

Chapter 6

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Leon

I was inside my oce, nose-deep in paperwork for some newly acquired business properties and ventures, and it was hard to ignore the tension in the air despite being alone. I couldn't put my nger on it, but it felt similar to the calm before the storm. Aside from the hum of the air purier and the periodic shuing of papers, there was silence as I resumed my work, but it was interrupted suddenly by my cell phone ringing. Without even checking to see who was calling, I picked it up.

"Hello?"

"Mr. Von Doren?"

"Speaking."

"Sir, it's Jorge."

"I know. What do you want? I'm very busy at the moment, so get on with it, or I'm hanging up."

"Sir, I've uncovered the identity of the young woman you asked me to look into," he replied with what sounded like a tinge of hesitance in his voice. I brushed it aside for the moment, since hearing that he already had information piqued my interest.

"What did you nd?"

"Quite a bit. Her name is Dr. Annika Hollands, and she—"

"Did you say Hollands?!" I exclaimed as I snapped my head up from the paper I was currently looking at.

"Um, yes, sir. I did, and I gured this alone would garner your undivided attention."

"Any relation to D.A. Hollands?"

"She's his wife, sir."

"HIS WIFE!?" I snarled in disbelief.

"Yes. It appears that D.A. Hollands didn't just have an affair with Ms. Galloway while she was married to you, but he was stepping out on his own marriage as well." I couldn't stop the huff of disgust that escaped my lips. It made sense now why Annika was so upset when I went to see Counselor Malloy the other day, and it also made sense as to why the counselor also hired Jorge to spy on Sadie. Everything was coming full circle, and I was eager to know more about Annika because of this.

"How long have they been married?" I asked.

"Seven years, but they've been together since they were freshmen in high school. They're literally high school sweethearts, but it appears that only Dr. Hollands is upholding her vows. According to my research and some overheard gossip, D.A. Hollands hasn't been with his wife for over a year, but she only recently discovered his extramarital affairs."

"How recently are we talking?"

"Less than a month."

"Is she that naive?"

"No, sir. She's that trusting, and he's a master liar and manipulator. He's the D.A. for a reason. Though I'm certain all trust has been thrown out the window at this point considering what I overheard her saying to her colleague."

"Anything else? What about her background? You mentioned she is a doctor? She seems young."

"Young indeed. She's the same age as D.A. Hollands—26. She works in family medicine and owns the practice that she shares with her female colleague. From what I can tell, they're former college roommates and have remained good friends, and they were out together while I was running surveillance. Interestingly enough, this colleague, she's also Counselor Malloy's wife, so they all seem to know each other intimately. The good doctor graduated Summa c'm Laude from high school and college and obtained her Ph.D. and medical license within three years. Her maiden name is Silverton." There was a long pause as his words sank in.

"Wait, did you say Silverton?"

"Yes, sir."

"As in the Rhode Island Silvertons, the powerful family that owns every construction business in the Northeast part of this country?"

"That is correct, Mr. Von Doren. I was quite surprised as well when I discovered this. Dr. Hollands comes from a very auent family, while D.A. Hollands does not. Her family frowned upon their marriage because they felt he wasn't good enough for her and that he was taking advantage of her wealthy background."

"Was that the case?"

"No. Records show that Dr. Hollands rst attended boarding school when she was in primary and secondary school abroad, but chose to attend public school back in the states for high school. That's where she met Jeffrey Hollands. My understanding is he has no idea who she actually is. She hid her family background, or rather, her grandmother did when she found out Dr. Hollands was dating. I believe this was a tactic to prove whether or not Mr. Hollands really fell in love with her when they were teenagers. Records also indicate that her grandmother and aunt raised her while her parents watched from the sidelines. She went behind their backs to marry the D.A. They had a small wedding because they were both only 19 at the time, and Dr. Hollands assured her family that she would be happy for the rest of her days."

"So, the D.A. has no idea that he's been married to a billionaire heiress?"

"Not a single clue," Jorge replied, and I detected a mixture of enthusiasm and mockery in his voice. "Furthermore, while listening to a conversation between the two doctors, it appears that Mrs. Malloy also comes from an auent family, though not as wealthy as the Silvertons. Lastly, the penthouse where I caught Ms. Galloway sneaking out during my investigation into her affairs last year? Yeah, that actually belongs to Dr. Hollands and not D.A. Hollands."

"Her name is on the deed?"

"Well, it's technically in the name of the Silvertons. Her father bought it for her as a graduation gift from medical school. D.A. Hollands assumes that she bought it with her rst years' worth of funds from the practice."

"What an imbecile. Does he not realize a penthouse like that is worth over twenty million dollars? No newly graduated family practitioner can make that kind of money in a year."

"One would think that he would have more common sense as the District Attorney. Might I add, sir? Ms. Galloway doesn't even hold a candle to Dr. Hollands in looks, education, and wealth." For some odd reason, hearing Jorge comment on Annika's looks irked me slightly, but I paid no heed to it.

"You're quite right about that, Jorge. Thank you for your hard work. I'll send you your payment as soon as we disconnect."

"No rush, Mr. Von Doren. I'll send over my ndings as well as where you may nd Dr. Hollands."

Just as the call was disconnected, I immediately received an email from Jorge containing his ndings on Annika along with some candid photos he took of her. Most of them were of her at a local barista and bakery, accompanied by another young woman with long strawberry blonde hair. This must be her fellow doctor and friend. What caught me off guard was how Plain Jane both of them were. For someone like Annika, who comes from an auent family such as hers, one would assume she would dress more fashionably. I guess if she were still maintaining appearances, her dressing in ordinary clothing would make more sense.

But even in everyday clothing, she still struck me as someone beautiful and exotic looking. Without realizing it, I found myself tracing over her face with the tip of my nger.

"Beautiful, indeed," I muttered under my breath. I continued going through Jorge's report while feeling insulted that Sadie and Hollands were f****g behind both mine and Annika's backs, and a wild idea kept crossing my mind—she and I could work together to get back at them. After looking at the stills of surveillance footage from when I rst saw her, it was clear as day that not only was she hurt, but she was also angry. Anger and vengeance could be a very deadly yet successful combination.

"My dear Dr. Hollands, or should I say Dr. Silverton now, perhaps you and I can be of service to each other," I said out loud. I peered at the stack of les that needed my attention but gured it could wait a couple of more days since none of them were major priorities. I buzzed my assistant, "Diamond, please come in here."

"Yes, sir?" she asked, arriving almost instantly.

"Cancel my schedule for the rest of today and tomorrow. I have urgent matters to take care of and do not want to be disturbed. If anything needs my signature, place it on my stack and wait for my return."

"Yes, Mr. Von Doren."

"Tell Toby to get the car ready."

"Yes, sir. Have a wonderful day. See you in a few days." She bowed her head in a uid motion and left.

I logged out of my computer, locked the door of my oce, and went down my private elevator to where my driver, Toby, was waiting, and I realized I still couldn't get Annika's face out of my head. Though Jorge's pictures were from a distance and candid, I couldn't deny that she was attractive and very photogenic. And all this while, I thought Sadie was beautiful. Too bad for her because her shitty personality and whorish ways made her disgusting in my eyes now. Jorge was right; Sadie didn't hold a candle to Annika.

The elevator reached the basement level, and as always, Toby was already ready with the door open for me. I gave him a nod and sat down in the back seat. As soon as he closed the door, he ran around to the driver's seat.

"Sir, where to?"

"Land and Mall Health," I replied. The name of the medical practice was comprised of Annika's and her partner's last names. It was original and unique. Throughout the entire drive, I went through everything Jorge sent me with a ne-toothed comb, trying my best not to stare at Annika's pictures. I didn't even know this woman, yet with her current predicament and her beauty, I couldn't help but be captivated by her. She and I were in the same boat; only we didn't realize it. When I was ghing with Sadie in court last year, Annika was blind to the betrayal by that scum-of-a-lawyer husband of hers.

"Sir, we have arrived." I looked out of the window, and the medical oce signage was staring at me straight in my face. Toby went around and opened the door, and I stepped out, straightened my suit jacket, and went inside. As soon as I opened the door, I was greeted by the receptionist.

"Good afternoon. Welcome to Land and Mall Health. Do you have an appointment today?" she asked in an orderly fashion.

"Um, no. I don't."

"Oh, well, that's alright. We take walk-ins. What is the reason for your visit?" she asked. I had to quickly think on my feet and blurted out the following issues, "I haven't been feeling well the last few days. I've had some major headaches and lack of sleep. It's affecting my work," I lied straight through my teeth.

"I'm sorry to hear that. Have you been here before?" I shook my head. "No problem, sir. Please ll out these new patient forms, and I will squeeze you in to see Dr. Malloy."

"Actually, I was hoping to see Dr. Hollands because a friend recommended her," I quickly countered.

"Oh, let me see if she has an opening today. She's quite busy." I nodded my head. She made a few clicks of the mouse and keystrokes on the keyboard. "Well, you're in luck, sir. Dr. Hollands had a last-minute cancellation and has an opening in about forty minutes. Is that alright?"

"Yes, that's ne. May I stay here in the waiting room?" I asked and gave her a wink. She blushed immediately and nodded her head without responding. "Thank you, darling." I took the clipboard of paperwork and frowned at how much I needed to ll out. I never understood why doctor's oces required so much information from people. Since I had my own on-call doctor, I never had to ll one of these out.

"Sir, do you need assistance?" Toby asked me from the side. I nodded my head, and he approached to take the papers from me. Toby has been with me for over ten years and knows me better than I know myself, so something like this would be a breeze for him. Fifteen minutes later, Toby was nished, and all I needed to do was initial and sign a couple of pages. It made it seem like I was at the oce again. Once I signed everything, I took the clipboard back to the receptionist.

"Thank you, Mr. ... Von Doren. I will need your I.D. and any insurance you may have." I gave her what she needed and watched as she scanned them into the computer. "Here you go, these are yours. If you can, please have a seat, you'll be called back shortly." I turned my heel and sat down again. Twenty minutes went by at an agonizingly slow pace, but the door opened, and my name was called.

"Leon?" I stood up and had Toby stay in the lounge for me. "Right this way, Leon. We're going to go down the hall to the right, and I will get your height and weight." I obediently followed the nurse. "Please take off your suit jacket and shoes before you stand on the scale." I did as she asked. "Okay, 246.9. Now, go ahead and stand here with your back against the wall with your heels about an inch away from it. Stand up straight and look straight ahead for me, please." I watched as she got onto a step ladder and smirked at this since the scene was quite comical. "Why do men have to be so tall all the time?" she complained while taking my height. "Good grief, 6'7". You're gigantic!"

"Thank you," I replied and smiled.

"Okay, please roll up your sleeve to your forearm. We're going to take your blood pressure and your temperature now." I did as she said, and she placed a cuff on my wrist and a thermometer in my mouth. I waited for the beep to indicate my results were in. "My goodness. For someone so t, your blood pressure is quite high. It's 156 over 99."

"Is that not normal?"

"No, sir. It's not, so the doctor will want to discuss this with you. Please come with me." I put my shoes on and carried my jacket while following her to a room. "Dr. Hollands is still with another patient. She should be in shortly."

"Thank you." She smiled before closing the door behind her. I sat down on one of two chairs in the room and looked around. I couldn't help but admire how well the oce was built for a family practice. The rooms were spacious, and the interior design was awless. It seems that the good doctors spared no expense when it came to this place.

As I sat and waited for Annika, my phone pinged with a text. I took it out and read the message, and it was the last thing that I was expecting.