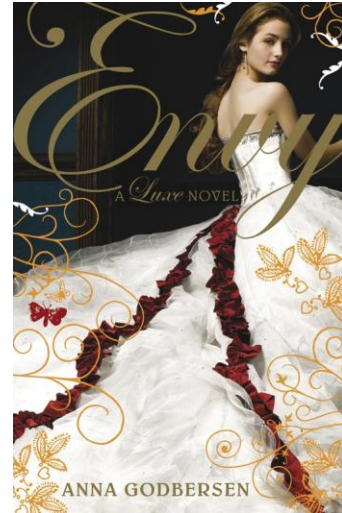


# ENVY

## EXTRACT 1



...“I hope, for my own sake, that the day you realize that you were made for better things is later rather than sooner.”

They had reached the huge, classically proportioned windows that faced northward onto the street, and Diana dropped her friend’s arm for a moment to gaze down at the fallen snow reflecting the warm light from above. Behind them the voice of Leland Bouchard could be heard going into raptures about his recent purchase of a horseless carriage, an Exley, which was displayed in the first-floor vestibule so that guests could, upon their arrival, stare at its shiny modernity with covetous curiosity.

Their host was tall, with a uniquely broad forehead and wheat-colored hair that always seemed a little overgrown.

“It can cover twenty-four miles in an hour, without undue racing effort,” he was saying to Mr. Gore.

“He is an investor in the Exley Motor Carriage Company,” Barnard remarked, sotto voce, to his protégé.

Though Diana should have listened for more information, she found her attention already wandering to the street below. The lace flower on her gown rose and fell with her breath, and a delicate sensation settled across her chest. The crowd behind her, which was full of stories that the protagonists would rather not have told, and also of small deceptions certain to amuse the reading public, dimmed for her. Just a moment ago she had felt the cleverest player in a game that obsessed the whole room, but she was overcome now by the strong impulse to hide herself and the brassy sound of her famous laugh.

Down below, Henry Schoonmaker had stepped out of his coach and was lighting a cigarette as he paused by the iron gate that encircled Leland Bouchard’s mansion. He was the man who had drawn out Diana’s affections last season, and then pounded on them. There was much history between them, but as Diana watched him, posing there with the elbow of his smoking arm rested on his wrist, in a wide, pensive stance, she reminded herself that she felt no emotion for him. And when Henry’s wife, Penelope—of the so newly grand Hayes family—arrived at her husband’s side, with her fierce blue eyes cast directly in front of her, Diana reminded herself that Henry had chosen to marry mere weeks after taking Diana’s virginity.

“I’d like to know what goes on in their bedroom.” Barnard smirked.

“The Schoonmakers are the envy of every young couple in the city,” Diana answered mechanically, as though repeating some lesson learned by rote.

Barnard took two champagne glasses from a passing tray and handed one to Diana. She closed her eyes and took a long sip that did nothing to settle her insurgent nerves. In a moment, Henry Schoonmaker would be coming through the door.

He must not see her.