

Chapter 6

Dean:

My heart raced against my ribcage as I looked at the little girl who was in the picture, trying to take a deep breath to calm myself in front of the woman who stood in front of me. The last thing that I needed right now was rumors spreading around. It was only a matter of time before the news about Iris being back spread around, and that alone was going to cause a stir that I knew that I wouldn't want to deal with.

The idea of this being true changed a lot, especially since it meant that Iris could have been in another relationship. Just thinking about it made my chest ache as the air in the room grew thick, and what made it funnier was the fact that I was in another relationship. Hell, I was fucking married and here I was, aching for the ex that I chose to want to break up with. I should have been thankful that the divorce ended without a fuss and without her claiming half of what belonged to me. At the time, she didn't even bother hiring a lawyer, it was like all she wanted to do was get out of my life.

"You can leave." I said, dismissing my secretary. At this point, nothing really mattered. I knew that I had a meeting, a few actually, to attend, and seeing as I just found this out, I knew that I needed to recompose myself. The men shouldn't be seeing me in this state, and the last thing that I wanted was to have them asking questions that I didn't want to answer. Especially since I knew that most of their wives knew Mariana, and I wasn't stupid to think that they didn't talk to their husbands about her.

She was not a person that they wanted to be around, and if anything, I knew that their husbands didn't want them around her much, nor did they want her around their men, thinking that she might end up trying to seduce one of them. Well, I couldn't blame them, they were mostly Iris's friends, friends who she chose to let go of for my sake when she chose to disappear.

I watched as she closed the door before I looked down at the picture of the angel who was my wife. The woman gave up a lot for me, her love, body, heart, time, and soul. I returned the favor by being the dick that I was to her. And that was not something that she was going to forgive me for, I knew that for fact. I wouldn't have been able to forgive me if I

were here; therefore, I couldn't have expected any less from her. Especially after everything that I did to break her.

"What are you going to do, Dean?" I asked myself, knowing that I had no one else to ask about this. I was a married man, and the marriage was one that no one approved of. It was something that I knew for fact, and I had to admit, I hated it more and more by the day.

I sighed and shook my head. I knew that I had a lot to do today, and the last thing that I wanted to do was worry about something like this. Iris was not going to spare me a second glance anyway. She made it obvious that she didn't want me in her life when she chose to disappear for years. It was something that killed me inside, but I knew well enough that I deserved it. She wouldn't have accepted to sign the divorce paper if not that, and that was something that I knew very well. If anything Iris has fought me against it for months, and has tried to make things right with me despite knowing that I had an affair.

It sickened me about myself that I had her blaming herself for it. She blamed herself for MY scandal, and that was something that I caused her to do. It was something that she did not deserve, this was something that I knew for fact. But I didn't have it in me to actually admit that she didn't. If anything, I made her feel like it was her fault, and regardless of how wrong I knew I was, I didn't do anything to stop it.

I walked out of my office and toward the meeting room where almost everyone was waiting. They knew that I didn't like delays, however, the one empty chair was Ashton's, Iris's father, and that came as a surprise to me, especially considering the fact that I knew well enough how strict he was about his timing. If anything, he didn't like it, and he didn't accept delays at all.

"Where is Ashton?" I asked, nodding at his empty seat. The men around frowned in confusion, each one of them just as confused as I was. We all knew of the man's accuracy, and we knew how much he hated delays, if anything, I think he hated them more than even I did.

"He hasn't answered any of his calls. We have tried reaching him to no avail, sir." Delilah said, and I nodded. Delilah was my second secretary. Knowing Mariana, I doubted that she would be keeping my employees without making sure that they quit faster than they were hired. It was her tactic since the two of us got married, and again, I couldn't blame

her. The trust that she had in me was close to nothing, and though it wasn't something that I liked, I knew not to question her about it.

Our relationship was toxic and was built on it. The two of us knew that we started wrong, the one thing that worried me was whether or not she would be letting me end this.

Knowing her, the woman has fought to marry me, and the ONLY way to get a divorce was to compensate or give her what she wanted. And after everything that she has asked for and gotten throughout our marriage, I doubted that I wanted to know what it was that she wanted.

Iris chose to sign the divorce papers for free whereas when I was thinking about it now, if I were to ever want to divorce Mariana, I would have to negotiate my way into the divorce. It was something that I didn't even want to think of, I had to admit that much. Plus, there was the fact that I would have to face the whole world who told me against the marriage, and that was another thing that I didn't want to deal with.

The woman was insane, and I knew that she would play the victim who wanted to do nothing but protect her marriage, home, and the man that she loves. The war of divorce, and media is not something that I want to deal with again. I knew how hard it was on Iris when it happened.

The two of us have chosen to keep silent about it, we chose not to cause a scene nor did we want people to ask questions that we didn't have answers to. Our divorce, being a 'mutual' decision, was barely done within a few hours, and when we parted ways, I could swear that I saw her crying; however, she didn't turn to face me. If anything, she just walked directly toward her car as if the whole weight of the world was carried on her shoulders.

The office's door was opened, catching us by surprise. I turned to face who it was only for my heart to drop as I caught sight of the woman that I didn't think I would be seeing.

The woman who has been running through my thoughts throughout the whole day stood right before me, holding a laptop bag in her arm, making me blink twice to try and process whether or not this was a dream. I stayed quiet as I tapped on the desk twice, fighting the urge to stand up as I faced her, wanting to know whether or not she was real.

Her eyes met mine and I couldn't help but feel like my breath got

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caught in my throat. This was the last thing that I expected to deal with today, and though I didn't know how I felt about it, I knew one thing, I didn't know how I was going to deal with it.

She took a deep breath, as if catching herself off guard, wanting to snap out of the moment before she turned to her father's seat. "My apologies for keeping you waiting. Traffic was hectic..."



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