

## Get What You Deserve - Part 3

**By TheSpiralledEye**

Ashton continued to text and flirt, we did go out for that cup of coffee, which I paid for and I found myself oddly at ease in his presence. I'd conducted a paper thin identity to go by with him but it had quickly expanded. Ashton wanted to know all about me and I was forced to start slipping kernels of the truth in just to keep my story straight. Dahlia had my favourite movies and foods, a lot of similar childhood memories, that sort of thing.

At first I thought Ashton was just trying to love bomb me or trying to get as much information as he could to totally knock me off my feet so I'd be a simpering mess after just a few dates. But the more we talked the more I had to face the uncomfortable fact that he was being...genuine. When I finally did manage to get the man to talk about himself there was no bragging, not even the humble kind most rich people involved themselves in, hell, most people regardless did it.; but not Ashton. He didn't seem to think he deserved his position as CEO any more than I initially thought he did.

"But it's better than handing my designs off to somebody who only cares about profit. I care too much about this planet to do otherwise. If only other corporations felt the same." He shrugged as we sat in his penthouse drinking coffee out cracked mugs.

"I suppose." I examined the cups with confusion, mine had a WallMart sticker on the bottom and Ashton blushed.

"I bought this place to be close to the office, and it came with the limo." He explained, "But most of this stuff is from my old apartment, the mugs cracked a little from me fumbling them so many times but they're not broken so..."

"Don't fix what ain't broke?"

"Exactly! Just because I have the money doesn't mean I need to spend it."

"That's certainly...not what I would expect somebody making millions to say." I admitted and Ashton threw back his head and laughed.

“It’s so nice to have somebody here who doesn’t care about all those silly bells and whistles.”

I squirmed a little in my seat and forced myself to giggle.

“You should have seen it, I had a bunch of shareholders over for drinks and they all looked at my instant coffee like it was totally foreign to them. I think a few of the silver spoons in the crowd thought it was a joke.”

“No way,” I spluttered, “They’d never heard of instant coffee?”

“Only the finest touch their tongue apparently.” Ashton snorted and I laughed along with him; apparently not all rich were the same when it came to their level of entitlement.

Still, I was sure Ashton would prove himself just as snobby as the rest of them with time. I just had to wait. I had to admit though, when he spoke like this I could almost forget the mission entirely. Sometimes, when we were texting back and forth I found myself getting lost in the conversation.

“Would you like to come with me to a charity gala?” Ashton asked all of a sudden, clearing his throat three times in an effort to get the question out.

I had to hold back a laugh; he was actually nervous to ask me!

“Wouldn’t I stand out a bit against your society crowd?”

“No, well, maybe but I don’t care.” Ashton replied hopefully.

I realised with delight that this was the perfect opportunity for me to get some goodies to sell.

“Well,” I murmured, “Maybe if I could find something to wear.”

“I can buy you a dress, if you’d like, and the accessories to go with it.”

I smiled and nodded; he’d pick it all out himself of course. This was where the rich guy control would come out, he’d treat me like his little dress up doll, then expect me to act just

the way he wanted so I wouldn't embarrass him. Even as the thoughts crossed my mind I felt doubt. Despite all my suspicion Ashton had been...nice so far. It had been weeks and the act hadn't dropped, there was a little part of me that was starting to suspect it wasn't an act at all.

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Ashton picked me up in his sleek black limo I had become so familiar with and we drove to the high-end boutique district downtown. The stores here were the kind you only saw in magazines, with designer names I couldn't even pronounce and price tags that couldn't possibly be worth it. The streets were lined with valet-parked luxury cars, and the scent of expensive perfumes wafted through the air as we walked arm in arm; it was the world I had been dreaming of for so long. I'd finally found my entry, I just had to harden my heart again so that I could stick the landing and make sure I stayed here forever.

We entered a boutique with pristine white walls and glittering chandeliers; why a boutique even needed a chandelier was beyond me. A saleswoman with a perfect smile greeted us and led us to a private section where racks of gorgeous dresses awaited. Ashton smiled at me, his eyes sparkling with excitement.

"Pick anything you like," he said, his tone casual but sincere. "I want you to feel special for the gala."

I started browsing through the dresses, my fingers brushing against the luxurious fabrics and eyeing the price tags. I wanted something I could sell off in a few weeks. But the most expensive dress was a gaudy red and purple striped affair that I couldn't imagine wearing even temporarily. So I decided to look for something nice but still expensive enough that I could make a decent profit with. Ashton sat in a plush chair, watching me with a contented smile.

"Try the blue one," he suggested, pointing to a dress with intricate beadwork.

His voice was casual, I could tell there was no manipulation. The beads sparkled under the light of the boutique and I eyed the price tag, it was nowhere near as expensive as the gaudy dress, despite being ten times as beautiful.

I slipped into it, and when I stepped out of the fitting room, Ashton's eyes widened. I turned to the mirror and gasped. The dress was exquisite—a deep sapphire blue that shimmered like the ocean under moonlight. The bodice was fitted, adorned with delicate beadwork that cascaded down to the waist, accentuating my figure without looking too revealing. The skirt flowed gracefully to the floor, made of layers of soft tulle that swirled around my legs with every step.

For the first time, I felt stunned by my own new appearance. I could take in the subtle details outside of the obvious. Yes, my breasts were displayed nicely, but it was more than that; it was the sliver of skin from the slit skirt that was shown off, the gentle curve of my face, the soft bounce and contrast of my hair. I'd never thought of myself as ugly before but I'd certainly never considered myself hot. Until now; no wonder Ashton had taken a shine to me.

Ashton stood up and walked over to me.

"You look incredible, Dahlia."

"...I feel incredible." I replied.

I blushed, feeling a warmth spread through me that I hadn't expected and realising those were the first truly honest words I had ever said to Ashton. For the first time since starting my charade a felt guilt started to worm its way into my stomach.

"This is it, don't you think?" Ashton smiled, "Let's get you some accessories!"

As the saleswoman brought over matching jewellery and a pair of silver heels, I started to feel a pang of guilt. Here I was, planning to use Ashton for his money, and he was genuinely trying to make me happy. Loathe as I was to admit it; it seemed that Ashton was actually a nice guy.

He held out the heel and I slipped my foot into it; a perfect fit of course. Then the saleswoman appeared once more with boxes of jewellery and bags hanging off her arms. I could see the look of jealousy in her eyes; how many women had she seen come through here and get decked out with items she could never hope to afford?

The jewellery was stunning; dangling sapphire earrings that matched the dress perfectly and a delicate silver bracelet encrusted with tiny blue gems. The heels were silver stilettos, elegant and just the right height to make me feel both powerful and graceful.

I twirled in front of the mirror and as I took in my reflection and felt my resolve wavering. Finally, with our bags in tow, we stopped at a quaint little café. Ashton ordered us coffee and pastries, and we sat outside, enjoying the warm afternoon sun.

“You're really looking forward to this gala, aren't you?” I asked, trying to shift the focus away from my growing guilt. “Not like the night we met.”

Ashton nodded, smiling.

“Yeah, it's raising money for ocean cleanups which is something I am passionate about. Plus, I get to spend the evening with you.”

His words hit me harder than I expected. I realised that Ashton was more than just his money. He was kind, generous, and genuine. And here I was, planning to seduce him just for his wealth, hell, my original plan had been to black widow him! I looked at him, his expression open and sincere, and I felt a pang of shame.

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The entire ride to the gala I looked out the window of the limo, trying to convince myself to hate Ashton as much as I had when this first started. I tried to tell myself that deep down he was a selfish asshole and that if I just waited long enough, he'd reveal it. The man must have ulterior motives; maybe he expected sex in exchange for this dress. Yes, that had to be it, when I denied him he would get all insistent and angry, saying that I owed him. If he didn't that would mean that the bad guy in this story...was me; and I could not accept that.

The gala was being held at the city aquarium; apparently some charity had rented out the entire venue for a charity auction to raise money for healthy oceans. I looked up at the huge building as we got out of the car in wonder and suspicion.

“If they wanted to raise money for ocean conservation, couldn't they have rented a less expensive venue?” I questioned. “I don't know how much it costs to rent out an entire aquarium but it's probably not cheap, if this is just a charity auction I am sure a regular old hall would have done just fine.”

Ashton's brow furrowed in thought.

“You've got a good point, I hope the aquarium volunteered.”

Inside, the space was transformed into an elegant venue, with tables draped in white linen and centrepieces of delicate coral arrangements. There was already a sizable crowd and the soft hum of conversation filled the air as waiters rushed past with trays of drink and food. I spotted a few women eyeing me suspiciously; jealousy obvious as I tightened my grip on Ashton's arm.

"I don't really feel like rubbing elbows with anybody until I have to." Ashton said suddenly, "Want to walk through the water tunnel? You can see the fish swimming all around, it's great!"

"Sure."

We moved past the exhibits and into the underwater tunnel which ran through the main tank. The blue dress he had bought me shimmered under the soft lighting, and the matching jewellery sparkled every time I moved. I could hear the gentle click of beading and feel the soft fabric brushing my inner thighs. As we made our way to the tunnel I realised a few of those jealous glances from other women weren't aimed at Ashton at all, but my dress. It was...oddly satisfying.

We stepped into the tunnel, surrounded by a panoramic view of the underwater world. Schools of colourful fish darted around us and over the curved glass of the tunnel. Graceful rays glided overhead, and a majestic sea turtle swam by slowly, seemingly unbothered by the spectacle around it. There was even a shark lazily passing by.

"This is incredible," I whispered, and Ashton hugged me closer.

We walked further into the tunnel, the world around us shifting from vibrant coral reefs to the mysterious depths of the ocean. The lights dimmed, and the atmosphere became more intimate, with only the soft glow of the underwater world illuminating our path.

We stopped in the middle of the tunnel, surrounded by a 360-degree view of glowing jellyfish. I turned to Ashton, his face lit up with the soft blue light reflecting off the water. He looked at me, his eyes filled with warmth and sincerity.

"I'm glad you're here with me, Dahlia," he said softly. "These events are a lot more fun when you have good company."

I leaned into Ashton, resting my head on his shoulder, and we watched in silence, completely immersed in the beauty of the underwater realm, but I couldn't appreciate any of it. My guilt was starting to get overwhelming.

"Are you okay?"

"Yes, fine." I lied, "Just a little hungry, let's go back and get some of those canapés."

We walked back out into the main area which was now completely packed with people. A few of Ashton's business associates noticed him and soon we were surrounded. Ashton spoke to them all politely but I could tell he really wasn't in the mood to discuss company stocks right now.

I sipped at my champagne quietly waiting for Ashton to finish when I realised that... I had champagne. I looked around and noticed the army of faceless waiters, all walking around with trays of food that were slowly picked clean. Nobody thanked them, nobody even seemed to notice they were there; hell, apparently I had grabbed a glass without even realising it.

There was a bitter flavour on the back of my tongue and I drained the rest of my glass feeling disgusted with myself. Somehow I thought I'd be better than the rest of this rich crowd once I'd made my way into their world; I'd barely gotten a foot through the door and I was already acting worse than them. No that wasn't true, not all of them. I watched with my guilt growing as Ashton thanked his servers, making sure to look them in the eye and smile politely, unlike everybody else, including me.

"Are you alright?" Ashton asked quietly, "You look sad."

"I'm fine, just thinking."

His brow furrowed but he didn't question me further. Instead he put his efforts toward the charity auction. I watched as people threw around more money than I would have made in a year like it was nothing. Buying things they didn't need and making a big deal of walking on stage to write the cheques for the charity, soaking up the praise. Ashton sat quietly, bidding on a few items here and there and humbly writing the cheques in his lap to be delivered later.

The guilt had started to turn hot in my throat; why did he have to be so perfect? There had to be some nasty side to him, some rich asshole part of him that was waiting to

come out. Once again I looked down at my dress, it felt heavy even with the price tag removed. He'd want to be compensated for it, that was my only hope now.

The gala felt like it would never end but eventually, we were back in the limo, snuggled up together with my head hooked under his chin. We hadn't even kissed yet, despite going on three dates, he would be positively desperate by now. So I took a deep breath, pulled back and stared deeply into his eyes before planting my lips on his.

Ashton groaned and without thinking my mouth opened to swallow the sound. I'd been prepared to hate kissing another man but to my surprise it was oddly pleasant. More than pleasant really, it was very, very good. I could feel the slight trace of stubble, rough against my ultra smooth lips and Ashton's hand cupped my jaw gentle. My whole body started to react, and an entirely new kind of heat started to build between my legs.

It was almost tempted to keep going but I had a theory to test; one final gambit to get Ashton to prove to me he was actually a rich, entitled ass. I pulled away, blinking my lashes enticingly.

"That's enough for now I think." I whispered with a smile, dutifully ignoring the obvious bulge in Ashton's pants.

I waited for the 'aw babe no, keep going' to come but instead Ashton cleared his throat, sat up a little straighter and smiled that damn, lovely smile of his.

"Probably a good idea."

That guilt burned red hot in my chest and I felt a lump forming in my throat.

"You're not going to try and change my mind?" I asked "But that's what all men do!"

Ashton gave me a look of utter sympathy and placed a gentle hand on my knee.

"Dahlia, I would never try to make you do anything you didn't want or feel ready for." He said seriously, "Have other men seriously tried to guilt you into sex?"

"B-but you spent all this money on me! We've been on three dates and that was our first kiss this...this isn't how it's supposed to go!"

He was ruining everything! He was supposed to be awful, why couldn't he just be the dick head I thought he was and make this all so much easier?



“You’re supposed to be egotistical and rude and...and...why are you being so nice!? I’m not supposed to like you!”

I was screaming now, I probably looked like a complete wackjob but somehow I couldn’t make myself stop. Even when Ashton pulled the car over to try and calm me down. I flung open the door with angry tears in my eyes and jumped out, running down the first alley I saw away from the car and ignoring Ashton’s cries to come back.

I struggled to move in the high heels but somehow I managed to keep myself from toppling over as I ran. I ran till my lungs were burning and I could feel my chest heaving with the effort. I stopped, gasping for breath and feeling my chest rise and fall; I felt hyper aware of my new skin, the extra eight on my chest, the delicate curve of my feet and the ache that throbbed through them thanks to the heels.

I looked down and saw a puddle of god knows what spilled across the footpath. My reflection stared back at me, a beautiful woman with a cruel heart. There was no denying it now, I was the bad guy here. I’d been bitter, poor and lonely for so long I hadn’t even realised how twisted I’d become. I had planned on seducing and murdering an innocent man, for what? Having more money than me? Pathetic.

I walked home, even though it was going to take over an hour and my feet were already blistered. I felt like I deserved the pain. When I finally arrived and removed the dress slowly, almost reverently. I wanted to preserve it as much as possible so that Ashton could return it for a refund. After everything I’d done, the lies, the manipulation; I didn’t deserve it. And I didn’t deserve to sell it for a profit either.

I went to the bathroom and started scrubbing the make up I’d bought off and scowled at my own face. I didn’t deserve to be this beautiful either. I wish that witch had made me an ugly hunchback or something, it was what I deserved. At least with that display back in the limo Ashton wouldn’t be seeing me again; no guy, rich or poor, wanted some crazy chick for a girlfriend.

“Dahlia? Hey, are you in there?”

The knocking at the door made me jump, I grabbed a towel, wrapped it around me and peeped through the hole. My jaw dropped.

“Ashton?”

He looked so worried, his face was red and his lips pressed into a thin line that immediately dropped when he heard my voice.

“Dahlia, yes, can I come in? I’ve been worried sick!”

Before I could think better I unlocked the door and he practically fell inside; within a second his hands were grasping my arms, not roughly, but with concern. His eyes looked me up and down, scanning for injury and relaxing when he found nothing.

“What happened? What did you mean by all that back in the limo and why did you run away?” It was the first time I’d heard him raise his voice. “I’ve been driving around for hours looking for you!”

I just shook my head in disbelief.

“Why?”

“Wh-what do you mean why? Because I was worried about you of course!”

“But why? What do you gain from dating a nobody, does it make you feel good or something? Rich people are supposed to be assholes, you’re supposed to be awful so that I don’t feel bad when I...”

“When you what?”

You could hear a pin drop. I swallowed nervously and fought back the urge to lie and cover this all up. In that moment, looking at Ashton’s heartbroken face I realised, to my own shock and frankly horror, that I didn’t want to lose him. He deserved better though, if I was going to turn over a new leaf and stop being this bitter, poisonous person, now was the time.

“I...I lied, that night your car almost hit me.” The words felt bitter on my tongue. “I knew who you were and I used the situation to my advantage.”

The words spilled out, my whole plan to seduce him for his money and every single awful thing I’d thought along the way. Of course, I didn’t mention the witch or the fact that I’d once been a man; that was too much. But regardless I was still talking for almost a full ten minutes before I finally finished.

“And then in the car I was sure you’d try to pressure me into sex and I’d use that as justification for everything but you didn’t and I just...snapped. I wanted for you to be the bad guy in this story so badly and you just aren’t, no matter how hard I tried.”

The silence hung in the air, a lump had formed in my throat and Ashton wasn’t looking at me. I wasn’t sure what I wanted, for him to yell or walk away but I couldn’t stand this silence.

“Would you say something please?” I croaked, “Or look at me?”

Ashton’s jaw clenched and I braced myself only to have the wind knocked out of my lungs when he finally met my gaze. He looked heartbroken, angry yes, but more than anything he looked furious.

“I really thought you were different.” He said, his voice was stable but there was a strain to it, like he was struggling to keep it under control. “I came into my money when I was nineteen, and ever since I have been surrounded by people who only see the world through monetary glasses. Only saw me through them too. Oh we might get along well enough but I could never get over the idea that if I wasn’t rich, they wouldn’t give me the time of day.”

“That’s how I felt too, except I didn’t have the money to go with it.”

“So you decided to try and take some. From me. Regardless of how much it would hurt.”

I winced.

“...Yes.”

“Well. Thank you for telling me at least.” Ashton cleared his throat and turned toward the door. “I’ll be going now.”

“Okay.”

I didn’t know what else to do, so I stood there and watched as he walked out the door, leaving me more alone than I had ever been before.