Excerpt from:

Under Covers

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Chapter One

The first sign was the milk. The glass bottle hit the ground as soon as she opened the fridge door. It shattered into a thousand pieces. Naomi's body went still. She watched the white fluid seep through her toes and spread across the floor while the feeling of dread seeped over her stomach.

Her mother always had a thing about milk. She said the milk had been sour the morning Naomi's grandfather died. The creamer had leaked all over the fridge the day her cousin, Marika, lost her baby. And even Naomi, who was usually the more practical one, couldn't forget the fly she found floating peacefully in the saucer of white liquid the night before she lost her job at Whisper. Bad milk was a bad sign – especially the week of your wedding.

Naomi shut the bad thoughts out of her mind even as she pushed the fridge door closed and grabbed the paper towels off the kitchen counter to clean up the mess. She was being silly. Nothing would go wrong with the wedding. She and Jordan had been

planning this day for the past six months. She had checked everything twice, some things three times. And what she hadn't caught, her wedding planner/sister-in-law-to-be, Amanda had. So, she was covered. Naomi didn't believe her family's silly old wives' tales anyway.

Still, she took several deep breaths to calm her racing heart. The phone rang and jolted her back to reality.

"Girl, where are you?" Natasha hollered through the phone. She didn't wait for Naomi to say hello. "Ryan Lue just brought over the proofs from the shoot. I hope you didn't get all bridezilla and forget about this."

Naomi heard shuffling and movement in the background and figured that her co-editor was already busy juggling a million tasks at the office even though it was only 9:15am. It would also explain why Naomi was on speakerphone even though Natasha knew she hated it.

"No, I didn't forget," Naomi cradled the phone between her ear and her shoulder. She rushed out of the kitchen back to her tiny bedroom to get dressed. Clearly, breakfast would have to be sacrificed. "I'm just getting ready to leave now."

"Good, cause I don't have your eye," Natasha murmured. "I can't pick these without you."

"Yes, you can," Naomi said as she tried to pull on her dress without losing grip of the phone. "I've seen you do it myself."

“Yeah but you were always standing behind me, breathing down my neck,” Natasha said with a laugh.

Naomi stood on her tiptoes in her closet. She reached for one of her Aldo shoe boxes. It almost landed on her head along with several other objects as it came crashing down.

“How about I was standing behind you supporting you?” Naomi picked through the pile for her plum wedges. “Preparing you for the day when I would get married and go on my honeymoon for two weeks, while you held it down at Street Life.”

“Yeah, yeah,” Natasha murmured, not convinced. “Just get your behind over here. I’m drowning.”

“I’ll be there in ten minutes.”

Naomi tossed the cordless on the bed, wiggled into her shoes and grabbed her purse. She was about to dash out of the room when the cloth covered notebook on the ground near the shoeboxes caught her eye. Apprehension made her pause for a second. She walked over. The scrawl of her handwriting on the open pages drew her eye, but she picked up the notebook and closed it before she could read any of the words. She didn’t need that this morning. Not on top of everything else. She stuffed it in the empty shoe box and chucked the box back on the top shelf of her closet.

Naomi dashed out the bedroom towards the front door. She wasn’t in such a hurry that she didn’t notice the few drops of milk beside the fridge she had missed. First the milk, then the notebook. This was not how she wanted to start her morning.

“Nothing bad is going to happen,” she said out loud, though there was no one else to hear her. All the same, she ran back to the kitchen and grabbed another paper towel. She hoped to the heavens she was right. The kitchen spill had been wiped away, but Naomi couldn’t wipe away the unsettling feeling that things were about to change – and not for the better.

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