



# A Typical Tuesday

The night was dark.  
The moon was gone.  
The stars didn't bother to show themselves.  
The air was cold,  
but peaceful,  
quiet almost,  
with the buzzing of people.  
A dog barked, a cat cried, a car alarm went off.  
It was just a Tuesday night.  
Everything's fine, everything's safe.  
She cried and screamed and begged for her life,  
blood dripping from her open wounds.  
She called for help, she shouted her throat raw.  
Her voice was hoarse, her soul was weak.  
She tried to fight but no one would come to her aid  
and as her energy drained, her will to live waned  
and the clouds rolled in and covered the inky sky.  
All was black and all was quiet,  
on a typical Tuesday night.



# Crystal Hearts

Dillon and Delaney Doherty were the heirs to the Doherty Dominion. Their grandfather, Dominic, had worked hard his entire life to help build their empire and to make it what it was today. He had a single son, Derek, who, along with his flower of a wife, Katherine, had perished, leaving the twins, Dillon and Delaney, to inherit everything.

Dominic was in charge in name alone – the portrait you hang over the fireplace and toast to – after a literal lifetime, he was enjoying his much-deserved retirement: taking long walks across his vast estate, having breakfast on the patio and reading his fine collection of books. He had recently taken up gardening – much to the actual gardener, Alfred's, distress – and quite plainly doing nothing. Leaving the Doherty Dynasty in the capable hands of his grandchildren.

Dillion was tall, well-built and had striking green eyes. He had red hair and delicate pink lips. His sister, Delaney, was even more beautiful, if such a thing was even possible. Like her brother, Delaney was tall, much taller than most women she came across. She too had flawless pale skin and emerald-green eyes. Her red hair reached down to her waist but right now it was piled high atop her head and her delicate pink lips were fixed in a pout. She wore a forest green dress that made her eyes pop; it was figure-hugging, revealing and simply put: completely inappropriate. The dress was out of fashion (not that it had ever been in, up to this point) and it was immoral. Her long, slender arms were crossed as she leaned against a wall and watched the other party-goers dance.

Dillon approached wearing a suit the same colour as his sister's dress, though his suit was both in-style and socially acceptable. He carried a glass of champagne in each hand and an un-lit cigar in his mouth. He

handed both vessels of golden liquid to his sister, then took the cigar out of his mouth. “You know,” he started, opening his jacket and pulling out a silver cigar guillotine from inside his pocket, “more people would dance with you if you dressed appropriately.” He snipped off the end of the cigar then pocketed both the travel-size guillotine and the snub.

Delaney made a noise a cross between a snort and a scoff. She rolled her eyes elegantly. “Oh please,” she countered as her brother produced a match book and struck a flame, “the only reason no one is dancing with me is because their mothers told them not to.”

Dillon laughed around the cigar that was back in his mouth as he lit the other end. “And why do you suppose mothers don’t like you?” he questioned patiently as he returned the match book and the used match to his pocket.

“I haven’t the faintest idea,” Delaney responded innocently, as she handed one of the champagnes back to her brother. He accepted it and the two clinked glasses.

The Taylors were basically the designated celebration committee of the town; they used any excuse to get people together with music and alcohol. Whether it was a wedding, a birthday or a funeral – even when they had nothing to do with it or were not connected to the person or persons in question in any way – they threw a party. It was their way of “keeping the community together”. ‘Community’ being used loosely as only the wealthiest families were ever invited. Tonight’s celebration was a changing of the seasons, welcoming Spring. It was supposed to be just dinner, but it always ended up being a ball. Since Dominic was too old to attend (at least that was the official excuse – in all honesty, he just did not want to), it was up to Dillon and Delaney to represent the Doherty Family.

“Ah, there’re my favourite twins,” William Allens said striding over. Mr Allens had money but he did not make it the way the Dohertys had – through hard work. Mr Allens was in the business of being young and having a lot of much older relatives who were all rich and all ended up dying and leaving their fortunes to him. There was always another great aunt or first cousin once removed to fill up whenever funds seemed low.

Although Mr Allens was not one of the old money founding families (and in fact, lived alone) that the Taylors liked to associate with, his convenient placing in his family members' wills always had him on the guest list. Not having to work, and not really wanting to work, Mr Allens spent his days in leisure, out and about on the town. In his own words, his specialty was "connecting people".

Mr Allens grasped Dillon's free hand firmly before clapping Delaney on her bare shoulder. Something to note about William Allens was that he was quite obnoxious. Not in a malicious way, very much in an ignorant way, having no idea the effect he had on people. "How are you Mr Allens?" Dillon asked politely.

"Quite excellent," Mr Allens responded. "And please, call me William. I keep saying, no need for formalities, we're all friends here." He winked at Delaney, causing her to press her lips together with discomfort. "Do you know, I was reading the most marvellous thing in the paper the other day about marmalade," he continued.

"Marmalade?" Delaney repeated.

"And it made me think of you."

"Us..." Dillon acknowledged.

"And speaking of you two, I'd like to introduce you to someone." As if materialising out of thin air, a woman appeared at Mr Allens' side. Now, women at this man's side were not unusual; William liked to surround himself with all manner of beautiful things – humans included. It was, in fact, a mocking theory between the twins as to why Mr Allens liked them so much – because they were a matching set. William Allens often had a woman, very rarely the same one twice (he got bored of them quickly, or more accurately, them of he), on his arm.

This one was different. While William Allens' lady companions were all aesthetically pleasing in one way or another, this woman was the most beautiful one Dillon and Delaney had ever seen. The most beautiful human. The most beautiful creature. She was shorter than Delaney, but most women were. She had dark hair, thick and sleek that came down to

just above her shoulders. She had big brown eyes and olive coloured skin. She had full lips that were painted burgundy and she was wearing a soft pink dress that was both in fashion and appropriate though the way it so deliciously contrasted with her skin should have been a crime. “This is Miss Arquette. Miss Arquette, Dillon and Delaney Doherty,” Mr Allens said to a completely entranced Dillon and Delaney who were trying to keep their jaws from hitting the floor.

“Miss Arquette,” Dillon murmured, taking her hand, “an absolute pleasure.” He kissed her fingers.

“Enchanted,” Delaney agreed and for once, she was not being sarcastic.

“I needed to get you three together,” Mr Allens carried on, oblivious to how Miss Arquette had beguiled the Doherty twins, “because the Dohertys...” Mr Allens paused here to point enthusiastically at the twins, “are in the lemon business.”

“Lemons?” Miss Arquette asked, speaking for the first time, her voice like velvet.

Dillon cleared his throat. “Yes,” he said, “we own lemon groves, we grow lemon trees.”

“For what purpose?” Miss Arquette wanted to know.

Dillon looked confused, as if the answer was obvious, “To produce lemons,” he stated.

“And what do you do with said lemons?”

“We sell the fresh lemons. We also make lemon juice and lemon oil.”

“This town basically runs on lemons,” Mr Allens put in with a laugh.

“We also make lemon jam,” Dillon continued.

“Lemon jam?” Miss Arquette questioned.

“Yes. It’s like marmalade but with lemons.”

“Marmalade!” Mr Allens chuckled and clapped Dillon on the shoulder.

Delaney cleared her throat. “So why is it you wanted us to meet?” she asked Mr Allens.

“Ah, yes!” Mr Allens exclaimed, remembering, “Miss Arquette here, is in the tea business.” He turned to Miss Arquette adoringly.

Miss Arquette smiled modestly and put her hand on Mr Allens chest. “My uncle,” she corrected, “is in the tea business.”

“Well, everyone loves lemon tea,” Dillon said raising his glass.

“We can’t fight over her you know,” Dillon said from behind the paper at breakfast the next morning. Delaney flicked her long hair over her shoulder nonchalantly. “Why not?” she asked taking a sip of her tea. Dillon closed the paper and folded it, placing it on the table and looking directly at his sister.

The twins had made a pact when they were thirteen that Dillon could never romantically peruse one of Delaney’s friends and Delaney could never befriend one of Dillon’s romantic interests. And of course, that went both ways: Delaney could never romantically express interest in one of Dillon’s friends and Dillon could never befriend one of Delaney’s suitors. Dillon was now calling attention to that. “I saw the way you were looking at her last night – your curiosity has been tickled. And you have never been one to leave well enough alone,” he said.

Delaney seemed unperturbed, “What is your point?”

“My point is that if I peruse her, you will not stop pursuing her yourself. You will break the treaty and that will cause us to fight.”

Delaney snorted. “That implies she will accept you.”

Dillon pouted. “What makes you think she won’t?”

Delaney shrugged. “I guess we will have to find out.”

“No.”

“Why not?”