

## Chapter 2

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Annika

My first order of business was to identify the skank that dared to touch my husband. I could care less whether Jeff initiated it all or if she did; the fact of the matter was that she knowingly pursued him even though he was a married man. Homewrecker, I scoffed inwardly. Little did she know I was going to expose her as the tramp who ruined my marriage. With my husband being the esteemed D.A. he is, a scandal like this would destroy his image, and that's exactly what I wanted. It may come off as petty or selfish, but I was well past the point of caring. I gave eleven years of my life to Jeff, and this is how he repays me? By fucking cheating? I do not think so.

Before I exposed them, I was going to thoroughly torture him first. And the most gratifying way to do that was to take away everything he was gunning for—the penthouse and my practice. With adrenaline still pumping through my veins, I called Kenzie and her husband, Hunter, the moment I stepped through my front door. Kenzie was my colleague at the practice, and Hunter, well, let's just say she lucked out and married an attorney, a divorce attorney at that. I was going to need him, and without a shred of doubt, I knew Hunter would use any means necessary to get me what I wanted out of this sham of a marriage.

"Hello?"

"Hunter?"

"Annika. I guess I shouldn't be surprised you're calling me this late at night."

"I'm sorry, Hunter, but you and Kenzie were right. Jeff is cheating."

"Oh, fuck. I'm so sorry, Ann. I can't fucking believe him."

"You and me both."

"I suppose you want to file for divorce now."

"Not yet. I refuse to allow this man to do as he pleases, and he will pay for what he's done to me. I have proof of his infidelity, and I plan to use it as leverage to gain the upper hand."

"Okay. How?"

"I want to expose their affair to the tabloids. But before I do that, I need to know the girl's identity. I want to know everything about her: name, age, her family, job. Everything."

"I have a private investigator I can refer you to if you need one. As you can imagine, it's common for me to find out this type of information on behalf of clients in my line of work."

"Thanks, Hunt. I'll definitely take you up on that."

"I'll forward his information to you now. Oh, and don't worry about payment. My office pays out of our settlement funds, but I obviously won't charge you for my services. You're family, and Jeff deserves to be exposed for his bullshit. Let me guess, you confronted him, and he denied it?"

"How did you know?"

"Ann, I'm a divorce lawyer."

"Right, you've probably dealt with these situations more often than not."

"I have, and it's tragic. Majority of the time, the husband is the one who cheats and gets caught. If you have proof, hold onto it. Better yet, forward it to me, and I'll keep it in your case file that I will create first thing in the morning."

"I will. Thank you."

"Hang in there, Annika. We'll get through this and make sure Jeff walks away with nothing from the divorce."

"That's why I called, actually. Jeff is after the penthouse and the practice."

"WHAT!? Why?"

"Isn't it obvious? That sleazy bastard wants to bring his mistress of a mistress into my home and thinks he can cash in on some prime real estate while he's at it."

"He does know that Kenz's name is on the deed for the practice, right?"

"No, he doesn't. But since I own half of the property, I know he's willing to do whatever he can to take over my share and kick out Kenzie."

"Over my fucking dead body!"

"Hunter, effective immediately, I need to transfer a quarter of my ownership to Kenzie. That way, she would own 75% of it, and Jeff wouldn't be able to take it from us."

"Consider it done. An attorney in my building handles this sort of thing, and I'll give him a call in the morning and have the paperwork drawn up."

"Perfect."

"What about the penthouse?"

"It's in my name, and I want to make sure that he gets nothing in the divorce, including the penthouse. I worked too hard for this place, and I will be damned if Jeff's mistress moves in here."

"If it's in your name, you don't have to worry about that. Unfortunately, given that you guys are married and he lives there, he has the legal right to bring her into the penthouse without your consent."

"Fuck."

"I wouldn't worry too much, Ann. I doubt he's stupid enough to bring her into your place."

"I guess we'll see just how stupid he really is. He was stupid enough to get caught. Not once, but twice. Oh, and speaking of, these pictures are graphic."

"I've seen them once; I've seen them all. Don't worry about that."

"Alright. Well, I'll let you go, Hunter. Thank you again for taking my call. I know it's late."

"Don't apologize, Annika. As I said, you're family. Kenz and I are here for you, whatever you need."

"Good night, Hunter. Give Kenz my love."

"I will. Try to get some rest. You'll need it if you're going to go after Jeff on all of this."

I hung up, and my eyes immediately betrayed me as I tried to blink back the tears. Feeling exhausted, I surrendered to the rain and broke down. Even though I witnessed firsthand what Jeff was up to, I still couldn't believe this was happening. The future I envisioned never included planning to divorce the man I gave my entire heart to. Where did we go wrong? Where did I go wrong? Why would Jeff hurt me this way when all I've ever done was love him unconditionally?

I pulled up the pictures to send to Hunter, and seeing it all over again shattered my heart into a million pieces. It felt like my body had forgotten how to breathe, my mind was suddenly paralyzed, and I just couldn't understand why. Why would Jeff do this to me? To us? What was I going to tell my family when they asked how we were doing? How could I admit that they were right all along? An unpleasant memory replayed in my head, and their words that now sounded more like prophecy echoed over and over again.

"Marrying Jeff will be the biggest mistake of your life."

I shook my head bitterly and resumed my task of sending the pictures to Hunter. Just as I hit 'Send,' the bedroom door swung open, and in walked Jeff. It took everything in me not to run towards him and drive a scalpel between his eyes. I couldn't get past his audacity to come back to the penthouse after what he had done. I hope that bitch gave him an STD. It's not like I would open my legs for him ever again, I fumed.

"Why are you still awake?" he asked me with a nasty tone of voice, clearly still upset that I accused him of cheating.

"Why do you fucking care?" I retorted.

"Sweetheart, why are you being like this? I told you, I'm not cheating. Why won't you believe me?!"

"Because I've already caught you in multiple lies, Jeff! And you refuse to tell me the truth!"

"Annika, I'm not lying. I swear to you, I'm 100% faithful. You have to believe me, baby. I've loved you since we were 14. Why would I destroy everything we've fought for by being unfaithful?" God, he was good. Too good. Had I not seen him an hour ago with his dick inside of that blonde-haired bimbo, I would actually fall for it. But then again, this is Jeff we're talking about, Mister District Attorney; of course, he would be good at convincing people.

"Prove it then," I replied, turning my nose up with pride.

"How?"

"Let's have a baby." He froze at what I said and didn't reply. "Why are you so freaked out? We always promised that we would have a baby after our careers were steady. So, let's have a baby."

"Annika, I'm not ready to be a father. Yet," he hastily answered. Oh, but you were ready to give your blonde mistress a cream pie when she asked.

"Forget it then. You're too much of a fucking coward to prove your innocence. You're unfaithful, and I'm going to prove it. Until then, you can take your ass to the guest room."

"Annika!"

"You can either go to the guest room, or you can get a fucking hotel! It's your choice, but this is MY house, and what I say goes!" I yelled at him. I pointed to the door, signaling that this was the end of our discussion and time for him to take his leave. He grunted in frustration, grabbed a few clothes out of the closet, and left the bedroom. I could hear him going down the hall to the guest room. I was honestly shocked. I figured he would jump at the chance to go to a hotel and spend time with his slut. But then again, he loved this penthouse more than anything hence why he's trying to take it from me.

I locked the door and made a mental note to change the locks on the master bedroom tomorrow. I couldn't change the locks on the penthouse because that would cause too many issues too soon. I went into the closet and loaded up the rest of Jeff's clothing and personal effects into three duffel bags before heading to the guest room. Until this nightmare was over, I didn't want him anywhere near me.

"What are you doing?" he asked me after I threw his belongings into the room.

"Until I decide whether or not I want to continue this marriage, your ass will stay in the guest room."

"Annika, you can't be ..."

"If you don't like it, then you can fucking leave." I turned my heel before he could respond and slammed the door. I headed straight back to the master bedroom and locked myself in, my rage evaporating and turning into heartache once more. His passive response and the fact that he hadn't even try to convince me otherwise only further proved Jeff had changed. Whenever we used to go to bed, Jeff would do everything in his power to get me to smile and stop being mad. But now, he just let me stay mad. I rested my forehead on the door and cried. This time, my knees did give out from under me, and the tears I had been suppressing spilled over.

How was I going to survive this?

Sadie

After having my fun with Jeff at his office, I returned home, expecting to just go to bed. But instead, I was met with my pissed-off father.

"Sadie, it's almost two in the morning! Where on Earth have you been!?" he screamed at me.

"I went out to meet a friend, Daddy," I answered sweetly, knowing he was all bark and no bite. I was a Daddy's girl, and I had him wrapped around my little finger.

"Sadie, are you out of your mind? You're recently divorced after only being married for a year! You going out in public like this can cause major problems for the company!"

"Oh please, Daddy. The tabloids don't care that I'm divorced; they care that Leon is divorced."

"Sadie, if the public finds out you two got divorced because of your infidelity, that could jeopardize everything and put us in ruins!" he shouted.

"Daddy, no one will believe that I, Sadie Galloway, the daughter of multi-millionaire real estate investor, David Galloway, am a cheater. Relax. I'm 21, Daddy. I'm just an innocent young adult, and Leon is the big bad wolf. If anything, the public will believe that he's the cheater and feel sorry for us. Don't worry too much, Daddy," I said and put my hands on his shoulder. "Goodnight, Daddy, I love you," I told him and walked away as if resting my case. I could hear him grumbling behind me, but there was nothing he could do. It didn't matter what I did wrong. Short of killing someone, my dad would always take my side. Though I'm sure, even then, he would bail me out and pay to have someone else take the fall.

Still, someone of my caliber does understand my limits, and I knew he wouldn't be happy if he found out that I was seeing Jeff. Luckily, no one knows that Jeff is married other than me, but it doesn't really matter because soon, Jeff will be divorced and free to marry me.

I went to my room after handling my dad and made sure to lock the door. Outside of this comfort zone, I had to keep up appearances and play my cards for the time being. But here, in my safe space, I can celebrate and look forward to my future with Jeff. It's been months since me and Jeff started having unprotected s\*x, and I knew that eventually, the inevitable would happen. I pulled out the tiny white stick from my locked dresser and smiled at the two little pink lines. I was pregnant with Jeff's baby, and I couldn't be happier. Now, I just needed to find a doctor's office where no one knew who I was.

I rubbed my tummy and smiled again. "Soon, baby, soon Daddy will be home with us, and we're going to live in a beautiful penthouse that overlooks the whole city. We're going to have everything that we ever dreamed of."