

By Any Means Necessary

They were on a mission and were not to be deterred.

For years, they had patiently waited, convinced that the natural order in life would prevail. But no longer. They had swallowed a bellyful of disappointment, regret and hopelessness their middle names.

It was time to take action. Each of them smeared black tar beneath the rims of their bloodshot eyes. Despite the knowledge that they were heading into serious battle, the night before they lingered at the bar too long, tossing back shots of tequila. Today, they paid the price. The remnants of bile coated their throats, a bitter yet fitting reminder of what led them to this place.

Seconds ticked by. After a final check was made to ensure there would be no mistakes, they scattered. One by one they hit the ground and slowly crawled into position. As expected, G and Deb were out in front. Long ago they had made a pact that no sacrifice was too great and so, despite the risk of capture, they made their way down the long, dark hallway. Regina hung back, guarding the small arsenal that lay by her feet. If the mission was to succeed, they'd need someone at the end to convert the noble cause into a righteous happening.

Fifteen feet short of reaching their destination, Deb and G stopped abruptly. Without so much as a whisper, G reached into her back pocket and pulled out a crisp, white napkin and tossed it to the ground. The signal given, one-by-one, the remaining posse members dropped to the floor and sidled into place. Not a sound was uttered despite the group's natural propensity toward chattiness.

Satisfied that their plan was unfolding according to the well-mapped strategy, they stormed the room.

“My goodness, what took you so long?” Susan exclaimed. “I’ve been waiting here for weeks, wondering where you were.”

The women looked at each other, confusion etched on their faces.

“Do you honestly believe I thought it would be a good idea for my character to parade in those silly getups for weeks on end, pretending to be a twenty-something showgirl? For heaven sakes, I have a married daughter.”

“Then why’d you pitch the stupid idea in the first place” Kimberly pitched in.

“Nothing personal, Susan, but you’ve been around the block long enough to know that MMT has a hard

enough time writing romance. The last thing she needs is this kind of help from you,” Pam ranted.

“Oh, but I disagree. This was precisely the kind of help Megan needed.”

The posse shook their heads, their confusion and frustration mounting. “Would you please explain your logic to us because, for the life of me, I don’t get it. This Vegas storyline has me this close to turning off my TV forever “ Mary barked.

“Truer words were never spoken” Mel agreed. “What’s this all about?”

Before Susan had a chance to reply, Regina barged in, a wagonful of equipment trailing behind her. “What’s taking you girls so long? You were supposed to grab her and be gone!” Blank stares were her only greeting. Something was terribly wrong.

“Ladies, look around. You’re here aren’t you?”

The group nodded wordlessly. Susan shook her head. Clearly the posse crew was not as swift on the uptake as she had originally hoped. Either that, or they were still too shell-shocked by the recent events on AMC. Taking a moment to consider both options, she settled on the latter. It was understandable that they were having difficulty catching on to her machinations.

They saw her as the grand lady, not the scheming conniver she played on TV.

Thinking back on all that she heard about the group from Walt and some of the others, she had to chuckle. “I guess I’ll need to not only lead your horses to water but help them drink as well!” she informed the motley bunch. “But, before I do, I insist that you clean yourselves up. That underliner is on much too heavy. And, believe me, I would know. I’ve seen clips of me from the Eighties.”

Ten minutes later the group reassembled in the actress’s lavish dressing room. “Much better” Susan replied after careful inspection. “Now, here’s what I want you to do”

Moments later the mood in the room had changed dramatically. Bewildered expressions were replaced with thunderous laughter led by the unholy trio. “This is even better than we had hoped for. ” crooned Georgianne.

“Ooooooooooh, I love this. It’s a great plan” Deb piped in.

“Dears, all of our hard work has paid off. You should give yourselves a big pat on the back” Regina agreed.

“And hugs” Sandy added. “Let’s not forget those.”

And so, the plan was put into motion.

Walt arrived promptly at the studio for his 10AM call. It had been more than a week since he last had to report for work and wanted to make sure he got there in plenty of time. He had been up late studying his lines, trying to summon some interest in the lame script he had received the night before. What the hell is going on, he thought to himself. And why do they have me dressed like this. It just didn't make sense. But then, not much did in the last several weeks. His storyline had seemed to go off-track and he got that funny note last Monday from the writers . . . grow your hair long and add some highlights. We want it blonder than it has been . . .? Now, he was all for being cooperative; after all, he had a good life and was just given a lucrative contract that would keep him "at the Kids" for the next four years. What did he really have to complain about?

Stepping off the elevator, he made his way to his dressing room. For some inexplicable reason, the door was locked. Looking around for a moment, he noticed a note taped to the nearby light switch.

"Locked out again?" it read. "Help is around the corner."

“What the . . .?” Three steps later, he turned and stopped dead in his tracks. Lying in front of him was a pale pink towel with an envelope pinned to it “You’ve got to be kidding me” he muttered bending down to pick it up. “What kind of game is this” he wondered.

Walt ripped the envelope open. Something was scrawled on a tiny piece of paper but for the life of him he couldn’t make out a single word. Turning the note over, he read two words. “Knight’s Room”.

“Okay, I give up. What does ‘Knight’s Room’ mean?” he said aloud. Just like on the show, Michael B. Jordan rode to the rescue. “I uh, I think you’re supposed to go to Michael E. Knight’s room, Walt.”

“And how do you know that?” Walt inquired. Michael simply shrugged his shoulders and walked in the opposite direction.

“Fine, I’ll just let this game play out.” Two seconds later he was at MEK’s door, poised to knock, when the door swung open.

“Here, I bought you a present” Michael smirked, shoving a brown bag into Walt’s hands and closing the door just as quickly.

Walt was almost afraid to look. Taking a deep breath, he peeked inside. Nestled at the bottom was a pair of

wire-rimmed glasses. Walt pulled them out and fixed them carefully on his face. “Okay, I guess this means that I’ll be able to read whatever was on the note,” extracting the scrap of paper from the pocket of his suit trousers.

“Soundstage eleven. Take the route past Eden’s dressing room.” Shaking his head in utter bewilderment, he quickly made his way toward the stage. Unfortunately, there were still a few roadblocks impeding Walt’s arrival. The first, ironically, appeared by the air-conditioning unit. Beside it was poised an aluminum rack holding a single long, black coat and a sign that simply read “wear me”.

As he slipped the coat on, he felt something in the right sleeve. Before he even pulled it out, he nodded to himself, knowing that it could only be one thing. Sure enough, it was a white, silk scarf.

It was impossible. No way in hell could they get access to this place. Or could they he wondered. He knew they were a determined bunch but this was unbelievable, even for them.

As he turned the final bend before reaching the soundstage, he heard his disembodied voice over the loud speaker. “Come here . . . ; come here” it repeated over and over again. Taking a deep breath, he pushed through the double doors.

Walt blinked twice in disbelief. Before him stood Susan, looking prettier than ever in a simple white sheath. She was flanked by her TV family; Alicia, Eden and Rebecca on her right; Michael B. on her left. Peering behind him was a doe-eyed teenager who he didn't recognize. "That must be the new Lily," he thought to himself.

"Okay, I give up. Would somebody mind explaining what is going on? Mikey? Susan? Somebody?"

A beleaguered McTavish walked toward Walt. "It was Susan's idea. She tricked me. The entire Vegas storyline was just an elaborate setup to enrage your fan base, throw off viewership, and ultimately force me to stage this thing to save my job. I stand before you a broken woman."

Megan's speech was met with thunderous applause along with loud whooping and hollering. Walt turned to see where all the commotion was coming from. Toward the back of the soundstage stood a group of women. Most of the faces were unfamiliar to him but the red tee shirts they were wearing were unmistakable.

"We couldn't very well have a wedding without the posse in attendance, now could we, Walt?" Susan purred. "And, they were very helpful as well. Ladies, you did a terrific job laying out the props. I knew I could depend on all of you to show up and give me a

hand. And, I agree. He looks wonderful in that coat, that tux, the scarf. But, I think it's time we got down to business and shoot this wedding once and for all. Regina, I trust your camera is ready to roll?" The woman nodded yes, her face beaming with a sunny smile.

For the second time that day, the posse group stood motionless, as they saw their couple finally tie the knot, a mixture of tears and smiles on their happy faces. And, as a montage played on the editor's monitor the group turned their attention to the burlap sack one of the posse's finest had been lugging around all day.

Simultaneously, they reached in and began pelting one another with marshmallows, chanting "Ride, posse, ride."