

“What do you have to say for yourself?” Tiffany stood up, cleared her throat and began to speak. “I remember the day. ‘EMILY MARKS- Reporter.’ Is what it said at the bottom of the page after my first article in the New York Times. I just finished college at New York University, and finally my dream came true, I got a job as a reporter only eight months after I graduated. It was cold and raining but a nice day in January 2013. *Today is the first day that people will see my name, Tiff- Emily Marks.* I shook my head to clear the thought as I walked down the street to my apartment.

The smell of pretzels being warmed on carts, the rotting garbage from dumpsters, and coffee from the many pedestrians who drink it as I walk pass, filled the air.

When I got home I opened my blood-red door, walked into the messy living room of the two bedroom apartment, and set my purse on the coffee table in front of the couch. My roommate, Thomas, was probably out on a crime scene, since he was a detective and that’s what he is always out doing.

Five years ago, I was going to school to be a reporter and he was starting out be a detective, so we thought this was a funny match. We were around the same age, I was twenty-one, and he was twenty-three when we met. With both being tall and having dirty blonde hair, blue eyes we looked like we could be related. I was messy though, but I knew where everything was I just didn’t want other people to. I’m surprised I had a roommate because I like to keep my life private.

I was walking to the coat rack when I heard the front door open, ‘N.Y.P.D.!’ I jumped even though I recognized Thomas’ voices. *It’s still not funny.* He did it as a joke but it scared me every time.

‘Hey’ Thomas said as he walked over, laughing and flashing his big bright smile.

‘Hey Thomas, how was work?’ I asked as I did every day although I never wanted to hear about it.

‘Nothing much, it was a suicide. I found a suicide note, so here I am now. What about you?’ He hung his coat and went to the fridge.

‘Pretty good,’ I tossed him the newspaper ‘Check it out.’ he opened the paper and looked inside,

‘Wow! That’s so cool, let me take you to a congratulations dinner. Grab your coat.’

‘Deal.’

We were at my favorite restaurant when Thomas got a phone call.

‘Excuse me.’ Thomas answered his phone ‘Hello? Really? Where? I’ll be right there.’

He hung up.

‘I have to go. They found some gun in Central Park. It has to get investigated to see if it matches any cases and it probably will with all the crime here. I’ll take you out again, I promise.’

He handed me a twenty, ‘It’s late. Get something to eat though’

I nodded as he left.

I hate hearing about crime, although I write about it and that’s all I hear about from Thomas. I ate dinner and took a cab home. When I got home I turned on the T.V. when I saw breaking news that a gun matching the description of the weapon used in the Jennifer Clark case, was found in Central Park. I immediately focused on happier thoughts. *It can’t be it. It’s been five years...* After a few minutes I turned off the T.V. and went to bed.

The next morning I woke up and got ready for work, I was about to leave when, Thomas walked in the door with something in his hands. ‘Morning, I figured you would be getting up about now, since it’s eight thirty, you start work at nine and you are always late.’ He teased.

‘Am not! And save the detective act for work.’ I mocked back.

‘I brought you coffee and a doughnut.’ He handed over the items in his hand.

‘Thanks Thomas, you’re a life-saver. See you later.’ I started walking out.

‘Yeah, maybe. We have a big cold case becoming hot again. Jennifer Clark, I think.’ I walked out the door.

I closed the door and stopped in my tracks. *That was from five years ago. Who cares about her? She had enough of the lime light. Everyone only cares about poor Jennifer. Never Tiffany.*

I quickly walked down to the street and headed to work enjoying the jelly doughnut and coffee Thomas had brought me. I walked into the building, went through the lobby and stepped into the ice cold elevator.

I hate elevators, although I am not claustrophobic. I don't like to be trapped. To have nowhere to escape, whether mentally or physically, is excruciating. I must endure it for an agonizing minute, one that feels like it must be an hour every day as I go up the office and come back down at the end of the day.

When I walk into the office I head over to Metro Editor Mark Flynn.

'Hey Mark, anything new?

'Absolutely, I don't know if you remember anything about it, it was about five years ago, but here.' He handed me a folder. 'Find out anything you can and report back to me with any information.'

'Okay.'

I went to my cube, the one with the three photos of me and Thomas, a copy of my NYU diploma, and the newspaper clipping from yesterday were pinned to the otherwise lifeless beige cork-board that hung slightly above my small desk.

I opened the folder to find the only case I never wanted to see again. One that I absolutely did not want to report about. Especially not to help and find out more about.

I never thought I would see the name again. It was the Jennifer Clark case. Jennifer Clark, 24, was killed in her home shortly after she got a job at a law firm.

Her sister, Tiffany Clark, twenty-one, who staying with her at the time, disappeared. Tiffany was never found. Investigators labeled it a kidnapping because of the dead body. But a lack of evidence caused the case to go cold. Until now.

I spent my whole day reading through the folder I didn't want to even touch, yet I found out nothing I didn't already know. At five o'clock I went down the building with the folder and went home.

When I got home, Thomas was there.

'Hey Thomas, did you find out any more about the case?' I asked but I really didn't want to know.

'No, not yet. The gun is in the lab getting checked for prints.'

My heart raced only hoping he wouldn't find out. That nobody would ever find out.

Thomas's phone rang, 'Hello? Oh, yes. How did it come back? What?! How is that even possible? I thought she was kidnapped. Well, we have a whole new case on our hands now... Goodbye, thank you.' he hung up.

'What happened?' I asked but I already knew. I've known for five years.

'The prints came back. The only prints on the gun were Tiffany Clark's... I gotta go.' he said as he sprung up from the couch, grabbed his coat and rushed out the door.

*I can't let anyone find out. He's going to ruin everything!* I glanced down to my purse where I carried a gun not even Thomas knew about. *I have to stop him.*

Thomas returned home later around eleven.

'Hey, Emily! Check this out.' Thomas held a newspaper clipping in his hand. I walked out of my room.

'What?' I reached out for the picture.

'Look, she looks just like you.' He pointed to the picture in the article from five years ago about Tiffany Clark.

'See, same long dirty blonde hair in a messy bun, you were both twenty-one, she was five foot seven inches tall, you were too around that time, you both have blue eyes, and the same freckle on the side of your-' He stopped, putting things together. 'nose... Emily?' he looked into my eyes, I looked away. 'Is there something you are hiding? That you never told me?'

I saw him slowly reaching for the landline." Tiffany stopped "hm- hmph. Sorry." She cleared her throat to keep from choking up, and continued.

" 'T-Thomas! Wait!' He stopped.

'Tell me. Now, Emily. Everything.'

'I don't know what you're talking about, Thomas.' I was trying to buy myself time.

'Em-Emily, tell me now. Or I call the police.' Thomas stammered.

'There's something in my purse that can explain.'

I thought about the gun.

'No, Emily. You tell me.' His voice had never sounded so serious.

I had run out of time and options. Tears streaming down my cheeks, I kissed him. *I've wanted to do that.*

‘Emily.’ Thomas slowly started to pull away, his hands still lightly on my face.

‘I love you, Thomas.’ I whispered.

‘Emily, I love you too. But you need to tell me what it going on.’ Conflicting emotions swept across his face.

‘I-I’m Tiffany Clark.’

Thomas’ eyes widened. He slowly stepped back, and reached for the landline again.

My heart racing, my mind about to go crazy, my hands sweating. I looked at my purse and quickly grabbed the gun.

‘Emily! Stop!’ He rushed towards me.

Too late. My hands quickly found the trigger and without a second thought I shot him.

‘Nobody can know, Thomas! I should never have become friends with you! You! A detective of all people! What am I? Stupid? Crazy? I don’t even know.’ I stopped. I reached down to touch Thomas, my hand coming up, covered in blood. I realized I was just yelling at Thomas Pierce’s dead body on the floor in the messy living room.

I sat there in the living room, on the floor, staring at the dead body for an hour, when there was a knock on the door. I jumped up and walked to the door and opened it.

‘Hello?’ I answered, unsure of whom the man standing in front of me was.

‘Hello, miss. I’m Officer Kane. We got a call about a loud noise, possibly a gunshot. We’re checking all the apartments. Have you heard anything?’ The man’s eyes drifted down, only to find my hand, covered in blood, still clenching onto the gun.

‘Ma’am? Can I step in?’ Kane insisted. I stepped aside, dropping the gun, letting him in. Kane went toward Thomas, and checked his lifeless pulse. He lifted his handheld radio. ‘I’m going to need someone down here, 351 E 52nd St, apartment 3A. I have a dead body. And a suspect.’ He put his transceiver in his belt, and took out his handcuffs. ‘Name?’

‘Tiff- Emily. Emily Marks.’ I answered.

‘Hands behind your back, Ms. Marks. You’re being taken downtown to be questioned for the death of-’ he went down and pulled out Thomas’ wallet, he opened it, his eyes went wide. ‘Of Detective Thomas Pierce.’

As Officer Kane led me out we passed the detective entering my apartment which was now a crime scene. I was put into a police car and taken downtown. I refused to talk, yet they had enough evidence to hold me until my trial.

In the weeks after the shooting and now, my lawyer and I agreed I would claim *Crime of Passion* in order to get the charge of *2nd Degree Murder* lessened to *Manslaughter*. However, this was not just a claim. It was true. I loved Thomas, more than he knew. More than I knew. I never wanted to kill him. But, he knew too much. I was charged of Manslaughter, but before I serve the rest of my life locked up. Here's why I did.

You see, I *am* Tiffany Clark. I was never kidnapped; I just changed my name after I killed my sister. Then I went to school and ended up here. Oh! My sister, yes. Everyone loved her. Prom Queen, Valedictorian, and she even had a law degree. My parents loved her. She was the best in the family. I was forgotten. When I went back to visit for the holidays she had just gotten a new job at the law firm she always dream of working for. It was too much for me. So I killed her. I went in her room with my gun and killed her, then fled, hiding the gun in Central Park. And I was going to show up a few months later but, everyone forgot about me. They only cared about Jennifer and who could have killed her.

So once again. Here I am now. Because when I told this story to my lawyer he called me insane. He made me see a therapist, who agreed. So now, I claim 5150... For only someone insane could do this." Tiffany finished telling the judge her story, the story only she really knew.

"Thank you, Ms. Clark. That should be enough." Judge Conway informed her. "Jury, do you accept Ms. Clark's claim?"

"Yes, we do, your honor, find Ms. Clark of Diminished Mental Capacity." The jury foreman replied.

"Good, thank you. I sentence Ms. Clark to life in the New York State Psychiatric Institute." Judge Conway asked Tiffany "Anything last to say?"

Tiffany looked up at the people in the courtroom, and gave a slight smug smile.

“We all go a little mad sometimes.”