

Sample - Romance Novel

Have you ever had one of those moments where you want to run away, but it feels like someone superglued your feet to the ground? Like you're caught in one of those glue traps for mice, and you're doomed to be frozen to the spot until someone picks you up, trap and all, and tosses you in a dumpster?

That's how it felt when I walked in to my bridal suite to find my fiancé, Eddie Gardner, and my maid-of-honour and best friend, Alicia Turner, pre-emptively christening my marriage bed, on top of my crisp, white, Vera Wang wedding gown. I couldn't do anything but stare as their moans grew louder and louder in my ears. I must have said something or made a noise because they finally realized I was standing in the doorway. That's when the screaming started.

I often wonder what might have happened if I hadn't caught them. What if I got back to my room earlier, or had spoken to anyone else except my mother. What if my hairstylist hadn't called to say she would be late, giving me just enough time to go up to my bridal suite and "relax" for a moment alone? What if I had bought the Monique Lhuiller bridal gown instead of going for the more expensive Vera Wang? What if that butterfly hadn't flapped its wings over the Pacific Ocean, causing the inevitable circumstances that led to me opening the door to my bridal suite and seeing the love of my life and the best friend I'd ever had screwing each other over my dress? I suppose Tony and I would be married now, and they might still be carrying on their affair, or I would have caught them, causing a very messy and very expensive divorce. In a way, I dodged a bullet, I understand that now. But at that moment, stuck in a glue trap of my own making, I could only stare.

"L-Lindsay! What are you—" Tony stammered, trying to bend down to pull up his pants,

"Lindsay, GET THE HELL OUT!" Alicia screamed over him, covering herself with, of all things, *my* wedding dress. That's what woke me up, I think.

"Get your grubby hands off that!" I screamed, and Alicia just clutched the dress to her naked body and ran into the bathroom.

"Alicia, get the *hell* out of that bathroom with my dress!" I screamed, ignoring Tony and making a beeline for the bathroom door. He'd gotten his pants up by this point and came over to pull me away, but I just slapped him, "Get away from me! I'll deal with you after I get Alicia to give me back *my* wedding gown!" I screamed, pushing Tony away and turning back to the door. By now we had caused enough commotion and my bridal party had gathered at the door to the adjoining suite.

"Linds?" I heard the voice of my bridesmaid, Natasha Davis, coming through the suite. She couldn't see this, if she did, soon the whole town would know that Tony and Alicia had been spread eagle on my dress on the day of my wedding. Natasha was the biggest gossip I'd ever known — harmless in general, but catastrophic in situations like this. While I banged on the door, Tony ran out of the bedroom into the suite next door. I could hear his charming voice telling Natasha everything was okay, that I was just having some cold feet. That wouldn't do

at all, I turned my attention from Alicia back to Eddie, running into the suite and screaming at Natasha and the other shocked bridesmaids,

“Nothing is fine! I just walked in on Alicia and Eddie fucking on top of my five thousand dollar Vera Wang wedding dress!” Just then, tears started streaming down my face. I could hear the bathroom door open in the room next to me, and Alicia came in, still holding my wedding dress to cover her naked body.

“We weren’t *fucking*, we were *making love*!” She corrected. At that point, I just couldn’t stand anymore. Making love? I knew Alicia had a very romantic vision of the world, but her describing that encounter as ‘making love’ broke me. I rounded on her with renewed anger,

“You call that *making love*? Alicia, you wouldn’t know love if it smacked you in the face, allow me to prove it!” I said, as I smacked her across the face. She dropped my dress in shock, and tried to grab it back. I got there first, throwing it back into the bedroom. Alicia tearfully ran back in there to get the dress, or maybe her own clothes, I don’t know. I was blinded by rage at that point. I moved to chase after her, but Tony grabbed my arm.

“Baby, just leave it, please let me explain!” He pleaded. I saw a couple of my bridesmaids run past me into the bedroom and restrain Alicia, who was moving to put my wedding dress on and crying about how cold it was without clothes on.

“Explain what?” I asked, “Did you fall on top of Alicia and accidentally start screwing her from behind? Were you doing yoga over my dress and your clothes suddenly disappeared? How are you going to explain what happened, Tony, other than telling me just how long you’ve been having an affair with my maid of honour?”

“You have it all wrong, it’s just cold feet!” he said, “I got scared, I was just so scared because of how much I love you, and I was in here looking for my cuff links when I saw your wedding dress, and it just hit me how when we get married we’re going to be together forever and forever is a long time, and I’m sorry, okay!”

He had me. Tony always did, he’s a charmer down to his very core. Luckily, the sound of my wedding dress being torn at the seam brought me back to reality.

“What are you doing?” Alicia whined, “I could have worn it!”

“When?” I asked, rounding on Alicia, “When would you have worn *my* wedding dress?”

“Once you two split, Tony said it was inevitable!” Alicia cried, tears streaming down her face. You’d think *I* had somehow ruined *her* special day. I looked at the scene, my bridesmaids holding Alicia back from my torn gown, Tony pulling my arm pleading with me, and Alicia sobbing on the floor. I had to get out of there, I couldn’t think, could barely breathe. The hotel’s bridal suite, once so vast and opulent, had turned in to a cramped room with no room to breathe.

“I have to go.” I muttered, turning around.

“You can’t just go, we have to settle this!” Alicia screamed, “you have to give me your blessing!”

“You can’t leave, baby, we need to talk. You can’t be alone right now.” Tony said in his smooth voice. I didn’t answer either of them, I just wanted to get out. Behind me, Alicia screamed again, this time asking why Tony wouldn’t stand by her why he was spending time reasoning with that bitch (presumably, me). Tony dropped my arm and turned to Alicia, giving me the chance I needed to get away. I bolted out the door into the hallway, slamming the door behind me. I ran to the elevator, pressing both the down and up button before anyone would have the chance to stop me. The elevator arrived just as Tony stuck his head out the door, I jumped in pressed a random floor and then punched the “door close” button as many times as I could. The door closed on his face, and I was finally alone, zooming up to the penthouse floor.

I got out of the elevator and walked down the hall, trying to clear my head. It hit me that I was still wearing my robe that had “bride” embroidered on the back. I started to take it off before remembering I didn’t have much on underneath. When my hairstylist said she would be over an hour late, Alicia suggested I go to the spa. I stopped dead in my tracks, realizing she probably said it, so she could have a quickie with Tony. What a perfect opportunity for them.

I still didn’t understand the kink behind doing it on my wedding dress. Was Alicia really that vindictive? Suddenly, it felt as if I didn’t really know either of them anymore. Who were these people who had comforted me in my moments of sadness, celebrated my wins with me, and commiserated as I talked to them about my mother or wedding stress? I wandered out onto the hotel’s rooftop terrace, lucky for me, it was early and no one was around. I heard a cellphone ringing and slowly came to the realization that it was mine. I wasn’t sure I wanted to talk to anyone right now, but I found myself answering anyway. The caller ID said “Hotel Ritz”, so maybe it was the hotel calling to tell me it was all an elaborate prank gone horribly wrong.

“Baby.” I heard Tony’s voice on the other end of the line and my body cringed.

“Don’t all me that, Tony. I’m done,” I said, “I can’t marry you.”

“Why? Listen, you don’t understand what you saw. Please come downstairs and let me explain! I came to your room because I had cold feet, I needed to talk to you. Alicia was the one trying to seduce me, Alicia was the one whose idea this all was! I love you, more than anything, I need you. I didn’t think you could ever overreact like this, just come downstairs, and we can get you something to calm you down. Lindsay, you don’t understand what you saw, and I’m worried about what you’re going to do right now.” Tony said,

I still don’t know what he said that made me wake up. Maybe that he told me I was overreacting? I’ve talked about it in therapy in the years since, and my therapist and I have never been able to pinpoint exactly what triggered my wake-up call. In a moment, all of Tony’s little white lies came rushing back to me, all the moments when I saw him flirting with Alicia (or other women) and he told me I was reading too much in to their interactions.

“No.”

“What? What do you mean, no?” Tony asked, he wasn’t used to me asking anything of him.

“Tony, I know exactly what I saw. I may not know how you two got there — though I can speculate — but I know what you were doing. If there was seduction going on, it happened long before I arrived.”

“Lindsay, it wasn’t me!” Tony cried,

“Tony, this is real life, not a 90s pop song. It was you, and Alicia, and my wedding dress. I’m not one to kink-shame, but that is bizarre, even for you. I have cut you so much slack that I don’t have any left for myself. You’ve flirted with every *single* one of my bridesmaids, as if you had some kind of sick fantasy of thoroughly embarrassing me on my wedding day.”

“Let me explain!” Tony whined,

“Were you and Alicia in my bridal suite?” I asked.

“Yes.”

“Were you behind her while she was on all fours on the bridal suite’s bed?”

“Well...yes, but it’s not how it—“

“I don’t care about how, I care about facts. You were behind Alicia, Alicia was on the bed, and beneath Alicia was my very expensive wedding dress.”

Tony was finally silent.

“And whether you were or were not thrusting yourself into Alicia from behind, the two of you were still quite careless, as no matter what activity you were engaged in you could have wrinkled my dress which would have been very embarrassing to me walking down the aisle. So, no matter what you were doing, based on what you just told me, I would have been embarrassed on my wedding day. And since we are both adults and know exactly what kind of carnal instincts you have — not to mention the fact you used the most cliché adulterer’s line in existence — I think I can confidently say that you were screwing my best friend and *maid of honour* less than eight hours before you were going to vow to have and hold me forever and say ‘I do.’ No matter which way you look at it, unless you’re looking at it through your manipulative lens, this wasn’t the time or the place to engage in whatever exciting little game you have going on, and frankly I would like to disqualify myself from playing. I don’t ever want to see you — or Alicia — ever again.”

The line was silent for a second, before Alicia’s shrill voice came on the line.

“Good. You didn’t deserve him anyway, you could have heard him out, let him explain to you why we were having sex today, but you wouldn’t even give Tony the chance to explain his side of the story! That’s why you’re going to be left alone, Lindsay, you never let the other person in. You’re so cold you won’t even listen to the man who was supposed to be the love of your life explain to you why he’s been so emotionally stressed. Why *he* needed a moment to himself on a day that isn’t all about you! It’s about the people around you, too!”

I tuned Alicia out after that.



Natasha was the one who found me. I was sitting on a deck chair, drinking a piña colada from the rooftop bar. As soon as I saw her, I broke down in tears. Natasha took care of me for a few weeks after that, playing defence as Tony and Alicia kept trying to make me “see the light.” She moved my things out of the apartment, just in time for Alicia to move in.

After the wedding fiasco, I thought I was invincible. Whatever you threw at me, nothing could possibly be worse than the day I caught my fiancé and maid of honour in the throes of passion and had to take a cab home in a silk bathrobe that said, “Bride-to-be” on the back. Or so I thought.