

Chapter Thirty-Seven—The Giddy Gynecologist

When I finally managed to get on my feet again, I moved carefully around the couch so I could get to the hallway. But with only one eye to guide me, this was not an easy task. Especially since the entire house was now pitch black.

I thought I heard someone yell right after the crash, and it sounded like a male voice. It was either Brit or Rick, but I couldn't be sure which.

"Hello?" I called out. "Is everyone okay?"

"He's blown a fuse," Rick yelled back. "You'd better stay where you are, Henson."

At that moment, I walked straight into a coat rack. Which clearly meant the depth perception in my right eye was sadly lacking. So to avoid any further injury, I decided it would be safer if I stuck close to the wall and sort of felt my way along it. Which was fine, until I somehow ended up in the kitchen instead of the bedroom; my sense of direction obviously as bad as my perception.

I could hear Celia cursing and making her way to the kitchen, but I wasn't fast enough to tell her where I was. So when we bumped into each other in the dark, she screamed and instinctively punched out at me, a maneuver she no doubt learned in some self-defense class.

Her punch connected with my stomach, and I immediately went down to the ground. Not because of the punch, but I wanted to avoid anything else that might be coming. Like a kick to my groin, perhaps.

"Oh my God, Henson." Celia screamed. "Was that you?"

"Yes...unfortunately," I managed to sputter out.

"I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to hit you. It was a spontaneous reaction. You scared the crap out of me."

"What happened?"

"Well, I was walking down the hallway and then I bumped into you, and it scared the..."

"No, what happened in the bedroom?"

"Oh. Brit knocked over the two big display cabinets back there. The ones that housed all your old collectibles. The second one crashed into the lamp and stereo."

After Celia helped me back to the couch, she went to look for the fuse box. Within a minute, the lights were back on and the house was back to normal. Well, almost.

Brit had evidently caused some major damage to the bedroom, not to mention himself. And even though he was handcuffed and taped from head to toe, he still

managed to wiggle his body over to the base of the two curio cabinets. Then with great effort, he was able to slam his legs into one of them, causing the cabinet to crash to the floor.

He was apparently in the middle of moving toward the second cabinet when Celia and Rick burst into the room. But in his eagerness to accomplish his goal before they stopped him, Brit neglected to consider where the other cabinet might fall. And in a moment of sheer stupidity and lack of instinct, he threw himself into the second curio, which not only fell on top of him, but on the desk housing the stereo and lamp as well. The combination caused an electrical surge, which blew the lights out in the house, and possibly gave Brit quite a shock as well. Or at least that's how Rick explained it to me later.

Brit's ill-conceived plan earned him several cuts, some nasty bruises, and a rather large shard of glass that had to be removed from above his left eye. (A little bit of reciprocal Karma, perhaps?)

As soon as the lights were back on, it was obvious to Rick that he couldn't hold Brit at the house any longer. He called an ambulance as well as a fellow Officer, and then got Brit ready for transport. This involved moving a lot of glass and wood and broken plastic out of the way.

Rick wouldn't let me help clean up the mess because of my swollen eye, so all I could do was watch as he picked through the debris, tossing some of my favorite childhood toys in the process. It was sad to think these objects that were once so important to me were now reduced to nothing more than cabinet rubble.

"I'm going with him to the hospital," Rick said. "And don't worry. I'll make sure he's so loopy from pain killers, he won't even think about calling anyone."

"You're the best," I said, before hugging him affectionately.

"I'll call you later," he said, smiling. "I promise."

He kissed me lightly on the cheek, and then was gone. The ambulance drove away without a siren, and Celia and I were left alone once again.

"He's a great guy, your Officer Rick," Celia said, before checking the condition of my eye.

"It looks like the swelling has gone down, but you're still very puffy" she said. "We'd better get you to a doctor first thing in the morning."

And with that, we decided it was time to get some rest. Rather than going back to my house, we both stayed in the SSCP house, and slept much the same way we had the previous week. With both of us dozing on the couch, our legs intertwined somewhere in the middle.

The next morning, Celia took me to the local outpatient center, staying in the car while I went in to have my eye examined. The attending doctor took some x-rays, but didn't think anything had been injured. Other than the nasty puffy shiner I had going, the damage was mostly superficial. That was a relief.

While I was in the doctor's office, Celia got a phone call from her Gynecologist who immediately agreed to help her out. Celia then called Rick, who told her that Brit was in surgery at the moment, and wouldn't be available to talk for several hours.

Without a voice to imitate, the plan to impersonate Brit was quickly losing steam. Which made Celia begin to panic. Especially since Brit's cell phone had been ringing non-stop all morning, causing her to jump every time *Beethoven's Fifth* began playing. Who was calling him, she wondered. And what would they think if he didn't call back?

Celia's head was spinning, filling her with horrible visions of what might happen should the SSRS find out about Brit's incarceration. She had worked herself into such a frenzy, that by the time I got out of the doctor's office and into the car, she was hysterical.

"What are we going to do?" Celia blurted out. "If Brit doesn't call anyone back sometime soon, they're going to know that something's wrong. They might even call off their plan for this evening, and we can't afford that."

Since we obviously couldn't get the real Brit to talk, we needed to come up with other options.

"What options?" Celia practically yelled. "There are no other options. We're screwed!"

"Maybe not," I said, optimistically. "Couldn't your friend learn Brit's vocal patterns by watching footage from his old reality shows? There must be some place we could get copies of those, right?"

Celia looked at me and smiled.

"Now see...that's why I love you, Henson. You're friggin' brilliant!"

I had no idea what I'd said, but Celia suddenly became very excited. She immediately whisked us away on a mad dash down the Garden State Parkway to Manhattan, where we arrived less than an hour later.

After parking the car, we met Celia's friend, Dr. Bill, outside the Museum of Television and Radio on West 52nd Street. He was a tall thin fellow with an impeccable appearance, who seemed to add a slight giggle after everything he said. I don't know whether it was intentional or a nervous tick. But as the afternoon wore on, I began to think of the giggle as his own personal laugh track.

"Nice to meet you, Henson (giggle)," Dr. Bill said, as we entered the Museum. "Are you the person I'm supposed to be imitating? (giggle)"

"No, I'm just a friend," I replied.

"No, I'm just a friend, (giggle)" he shot back, mimicking my vocal patterns to a "T."

"Do I really sound like that?"

"Do I really sound like that? (giggle)" Dr. Bill continued.

"It's like listening to a tape recording of my voice. It sounds so different when you play it back."

"It's like listening to a..."

"Okay, you can stop now!" I said, getting a little irritated.

"Sorry (giggle)," the doctor said. "Force of habit (giggle)."

"This place is awesome," Celia said, looking at various pictures in the reception area. "I once came here and watched an entire season of *The Avengers* to prepare for my role in *The Whip and I*. I thought Diana Rigg was so fierce."

Celia had called ahead and used her VIP connections to finagle us a private room. So we were able to watch highlights from Brit's illustrious television career without being interrupted.

Other than his nervous giggle, I was rather impressed with Dr. Bill. He was very good at observing Brit and then immediately mimicking what he'd just said. In fact, he began mimicking what everyone was saying, until Celia pleaded with him to only concentrate on Brit.

After ten minutes of observing, Dr. Bill felt comfortable enough to try speaking without the aid of the prompter. We then talked him through a series of practice runs, pretending he was Brit and we were members of the SSRS. The first question Celia asked him was where he was and why he hadn't returned any of her phone calls. Without missing a beat, Dr. Bill replied:

"Yeah. I've been trying to retrieve my messages, but there seems to be a problem with my phone. I'm taking it in to my dealer right now."

His imitation of Brit's cocky inflections was brilliant. I could see why Celia liked him. Though when he was imitating someone else's voice, he automatically dropped the nervous giggle, which led me to believe that it was an intentional device rather than a tick.

"Excellent," Celia said smiling. "Just plead dumb on every count, and don't let them get you into any situation where you have to answer a bunch of questions. The less you say, the better."

Celia had tried without success to access Brit's voice mails to listen to the messages. But apparently the password for his phone was not the same as the one for the SSRS website. She was, however, able to access his list of recent incoming calls. The first one on the list was a 917 cell phone number. Celia hit the speaker button and handed the phone to Dr. Bill. The number rang once and then was picked up by a brash sounding man who began screaming into his receiver.

"Where the f*ck have you been?" yelled the voice on the other end. "I've been calling you non-stop since last night. Did you get f*cked up on coke again?"

"No, I didn't get f*cked up on coke," Dr. Bill snapped back with Brit's signature snarl. "My phone is dead. Or dying. I'm not sure which. I'm taking it to the dealership right now."

"So you couldn't use a pay phone? Or the house phone? Where were you last night? I kept calling the house and it just kept ringing and ringing."

"I stayed at a friend's house last night. Big deal."

There was a long pause at the other end of the phone. Celia and I both froze. Had Dr. Bill said something wrong? Did the other person know he was a phony?

"I thought you were done with Lacie," the voice finally said.

Celia and I looked at each other and relaxed. I knew the mention of Lacie Fromage must have been like a stab in Celia's chest. But at least the caller didn't suspect what was really going on. Without realizing it, Dr. Bill had conveniently provided Brit with an alibi for the last twelve hours. Now we just needed to find out what Brit's part in the whole plan would be.

"So what were you calling about?" Dr. Bill asked.

"What am I calling about? Are you on crack? Do you know what today is? Better yet, do you know what tonight is? Tonight is when we screw Mr. Clooney to the f*cking cross."

"It's Adam!" Celia suddenly blurted out before she could stop herself. She instinctively slapped a hand over her mouth, but it was too late.

"What was that?" the voice asked.

"What was *what*?" Dr. Bill said, stalling for time. He looked to Celia for help.

"I thought I heard a woman call my name," the voice said, confirming the fact that he was indeed Adam Wordon..

"Do you still have Lacie with you?" he continued.

Again, we all froze. How do we get out of this one?

"It's okay," Adam said, softening his tone. "I'm glad she's there. It saves me from making two phone calls."

"Uh, yeah, Lacie is here," Dr. Bill agreed.

"Hey Lacie, how's it going?" Adam asked with obvious delight in his voice. "Are you ready for tonight?"

Since Celia was the only female in the room, she moved near the phone and did her best imitation of Lacie that she could muster. This involved placing her voice in a much lower register and attaching a raspy quality to it, making her sound as if she'd just smoked a carton of cigarettes. She also slurred her speech slightly, which resulted in an almost pitch-perfect impersonation.

"Hey Adam," Celia began tentatively. "Of course I'm ready."

"That's my girl. I'm counting on you to give the press a good story as soon as the sh*t hits the fan, so to speak."

"And you know I will," Celia responded, before cleverly adding: "But can we go over it one more time, just to make sure I don't do anything stupid? You know how flitty I can be sometimes."

Celia followed this with a ridiculous schoolgirl giggle, which she quickly adjusted downward until it sounded more like a cackle. Again, there was a pause at the other end.

"Are you getting a cold?" Adam finally asked. "You sound a little clogged."

"It's nothing to worry about," Celia quickly perked up. "I'll be fine. I just want to make sure I do everything exactly as you envision it."

Adam went through a brief rundown of Lacie's part in the evening's festivities. At exactly eight thirty, after the award presentation had begun, Lacie would storm the press and paparazzi outside the venue and give them the scoop on George's embarrassing downfall. With Lacie being the first one to break the story, the SSRS was assured that the event would get the publicity it deserved. It also guaranteed that the press would get a surprisingly detailed account of what happened. Lacie was the perfect choice to deliver such news, as she thrived on the glow of flashing bulbs.

Before hanging up, Adam asked our fake Brit to meet him outside the theater at seven o'clock that evening. Dr. Bill agreed to the time, and then said good-bye.

"You were great, Dr. Bill," Celia gushed. "You really saved my ass this time."

"Funny. I thought I'd been saving your ass for years," Dr. Bill quipped, before adding his signature giggle.

"What about the other messages?" I asked. "Don't we have to call them back too?"

The next twenty minutes was spent returning phone calls, one of which turned out to be Lacie Fromage. As her famous raspy voice came on the line, I could see Celia's demeanor completely change.

"Brit, you Bastard," Lacie moaned into the phone. "Where have you been? I've been going absolutely mad."

"Sorry, Baby," Dr. Bill improvised. "I had a lot of things I needed to take care of. For tonight, you know?"

"I see. And you're absolutely sure this is going to work, right? I wouldn't want to do anything that might tarnish my reputation."

Celia rolled her eyes, though I'm sure she wanted to make some kind of sarcastic comment. Like "you can't tarnish something that's already rusted" or something equally as biting.

After signing off with Lacie, we said good-bye to Dr. Bill and were soon in the car on our way back to Plainfield. There were only four hours left until we had to be back in the city for the Charity Event, and both Celia and I had to shower and change. We decided to accomplish this at my house, since the SSCP house was filled with too much bad karma at the moment. Brit's presence had somehow tainted the environment.

The hours seemed to fly by, as we prepared ourselves for the evening's big event. While Celia was taking a shower and getting ready in the bathroom, I decided to look through the SSRS website once again. Maybe I'd find something new that would help us this evening, though I was sure George had already gone over it with a fine tooth comb.

I clicked on the SSRS version of the Tribute Video again, the version that would hopefully never be shown. As I watched the various clips unfold, I suddenly remembered the two DVDs Celia and I had copied at the SSRS house. She had put them in her jacket pocket and then we'd both forgotten about them. So what happened to them? She'd brought the jacket back to Plainfield and then....Oh my God! The jacket that Brit had wrapped the laptop in last night. Where had it gone?

Without thinking, I ran down the stairs and out the front door, moving as fast as I could to the SSCP house across the street. I quickly ran around to the house to the area we'd had our little altercation with Brit last night.

Please let the jacket still be there, I thought to myself. Please let me find it where Brit had dropped it. As I got closer to the spot where Brit and I had traded blows, I was relieved to see the big black clump still lying on the ground where it had fallen.

My heart started pounding as I scooped it up and headed back to my house. Minutes later, I was glancing through the DVD marked SSRS files. There wasn't much to it, really, except more articles about the various members. That is, until I happened to find a file hidden amongst some graphic images that was labeled File 41.

I clicked on the file and opened up a huge warehouse of documents, along with more files and video clips. JACKPOT! This must be where the SSRS stored all their particularly dicey material, including explicit details about all the Chosens they'd attacked, as well as a short list of upcoming targets. I flinched when I saw my name, though it shouldn't surprise me after being attacked at the Dixie Dells two nights ago.

One file I opened included photos of various SSRS members standing in front of the houses they'd broken into, or the cars they'd damaged, or the Pink Dress they'd stolen from my curio cabinet. I was shocked to find a series of pictures of some guy I didn't know holding up my Pink Dress and smiling at the camera. What's more, the picture was taken in my bedroom right in front of the curio cabinet and was obviously taken by someone else. Which meant there was more than one person in my house during the break-in.

The thought made me sick to my stomach. I couldn't look through any more of it right now, and I decided not to share it with Celia either. No sense getting her more nervous about tonight's event than she already was. Still, it was good to know there was more damaging material at our disposal just in case tonight's strategy didn't work.

If everything went according to George's plan, the SSCP would remain a secret and continue with their work. The SSRS would be exposed and changed in a way they could never imagine. And I would no longer be a Chosen monitored by the SSCP. If everything went according to plan, it would all be over in a matter of hours.

But as we've all come to expect in life, nothing ever goes according to plan. And tonight would prove no exception.

Next Episode: The Supper Club

Only Six Chapters Left!!!