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TEASER

EXT. LONDON STREET -- DAY

Warmly dressed people cross the street on a cold bright day.

INT. LEO MARTIN'S PRIVATE OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

A DAZZLING DIAMOND sits in a black velvet jewel case.

ELENA KAZAPOV - 30s, Russian, an ice queen in luxury wear - stares at the gem reverently. *She has a thick Russian accent.*

ELENA

Beautiful.

She SNAPS the jewel case shut.

ELENA (CONT'D)

I leave tomorrow. Until then, keep it safe.

LEO MARTIN - 40s, English, a well-spoken weasel in a business suit - takes the jewel case from her as she goes to the door.

LEO

Security *is* my business. I hope Mr. Dragov is pleased?

ELENA

Don't expect a medal.

INT. RECEPTION AREA -- CONTINUOUS

Large lettering on a wall reads "Martin Security Consultants."

LUCY SMITH - 20s, Plain Jane secretary - COUGHS at her desk. She looks up nervously as Elena emerges from Leo's office.

ELENA

Call my car.

LUCY

Yes, Ms. Kazapov.

Lucy SNEEZES violently. Revolted, Elena heads for the door.

ELENA

I'll wait outside.

Lucy reaches for the phone -

- But as Elena goes, Lucy hurries toward Leo's office instead.

INT. LEO MARTIN'S PRIVATE OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Leo kneels over a floor safe --

*Reciting the combination in his head:*

*LEO'S THOUGHTS (O.S.)  
Fourteen right... fifty left...*

INT. MARTIN SECURITY, RECEPTION AREA -- CONTINUOUS

Standing at Leo's door, her eyes shut tight in concentration --

***Lucy reads Leo's thoughts:***

*LEO'S THOUGHTS (O.S.)  
Forty two right... six left...*

INT. LEO MARTIN'S PRIVATE OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

With a CLICK the safe unlocks. Leo puts the jewel case inside -

- Just as a KNOCK sounds at the door. Leo shuts the safe and fixes the carpet, then goes over and unlocks his door.

Lucy stands outside, looking nervous.

LEO  
What is it, Lucy?

LUCY  
Uh... Mr. Martin, you have a lunch meeting at one.

Leo checks the time and glares at her.

LEO  
I'm already late! Why didn't you remind me sooner?

INT. MARTIN SECURITY, OUTER OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Ushering Lucy out, Leo pauses only to lock his office door.

LUCY  
Mr. Martin?

LEO  
What!?

Lucy BLOWS HER NOSE messily, making Leo step back.

LUCY  
I think I've got the flu. Could I have the afternoon off?

LEO  
Just don't give it to me!

The outer door CRASHES shut behind him -

- And a change comes over Lucy Smith. Smiling wickedly, she locks the outer door behind him and turns the sign to CLOSED.

INT. LEO'S PRIVATE OFFICE -- MOMENTS LATER

Lucy shuts the door behind her, replacing a LOCK PICK in a small leather case. Moving to the safe, she kneels by it and pulls the carpet aside, then enters the combination.

LUCY  
Fourteen right... fifty left... forty  
two right... six left.

The safe CLICKS unlocked. Lucy wears a triumphant smirk.

EXT. MARTIN SECURITY -- DAY

Half-hidden by a pillar, Elena checks her watch impatiently as Lucy bursts outside, locks the door hastily, then SNEEZES her way to the road's edge and raises her arm.

Elena fumes as Lucy climbs into a CAB and it pulls away.

EXT. M25 MOTORWAY, OUTSKIRTS OF LONDON -- DAY

The cab pulls off the motorway onto a smaller, country road.

INT. CAB -- CONTINUOUS

Lucy takes off her thick glasses, removes brown contact lenses to reveal sparkling blue eyes, then reaches up to her head.

IN THE MIRROR: the CABBIE (50s) is amazed to see the mousy wig come away, revealing a chic blond bob beneath, as --

TASHA MERVAISE (32) emerges, butterfly-like, from her Lucy cocoon. She smiles at the cabbie's surprise, ruffling her hair in relief. *Her accent is suddenly Californian.*

TASHA  
Audition. No time to get changed.

She extracts a blouse from her bag... then hesitates.

TASHA (CONT'D)  
I hope you don't mind?

CABBIE  
You go ahead, love!

Tasha smiles... then drapes her coat over the partition, blocking herself from view. The cabbie shrugs. Ah well.

EXT. MILTON SCHOOL FOR GIRLS -- DAY

An imposing lone building sits in the middle of the Kent countryside. A sign reads "The Milton school for girls."

Clad head to toe in designer elegance, Tasha leaves the cab waiting and trots up wide steps toward the large front door.

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

A primly-dressed TEACHER (50s) writes in on the board as her CLASS OF TWENTY TWEEN GIRLS (aged 11-13) looks on.

TEACHER  
Je voudrais une tasse de thé.

ALEX MERVAISE - tweenage, braided long dark hair, intelligent green eyes - watches attentively from her back row seat -

ENTIRE CLASS  
Je voudrais une tasse de thé.

But BEHIND HER DESK: Alex practices picking a SMALL PADLOCK. Alex smiles in satisfaction as she hears it open with a CLICK -

- Just before the classroom door CRASHES open to reveal Tasha.

TEACHER  
Excuse me....?

Tasha's distraught gaze sweeps the room, coming to rest on Alex as she speaks with *an accent out of Gone With the Wind*:

TASHA  
There she is! My darlin' baby.  
Come here, sugar plum!

The class SNICKERS, while Alex resignedly gathers her stuff and gets up. As she walks toward Tasha, we *hear her thoughts*:

ALEX'S THOUGHTS (O.S.)  
*Don't overdo it, Mom!*

TEACHER  
Mrs Mackenzie, you can't just come in here like this - !

TASHA  
I know, and I apologize, but...

Tasha pulls the approaching Alex into a desperate hug.

TASHA (CONT'D)  
Baby, I have some terrible news.  
Your grandpa's real sick.

TEACHER  
Oh, how awful. I didn't realize -

TASHA  
We have to leave, right now.

ALEX'S THOUGHTS (O.S.)  
*You're lying about Grandpa, right?*

TASHA  
Yes, honey. That's right...

Tasha wipes imaginary tears from Alex's eyes.

TASHA (CONT'D)  
...You go ahead and cry.

INT. SCHOOL ENTRANCEWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

Tasha walks Alex quickly toward the impressive exit door.

ALEX  
Do you always have to do this, Mom?

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
Mrs Mackenzie!

MISS STEWART - 60s, her headmistress's voice impossible to ignore - strides purposefully toward them across the floor.

TASHA  
I'm afraid we're in quite a rush -

MISS STEWART  
Alexandra's school fees never arrived.

TASHA  
My goodness. Well, I will wire them from Texas, just the second we arrive.

MISS STEWART  
Of course *I* trust you, Mrs Mackenzie. But rules are rules. I must insist.

Abruptly, Alex throws her arms around Tasha, BAWLING.

ALEX  
WHY!?!??? First Poppa, now Grandpa!?

Miss Stewart steps back, disconcerted.

TASHA  
We were too late for her to say goodbye to her Poppa. And now her grandpappy's sick, too!

Alex raises a tear-streaked face to Tasha.

ALEX  
Will we make it, Momma? Will we get there in time?

Throwing herself away from Tasha, Alex throws her arms around Miss Stewart instead, SOBBING violently into her tweed suit.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I just want to say goodbye!

EXT. MILTON SCHOOL FOR GIRLS -- MOMENTS LATER

As the door CLUNKS shut behind them, Alex turns to glare at Tasha. Tasha shrugs, *her accent turning Californian again.*

TASHA

What?

Alex trudges down toward the waiting cab, Tasha following.

ALEX

We could have just paid.

TASHA

For a whole term? You were only here for two weeks!

ALEX

Yeah. A *whole* two weeks. You know, it was starting to feel like home.

TASHA

I promise, after the next job, we'll stay longer in one place.

ALEX

It's not that I don't trust you, Mom... it's just, sometimes, I really wish I could read your mind.

INT. LEO MARTIN'S PRIVATE OFFICE -- DAY

Leo opens the safe, speaking to someone behind him.

LEO

I'm getting it right now.

He turns back to the safe, reaching inside --

Then his mouth drops open in horrified surprise.

INT. HEATHROW DEPARTURE LOUNGE -- DAY

Seated next to Alex, Tasha peers into a SMALL JEWELRY BAG.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Boarding first class for Los Angeles.

Putting the bag in her purse, Tasha smiles and stands up.

END OF TEASER

## ACT ONE

INT. AIRPLANE, FIRST CLASS SEATS -- DAY

An ENTERTAINMENT LAWYER - early 40s, all capped teeth and hair plugs - leans across the aisle, drink in hand.

ENTERTAINMENT LAWYER  
Let's just say, you shouldn't believe  
everything you see on tv.

Across the aisle, Tasha leans out of her seat, showing ample cleavage as she hangs on his every word, her eyes wide.

TASHA  
So he didn't beat up his wife?

ENTERTAINMENT LAWYER'S THOUGHTS (O.S.)  
*Man, she's naive!*

ENTERTAINMENT LAWYER  
You think a major movie star would  
risk his career like that?

ENTERTAINMENT LAWYER'S THOUGHTS (O.S.)  
*Bet she'd even believe I'm separated!*

ENTERTAINMENT LAWYER  
Trust me, I'm his lawyer.

TASHA  
Poor man! I can't imagine being on  
the run. I mean, where do you think  
he sleeps at night? On the street?

ENTERTAINMENT LAWYER'S THOUGHTS (O.S.)  
*Try my villa in Cabo.*

ENTERTAINMENT LAWYER  
No idea.

Tasha turns her head away to hide a smile of satisfaction -  
- And spots Alex heading for the LAVATORIES.

INT. AIRPLANE FIRST CLASS LAVATORY -- MOMENTS LATER

Alex enters the lavatory -

- Only to be joined by Tasha, who then shuts the door.

ALEX  
Mom!

TASHA  
What?



ALEX  
I really need to go!

TASHA  
I *have* seen it all before.

ALEX  
Mom, I'm nearly thirteen!

Tasha rolls her eyes but makes a big deal out of turning to face the door. Grudgingly, Alex sits down.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Why are you in here anyway?

TASHA  
Oh, I'm ready to move on. I already picked my neighbor clean.

ALEX  
That was fast.

TASHA  
It's what I always say: the grubbier the mind, the quicker the *read*.

ALEX  
Anything good?

TASHA  
Only another exclusive for TMZ.

ALEX'S THOUGHTS (O.S.)  
*Is that all?*

Tasha spins around.

ALEX  
MOM!!! I said don't look!

Tasha swivels to face the door again.

TASHA  
What do you mean, "Is that all"?

ALEX  
I just thought it must be something really good to ignore a Congressman.

TASHA  
What? Where!?

ALEX  
Sitting next to me! I've only been thinking it the *entire* flight!

TASHA

I was rather busy, dear! Okay, let's think this through. There's still half the flight left. Make an excuse and we'll switch seats.

ALEX

But you're in an aisle seat.

TASHA

So?

ALEX

I wanted to see the Grand Canyon!

Alex stands and FLUSHES, jostling against Tasha in the small space as she washes her hands. Tasha sees her downcast face.

TASHA

I'm sorry, baby. But until you can read minds too, this is how it is. We have to -

ALEX

(grudgingly)

Maximize our opportunities. I know.

INT. LAX -- DAY

Alex and a frustrated Tasha stand in line for customs.

ALEX

I can't wait to see Grandpa.

TASHA

Six hours. He slept for *six hours*.

ALEX

Couldn't you have... nudged him awake?

TASHA

I kicked him. Twice! He went back to sleep. He must have taken a pill.

ALEX

He woke up for breakfast.

TASHA

Half an hour ago? Darling, I'm good, but there's not a Reader alive who can get inside a mind *that* fast...

Tasha notices the CUSTOMS OFFICER just ahead - 30s, cute. Seeing her looking him over, he flashes her a quick grin.

TASHA (CONT'D)

...although sometimes I can *guess*.

Tasha smiles seductively back at the man.

*ALEX'S THOUGHTS (O.S.)*  
*Mom! Stop embarrassing me!*

TASHA  
 You know, Alexandra, I'll be glad  
 when your abilities kick in and I  
 can't read you any more.

ALEX  
 Promises, promises.

They reach the front and hand the Customs Officer their forms.

CUSTOMS OFFICER  
 Come this way, please.

TASHA  
 Is there a problem, officer?

CUSTOMS OFFICER  
 No ma'am. Just routine.

Alex looks up at Tasha with a mixture of fear and frustration.

*ALEX'S THOUGHTS (O.S.)*  
*Mom, what did you do?*

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM -- DAY

SPECIAL AGENT DANIEL BILSON - late 30s, with a wiry build,  
 sleep-deprived but tenacious - checks the file in front of  
 him, then raises his eyes to the person seated opposite.

DANIEL  
 We take smuggling very seriously.  
 Especially when it's combined with  
 other crimes. Theft... blackmail.....  
*Assault.*

But ACROSS THE TABLE isn't Tasha, but rather --

SERGEI ANTONOVICH - late 20s, though the hardness in his  
 stubborn, pock-marked face makes him seem older.

DANIEL (CONT'D)  
 What happened, Sergei? Did some of  
 the women fight back? Refuse to  
 sleep with their 'clients'?  
 (baiting him)  
 Or was it just you?

Sergei stares back impassively. On the wall a sign reads:  
 "FBI field office - Los Angeles."