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The Glass Heir

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Introduction

Eva Finch has lived the last five years with the unshakeable sense that truth—no matter how deeply it's buried—has a way of surfacing. For as long as she can remember, she's chased stories with both ferocity and heart, believing journalism could be her ladder out of obscurity and grief. But with every byline comes a new compromise, a new sacrifice. Suddenly, the career she once built around exposing secrets teeters on the brink, and Eva, once the girl with a city to conquer, finds herself hemmed in by loneliness, the shadows of a personal tragedy refusing to let her go.

In the newsroom, Eva's sharp instincts have earned her wary respect and no shortage of enemies. Editors praise her intuition while cautioning her against "falling in too deep." Yet falling is what Eva does best. It's what sent her searching into the city's hidden corners and the corridors of power—always looking, always wanting to believe there's a way to heal by making sense of chaos. The assignment to cover Alexander Morrow's twenty-fifth birthday gala feels, at first, like just another job: a glitzy, high-profile distraction masking her desperation to reclaim her place in the world.

But the gala is more than a golden ticket into the elite's gilded cage—it's an invitation into secrets Eva could never have imagined. The Morrrows are royalty of a sort: dazzling, untouchable, and shrouded by rumors as scintillating as the jewels they flaunt. Alexander, the enigmatic heir, is a puzzle in himself—equal parts magnetism and melancholy. As Eva steps into the opulent ballroom that night, she has no idea her pursuit of a headline will draw her into a story much closer to her own heart, one knotted with old wounds and forbidden longing.

Haunted by her own past, Eva must learn to trust her instincts even when every clue seems to lead her astray. As the night unfolds, sparking unexpected chemistry and whispered confidences, she discovers that some stories are written in secrets—and that her own life might be entangled far more deeply in the Morrow legacy than she ever imagined. Every answer exposes new dangers and every truth comes at a cost.

This is not just a tale of privilege and passion, but also of ambition—of the lines we cross and the ones we draw to protect those we love. As she navigates the treacherous waters of power, loyalty, and scandal, Eva must decide: Is the truth worth sacrificing everything for, even her own heart? And in a world built on façades, is there such a thing as a second chance when the glass finally shatters?

Welcome to the world behind the velvet rope. In these pages, lies are currency, love is treacherous, and nothing is as fragile—or as strong—as the glass heir.

CHAPTER ONE: Shadows Beneath the Glass

The glow of the newsroom was a familiar, almost comforting, haze. Fluorescent lights hummed, casting long, distorted shadows across the crammed desks and over-caffeinated faces. It was 7:17 PM on a Tuesday, and Eva Finch, despite the late hour, was meticulously dissecting an expense report that looked suspiciously like a cover-up for a senior editor's illicit golf trip. This wasn't the front-page exposé she dreamed of, but it was a truth, however small, waiting to be unearthed. And Eva, with her perpetually furrowed brow and a pen gripped like a weapon, was a truth-seeker by nature.

Her current assignment, the Alexander Morrow gala, felt like a cruel joke. Fashion, philanthropy, and the polished smiles of the ultra-rich – it was everything Eva had spent her career trying to avoid. She preferred the grit, the underbelly, the stories that clawed their way out of the darkness, not those meticulously curated for public consumption. But the email from her managing editor, Brenda, had been clear: "Eva, you're our best. Morrow is a golden ticket. Don't mess this up."

Don't mess this up. The words echoed Brenda's thinly veiled threat from last week, after Eva had gone a little too deep on a municipal corruption piece, ruffling feathers higher up than Brenda cared to admit. Eva's once-meteoritic rise at *The Daily Ledger* had stalled, replaced by a precarious balancing act between maintaining her journalistic integrity and keeping her job. She was teetering on the edge, and Brenda knew it. Everyone in the newsroom knew it.

A cold coffee mug sat abandoned beside her keyboard, a silent testament to the hours she'd spent hunched over, chasing leads that often led to dead ends. Five years. Five years since the car crash, since the world tilted on its axis, leaving her with an unfillable void and a gnawing need for answers. She channeled that relentless pursuit into her work, a desperate hope that if she could just expose enough lies, right enough wrongs, perhaps the universe would offer her some semblance of peace.

"Still here, Finch?" Leo, the paper's veteran photographer, ambled over, his camera bag slung over his shoulder like a second skin. His face was a roadmap of laugh lines and exhaustion. "Thought you'd be home prepping for your Cinderella moment."

Eva snorted, pushing her glasses up her nose. "More like prepping for a night of polite smiles and even politer lies. Do you really think Alexander Morrow is going to spill his guts to *The Daily Ledger* at his own birthday bash?"

Leo shrugged, adjusting his worn baseball cap. "He's a ghost, Finch. No one knows

anything about him beyond the PR fluff. That makes him interesting. And everyone loves a mystery, especially one wrapped in a billion dollars." He leaned against her desk, his voice dropping. "Heard a whisper, actually. Something about the gala being less about his birthday and more about the Morrow family shoring up their image. Old money, new scandals, you know the drill."

Eva felt a familiar prickle of curiosity. "Scandals? What kind?"

Leo just winked. "That's your job to find out, ace. But don't go upsetting Brenda. This isn't a deep dive, it's a puff piece. Remember that." He patted her shoulder before heading towards the exit. "See you tomorrow, or rather, don't see you, because you'll be in a limousine, probably."

Alone again, Eva stared at the blank screen, the words "Alexander Morrow Gala" blinking mockingly. A puff piece. The very thought made her stomach churn. Her instincts screamed that there was more to the Morrow empire than the pristine veneer presented to the world. Their wealth was staggering, their influence global, yet the heir remained stubbornly, almost impossibly, out of the spotlight. That kind of elusiveness wasn't natural for someone poised to inherit a dynasty. It smelled like a carefully constructed barrier, designed to hide something.

She pulled up a search engine, typing in "Alexander Morrow." Page after page of curated articles, stock photos from charity events, and vague philanthropic statements popped up. He was twenty-five, heir to Morrow Industries - a conglomerate spanning tech, real estate, and finance - and notoriously private. His parents, Robert and Eleanor Morrow, were a different story: fixtures in society pages, known for their lavish parties and calculated public appearances. But Alexander? He was a phantom, existing primarily in carefully cropped group shots or grainy paparazzi photos from years ago.

A single, slightly older image caught her eye. It was from a society event, perhaps ten years prior. A teenage Alexander, looking impossibly young and a little awkward, stood beside his parents. But it wasn't him who made her pause. It was the girl standing a few feet away, her back mostly to the camera, a cascade of fiery red hair tumbling over her shoulders. There was something about the tilt of her head, the way her hand rested casually on a marble banister, that was unsettlingly familiar.

Eva zoomed in, her breath catching. The resolution was poor, but the distinctive shock of red, a shade so rare it was almost unmistakable, sent a jolt through her. It couldn't be. Not *her*. She dismissed the thought immediately. It was a trick of the light, a figment of her overactive imagination, a desperate connection to a past she couldn't change. The girl had just been a stranger, an extra in a forgotten photograph.

Still, the image clung to her mind, a tiny burr of unease. It wasn't the kind of detail Brenda cared about. Brenda wanted glamour, not ghosts. But Eva had always known

that true stories often lurked in the periphery, in the details no one else noticed. She saved the image, a small rebellion against the dictates of her assignment.

The gala invitation lay on her desk, thick cardstock embossed with a silver crest: a stylized, interlocking "M." The venue, the legendary Blackwood Manor, was a monument to old money and quiet power, rarely opened to the public. It was a gilded cage, a place where secrets could be buried under layers of champagne and caviar. Eva sighed, pushing away the lingering image of the red-haired girl. This wasn't about uncovering her past; it was about securing her future at *The Ledger*.

She glanced at the time. Almost 8:00 PM. She still had to pick out something to wear, something that wouldn't scream "struggling journalist who shops at discount stores." The sartorial challenge felt more daunting than facing down a corrupt politician. This was Alexander Morrow's world, a world of impeccable tailoring and effortless luxury. She had to blend in, to become invisible enough to observe, yet visible enough to warrant a brief, polite exchange with the elusive heir.

Eva packed up her bag, the expense report forgotten for the moment. The newsroom was emptying, the remaining stragglers hunched over glowing screens, chasing their own versions of truth. As she stepped out into the cool night air, the city lights twinkled like a million tiny secrets, each waiting to be uncovered. She felt a familiar surge of adrenaline mixed with dread. Tomorrow night, she would step into the lion's den, into a world where perception was everything and secrets were currency. And somewhere in that glittering crowd, a story was waiting. A story that, unbeknownst to her, was already intimately woven into the fabric of her own life. A story that would change everything.

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