially secure.” She says.

“I don’t have any accounts of my own. After Jason and I got married, he took over all of our finances.” She says innocently.

“Darling, you had over a million dollars in there. How could you turn it over to your husband?” she asks.

“Um, Mom, because we trust each other, unlike you and Dad. I never even thought about it. He asked for access and I gave it to him. Last I checked there still was over half of it in there. I’ll check again if it makes you happy.” She says and walks over to a computer to check her balance.

“Well?” her mom asks.

She turns to her mom, “\$500,000 were withdrawn today.” She says.

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“Is he allowed to do that on his own? Often times there is a limit to what the secondary person can take out. Call them.” She suggests, while holding in her stomach to keep from vomiting. Something is wrong, something is very wrong.

Without thinking, she sends a text to Peter, ‘Jason took out \$500,000 from Prissy and his joint account today. Today! I know you hate me but do you hate her too?’ Now she will wait.

~ ~ ~

Trace picked up his father’s phone and read the text out loud. “Ok, I may not love her but I don’t want anything bad to happen to her. Send someone over there Fred. Someone to watch them. Jason has to be found, and not at the house. Trace send her back a text and tell her to think of Springtime Lake. I hope she remembers.” Peter says.

“We’ve got him. Hook, line and sinker. Right here.” Computer guy says.

Mrs. Wiggs sees the answer. She looks at Prissy, “Honey, listen to me. Listen carefully. Don’t answer your phone for a while, even if it is Jason. No especially if it is Jason. Now, come with me we have to lock down the house. Do you remember we did this when you were little?” she asks.

“Yes, I remember. Is Jason in some kind of trouble?” she asks.

“I don’t know but we must be if your father asked us to lock down the house. Pull all the shades closed, I’ve set the alarm with a protected password, one you two don’t know about. Upstairs too, come quickly we have to get this done now.” Mrs. Wiggs and her daughter run around their large house, sounding hollow from their footsteps and the lack of other items in the rooms now. After all windows, doors and alarms have been secured, the lights all dimmed, she pulls Prissy into the kitchen to make something to eat.

“It is going to get worse before it gets better Prissy. We have to be there for each other.” She says.

“I’m scared Mom.” She says.

“Me too darling, me too but we are strong and we will come out ahead, you will see. Your father won’t let us fall too much. Ooo, the basement. I’ll be right back.” She runs downstairs to lock up all the windows and doors down there. She slides the boards they had used one time into their spots in case someone breaks the glass to get in from down there. She double locks the door from inside the kitchen. Then she runs around to the front door and fastens the lock they haven’t used in over 10 years. The last thing she does is start to pull down some very dark shades that were hidden behind the regular ones. The house becomes dark but at least they will be safe. The second shades will prevent a gunshot from coming in, but she isn’t about to tell Prissy that.

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She joins her in the kitchen and sends Peter one more message. "Done, even the blackout shades." Then she quickly adds, "be safe". Mrs. Wiggs looks up at Prissy, if they can recover the money from Jason, the two of them will be ok for many years to come. She knows how to manage her money when she has to. Despite what her husband thinks, ex-husband she pauses.

~ ~ ~

Everyone has been working for hours and hours in the dark. Iggy has uncovered three people who have private dealings with Jason, none of them authorized by the corporation. In a room with no windows, the lights are on and everyone is working hard. Computer guy has found a few glitches in the system that all point back to Jason and these three people. Eugene and Fred are half closing their eyes to what is happening and half in awe. This group works very efficiently and know what they are doing. Each desk looks exactly the same as it did before they came in. Coffee mugs not moved or even emptied, papers on the floor are still there. But in a matter of hours not months, this crew has uncovered the mole to the press as well as a plot to undermine and steal money from Peter, large amounts. The ring leader? Jason.

Peter's phone is buzzing frantically. He runs to get it, thinking something happened at the house. "It's from the security guard, Jason is on his way up, says I called him to come check on things here. What do we do?" he looks to Iggy.

"Tell him not to worry, we've got coverage here." He points to Fred and Eugene. They nod at Peter.

"Ok," he sends back a quick, 'not to worry the gang here says we have this covered. Thank you though, keep up the good work.'

"Peter," his partner calls to him, "with the system down, he thinks that he can get into the safes on each floor." He says panicked.

Eugene looks to Peter, "Nothing is in them anymore. My heart couldn't take the pressure of remembering which ones held which, whatever we had, its all up here in these two. Yours and mine." He smiles. "We should be expecting him in five or so minutes, depending on how much he is able to walk the steps. Fred, you'd best guard him from me." Peter says.

"me too" says Trace.

"Me three." Iggy puts in.

"Me" says the other crew members Iggy brought.

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"I get it, make sure he lives to stand trial. Got it." Fred smiles at everyone.

Eugene has all the copies of paperwork he needs, all the pictures of other papers he needs as well as computer and phone communications between them all. Eugene got the word that they picked up the other two people who had backdoor abilities to the clients. One checked out, the other one has been pushing blame all on Jason. So much for the loyalty and respect he thinks he has earned.

Peter gets another message, 'he is stopping on the third floor sir.'

'who is? Who is this?' Peter asks.

'friends of the security guard, he needed extra, we all came, he gave us your number as contact, I have a second guy on the floor with me now, how should we proceed?'

Peter shows this to Eugene, he writes 'follow him but not close, pictures are best if you can take them. We need to know every action he is taking. Even in the bathroom'

'roger that sir'

They wait some more, "Got the big one." Computer guy says. All eyes turn to him. "Offshore account in his name only, not the wife, syphoning money for five years now most of it from her account, some from the business. I don't think he was ever planning on sticking around. He probably has a goal number and then he would leave. Several direct deposits to four different accounts, I'm assuming these are the guys he pays. We're all done here Iggy. I've forwarded all this to our friend down at the 25th precinct. He says he is holding it for Eugene, whoever that is."

"Me" says the Commissioner. "I thought we were making copies here. What am I holding then?" he asks.

"Oh, those are the papers of proof he has tried to bribe and or threaten several other employees in order to get what he wants. You have very loyal people Mr. Wiggs, no one trusted him. They wrote you letters of every instance but haven't had a chance to get them to you is my guess. Or waiting for the right time. Now is a good time huh?" Iggy asks

Peter's phone buzzes again. 'he took a large file from behind the desk in room 305, headed up to your floor, he has been mumbling something about getting his due this whole time.'

'got it' Peter writes back.

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Eugene looks to Peter, "He obviously has a folder he has been working on in his desk. But his secretary hates him so I'm sure it is not as accurate as he'd like. In fact, she may have even forged a few numbers to make him think he has more than he has. Remind me Trace to give her a raise."

Trace smiles, but points to the stairway door, Jason has come through. They are watching him from behind the glass wall, one way visibility, in Peter's office. No one moves. No one says a word. Peter's partner nods and Peter does too. He gives word to turn on all the electricity as they see Jason take a box out of one of the desk drawers of his accomplices. One by one they file out of Peter's office.

"Put it down Jason." Trace says.

Jason looks up and sees the whole group, he turns around and sees not one but four security guards surrounding him.

"the gun is gone" Trace says again, he had given it to Eugene himself. "Who were you going to use it on Jason? Yourself? Your wife? My guess is no one. You were too chicken to even kill my sister. We have the guy who did it. He is at the police station now. Giving over a story of deceit, lies and bribery. One for the books I'm told." Trace says calmly.

"You had her injected with food dye didn't you? The kind you knew she was deathly allergic to. What for? The corner office that was never going to be yours? Or did she find you out. You left so many clues here it didn't take long to figure out it all ties back to you. As per your usual Jason, sloppy work, very sloppy work. Now hand over the cashier's check you got from the bank this morning from Prissy's account. You can't take it with you where you're going." Trace is standing close to Jason now with his hand out, all he wants is the check. He may not like his sister but she is too innocent to understand what kind of person she married. She doesn't deserve to be broke because of him.

"Found it!" a female voice says behind the group. Everyone looks to Elizabeth. "The handwritten note, I'm assuming from him. The one that reads, and I quote, 'you have nothing on me bitch and the next time you threaten me I'll kill you. Simple as that' Now, on the other side there is a typed note from Cassandra;

Dear Jason,

It is too bad we are related but I never liked you any way. I've found your offshore accounts and have ordered all monies returned to the company. That much I did for you. But if you ever try to steal from us again, I will personally have you fired from both the company and the family.

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Oh, and yes it is legal for me to get the money back considering you are not an authorized user to be able to do what you did with company money. A few bank workers were fired because of you and your inflated sense of self. The ones who believed you were given permission to do the transfers. Did you really think we wouldn't notice?

You're dumber than I thought. Watch your back Jason, because if you don't I will be. Your every move is being monitored now.

Sincerely,

Cassandra

Director of Financial Affairs. (a title you will never have)

I swear she wrote that last part, its all right here in her trash can. So, the way I see it boys, game, set, match." Elizabeth smiles.

~ ~ ~

With Jason in jail, Peter sends a friend of his over to his ex-wife's house to sit down with the two of them as their lawyer and financial planner to make sure they understand what they have and don't have. He has also been instructed to tell them about Jason and what he did. He had him put them on an allowance to help them learn how to spend and save.

All their money is there but they are being given limited access for their own good. Both women agree. "Peter told me to tell you that should you need anything extra you are to call me. If there is ever an emergency, you can call me too. Not him. He has changed his number and so has Trace. We have also arrested the man who has been leaking all the information about the family to the press. No one will know about Jason being in jail, unless you tell them or some other leak is there.

Oh, and one more thing. As a parting gift, Peter has agreed to pay for a driver for you and cleaning staff once a week. The driver's number is here, you are to call 15 minutes or more before you need him. He knows you don't drive, I'd take this gift if I were you. Most men would give you much less." He stands to leave.

Mrs. Wiggs stands with him, she puts out her hand. "I believe we can work with this. I will send the driver my weekly schedule. It doesn't change much. Tell Peter thank you and if you see Trace, tell him a part of me will always love him."

He shakes her hand. "Will do."

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He walks out and takes a deep breath. "Damn, I thought my family was messed up." He says as he walks to his car.

~ ~ ~

It has been a month to the day Iggy and his team solved the mystery with Mr. Wiggs' business which also solved who killed his daughter. Iggy and his girls are joining Peter and Trace for dinner tonight at a very fancy restaurant. "Now you two behave ok. I don't know what kind of food they have but you can have any dessert you want if you at least try and eat something." Iggy says.

"What about you Daddy, you don't like fancy food either." His oldest says.

"I know but we can't let them know. Ok?" he asks, they nod. "Mr. Wiggs is expecting us." He says as they walk in.

"Right this way." A man says to them and leads them to a private room, not part of the regular restaurant.

"Ah, you're here. I'm so glad you could come. This is my son Trace and you are?" Mr. Wiggs asks the girls.

"Hungry." The younger one says by accident, she puts her hand on her mouth and with her eyes says she is sorry to her father.

"Me too. Come sit down. I had them make my favorites. Fish cakes with mac and cheese and my all-time favorite a simple Caesar salad." Mr. Wiggs says as he shows them the table of food waiting for them.

"MMM, I love those too." The young girl says. "I'm Bea and this is my big sister Charlie" she says.

Trace looks to his father and he nods, then Trace leaves the room for a moment and brings back in a woman who looks to be older than anyone in the room. Peter looks at the girls, "This is *my* big sister Charlie, and she owns this place. Charlie, meet Bea and her big sister Charlie." He says facing his sister.

Charlie smiles at Peter, gives him a kiss on the cheek and then she says, "What is your favorite dessert?"

The girls look to Iggy and he nods, "We both love simple chocolate chip cookies."

"Ok, finish up and when you're done you can come in the back and help me make them. Yes?" she looks to their father.

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“Yes.” Iggy says.

“I always give her a heads up before coming, she knows I won’t eat her fancy food so she makes mine special. Trace and I love her food, but only the kind she makes at home.

“To new friends.” Peter toasts with his water.

“To new friends.” Iggy says.

“We decided on a simple memorial for Cassandra. Her mother has finally come around to being human again I’ve been told. She is missing her, they were actually close once. Her lawyer contacted me and I agreed to do this. We’d like you to be there.” Peter says.

“We’d love to come.” Iggy says.

“Oh good, mac and cheese.” A voice from behind says.

Trace looks over everyone. “Good to see you again Fred. Come in, this must be your wife. Please join us and who is this young man?” he asks.

“My name is Charlie.” The little boy says.

The laughter in the room becomes contagious. When the children finish eating Trace takes them to the kitchen to bake cookies with his aunt. When he comes back in the room, it is a lot more serious.

“What I miss? He asks.

Iggy looks around the room, “While we hate the way we all met, I think we are all happy that we did. While your version of simple and mine may be different, there is no reason why we can’t enjoy simple pleasures together once in a while. Even if it is a walk in the park.” He looks at Peter.

“Yes, a perfect place for a memorial. She loved the park. Fred, is there a park in the area that needs new equipment? We can do that for her. Have the memorial there and honor her at the same time. Help children. Yes?” Peter looks to Trace.

“As always, a great idea Dad.”

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The memorial is simple. Her family is here, mother and siblings. Deb and her husband, Fred and his wife and son, Iggy and his girls, plus anyone from the office who wanted to come. No obligations.

It turns out many of them did come. They respected her a great deal. The rest of the crowd came from the neighborhood, all the children who are waiting to run and climb on the new equipment. It is double in size of what was there, in true Peter fashion. A large sculpture of a daffodil is there as a sprinkler for the kids in the summer. Cassandra loved daffodils. She had them all over her apartment.

There is only one reporter there. Trace called a friend to give him the exclusive if he keeps his mouth shut beforehand. He did.

A simple event. Iggy misses the woman he spoke with. He wishes he would have met her, he certainly loves her family. Fred's wife has made them dinners a few times, it turns out they live not too far away and Charlie and Charlie love seeing each other even if she is older than him.

Life is back to being simple, the way Iggy likes it. He will look again to have a partner in his life but for now, his life is complete.

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