

# Divorced Heiress

Chapter 8 The truth in the light.

## Chapter 11 - Divorced Heiress

NARRATES SARAH.

I hadn't slept a wink all night, despite the banquet serving as a distraction from my problems, I couldn't help but keep thinking about the photo Rachel sent me. In the end, she had gotten her way, but in a way, I felt relieved to find out before it was too late.

Now I had to focus on my baby and my new, surprising, and unexpected position as the vice president of Doinel. I didn't want to disappoint my father if he was placing all his trust in me. I just hoped this role didn't become too much for me.

I got up five minutes after tossing and turning in bed. I had to make an appearance at the company today and I wanted to look presentable. The careless and unkempt Sarah had stayed in New York, along with a failed marriage.

After taking a relaxing bubble bath, I put on a navy blue executive dress and a black blazer, simple but fitting for the occasion. I was about to finish styling my hair when the door to my room opened abruptly.

"You have to see this!" Abby entered the room with a serious expression, her eyes about to spark. I looked at her confused, not knowing why she entered my room like that, so early in the morning without even saying hello.

"Good morning, Abby. I slept well last night, thank you for your concern." I said without taking my eyes off her obviously displeased face with whatever she was seeing on her phone.

She approached me and hugged me for a few seconds, realizing how rude she had been.

"I'm sorry, Sarah. It's just that they're despicable. Look at the news they've come up with." Abby showed me her phone. My eyes widened, and my heart sank in my chest as I read my name in the headlines.

"Sources inform us that Paul Dubois has been the reason for Sarah Petit's separation from renowned CEO Alexander Lancaster."

"Infidelity on the part of the new vice president of Doinel is said to have ended her two-year marriage with businessman Lancaster."

"Paul Dubois, Sarah Petit, Alexander Lancaster, a love triangle that ended a happy marriage."

"What the hell?" I said barely audible, not needing to read more to realize that the responsible party for the news was NY Entertainment.

They had used photos from the banquet to twist the context, and I knew exactly who did it, Alexander Lancaster.

NY Entertainment was associated with Lancaster Collection, so of course, they would use their influence to tarnish my reputation after our separation.

Moreover, no one but my family and Alexander knew about the divorce, considering that my parents were not willing to unveil their daughter's identity publicly.

I ruled them out entirely, especially since they would never do anything to harm me. Adding to that, I had no contact with NY Entertainment, leaving Alexander Lancaster as the only suspect.

Why?

What did he gain by defaming me like this when he knows the true reasons for our separation?

Was I such a terrible wife to him?

I couldn't believe I was married to such a despicable man who didn't care about others' reputations, only his own. He was hitting me with this blow as if I were going to expose his infidelity.

With tears in my eyes and heavy breathing, I searched for my phone on the nightstand. I had kept it turned off all night, and when I turned it on, the notifications poured in. I was being tagged in all the news where they shamelessly changed the version. I quickly became a trending topic on social media.

"What a rage! How did the news reach NY Entertainment, being a private event, and in France! Even the local media hasn't dared to comment on it." I said, giving her a look as if the answer was obvious. Her mouth opened, understanding who was behind all the rumors.

"Oh, that son of a... How dare he? Apart from cheating on you with your ex-friend and getting you pregnant, he comes to clear his name with false accusations. I can't believe it. What kind of monster were you married to? This wouldn't have happened if you had noticed my brother. Despite the gossip about him being involved with other women, he would never do something like this. For starters, he would never neglect you as his wife."

Abby seemed more upset than me. Although I was more hurt than upset, I never imagined this from Alexander, why not leave everything behind? Why cause a scandal? Why did he want to defame me?

"If he thinks I will just sit idly by, he's very mistaken." I said, wiping away my tears and regaining my composure.

Enough of the weak Sarah that everyone trampled on whenever they pleased, she wasn't the same person who was humiliated and didn't retaliate, that ended the moment I left New York. Were you looking for the real reason for the divorce?

Well, I would give it to you.

Chapter 8 The truth in the light part 2

## Chapter 12 - Divorced Heiress

"Yes! That's it! That's my Sarah, show them who they're messing with, teach them a lesson, make them never want to slander you again! And if they do, I'll be capable of traveling to New York and punching your ex-husband. He deserves it for being an asshole." Abby seemed ecstatic to see my sudden change in mood, she knew I was going to strike back.

I logged into my social media and looked at each photo with Alexander with a bitter taste in my mouth, and with all the pain in my soul, I deleted them one by one, leaving my profile completely empty. Alexander's profile caught my attention and I didn't hesitate to block him, I didn't want to have anything to do with him, especially after what I was about to do.

I contacted Damien, an old friend and the owner of Rousell Entertainment, the most important international celebrity magazine known for the truthfulness of its news. This wouldn't be an exception.

"Sarah? My goodness, it's been so long since I heard from you. But wait, can you explain to me what's going on? I couldn't ignore the news about your divorce." He asked as soon as I dialed my old friend's phone number.

"Damien, dear friend, why do you think I'm calling you? I'll give you the real reason for my divorce with Alexander Lancaster, you'll have my exclusive version, with evidence in hand." I said determinedly, not caring about the implications, I was going to damage Alexander's image by doing so, but he didn't care when he wanted to make me the bad one.

Abby jumped with excitement all over the room when she heard me serious and determined, without a trace of remorse on my face.

"It's an honor for me to publish your version of events, send me everything and I will make sure that article comes out as soon as possible. I knew that the Sarah they talk about is not the same one I know." I said goodbye to Damien and sent him the information along with the photo that Rachel had sent me via email.

That photo that hurt me as soon as I received it became a double-edged sword, it was the irrefutable proof that I didn't cheat on Alexander and it would refute all those notes that portrayed me in a bad light.

"You're my idol, I love you. If I were in your place, I would have deactivated my social media and disappeared from the map." Abby said after I sent the email, and I looked at her with amusement.

"Please, Abby. Lies always come to light and the public will realize that they misinterpreted the photos. Can't I hug my friends? So, the people I hug will become my lovers? I was surprised they didn't say I had a romance with Leonardo Doinel." I said calmly as I continued to fix my hair and prepare everything to go to the company.

Abby burst into laughter and sat on the bed with her legs crossed.

"Just wait until they find out you're Leonardo Doinel's daughter, they will kneel down and apologize for all the humiliations. Those witches will regret telling you over and over again that you were a nobody, when they find out you're not a Petit but a Doinel." I looked at her through the mirror, her face filled with satisfaction just by imagining it. But that wouldn't be possible.

Not until I earn everyone's respect for being Sarah Petit and not for being Leonardo Doinel's daughter.

"Sari?" My father's voice interrupted our conversation and Abby stopped laughing, her expression turning serious.

"Miss Dubois, you're here so early."

"Mr. Doinel, this is also my house, your wife has told me a hundred times."

My father looked at her with a furrowed brow, but said nothing, he knew how "funny" my friend could be.

"Sari, before going to the company, we will go for a prenatal check-up, I want to make sure everything is going well with my grandson." A shiver ran down my spine when I heard that.

My father was right, with all the divorce stuff, my return to France, my new position, the scandal of an affair, I had forgotten that I needed to check that my pregnancy was going well.

"I think that's an excellent idea, I also want to go meet my nephew." before I could respond to my father, Abby was already speaking with a bright, excited smile.

"When will you stop being so impertinent, Miss Dubois?" my father asked seriously, although it was clear he was holding back laughter.

"When you accept that you love me like a daughter." Abby responded with an innocent smile. She only needed a halo to declare that she was a fallen angel from heaven.

"I'll wait for you in the car." My father ostentatiously ignored my friend and left the room without saying anything else.

Apparently, he hadn't realized the media scandal I was involved in, and I hoped he still didn't know, at least until I could prove that I was innocent of everything that was said about me.

"Your father adores me! He invited me to go with you!" Abby said excitedly, although he had always adored her, he just didn't agree with how liberal she was.

"Uh, you invited yourself, friend." I said to purposely wipe the smile off her face, but that didn't happen.

"Anyway, he's always loved you. It won't be long before he calls you his daughter."

Abby laughed at me and my phone began to ring with more notifications. I slid my finger across the screen and the notification from Rousell Entertainment caught my attention.

"The real reason for Sarah Petit and Alexander Lancaster's divorce."

My skin tingled when I saw the title of the article and a smile of satisfaction appeared on my face. Abby, seeing my expression, approached me and looked at my phone screen.

"Oh my God, our dear friend is so efficient. It hasn't even been ten minutes since you sent the information." I ignored Abby's excitement and continued reading the article.

"An affair has ended Sarah Petit and Alexander Lancaster's two-year marriage, but it wasn't by Sarah's hand, it was by the renowned businessman, CEO of Lancaster Collection, Alexander Lancaster, who had a secret relationship with Sarah's best friend and former college classmate, Rachel Duncan. Want proof? We have proof!"

The photo of Rachel next to Alexander with a bare torso appeared below the text and I couldn't help but smile in victory.

Soon, social media began to explode and the criticism completely changed direction, the negative comments towards me turned into messages of encouragement.

Alexander didn't hesitate to put me in such a vulnerable position, what he didn't expect was for me to respond with the same strength as him, through reputable media outlets, wasn't it enough for him to sign the divorce without any scandals involved? He brought this upon himself and now my innocence and the true reason for our divorce were being proven.

Adultery.

Chapter 9 Battle won.

## Chapter 13 - Divorced Heiress

All the bad things disappeared when I saw the first images of my baby, the truth was that nothing could be distinguished, it was still very tiny like a seed, as it was only four weeks of gestation, but the excitement of knowing that it was growing in my womb, that there was life inside me, nobody was going to take that away from me, not even if they made up a thousand rumors online.

That was my child.

"I'm a hundred percent sure it will be a girl and she will be just as beautiful as Aunt Abby." My friend jumped with excitement in her eyes.

She, like my parents, didn't miss a single detail of my first check-up, my mother shed a few tears as she held my hand and my father, although with a neutral expression, knew that he also wanted to shed a tear of happiness.

Despite having shared that unique moment with the most important people in the world to me, I would have liked to see Alexander's expression when he saw his firstborn, but I quickly brushed off that idea from my head as soon as it came.

I would never see his expression, because he will never know about the existence of my child.

"Of course not, it will be a boy, the spoiled one of the house, whatever it is, it doesn't matter, it will be a Doinel." My mother played along with my friend and my father let out a tired sigh before letting go of my mother, who started discussing the sex of my baby, and came to my side, wrapping his arm around mine.

"Sari, I didn't want to mention this in front of your mother, but I've seen the news with your name in the headlines, are you okay? Do you want me to take care of it?" I looked at my father with a smile that didn't reach my eyes, even though those news got me in a bad mood, I had already taken care of denying everything and clearing my name.

"No, dad, I've taken care of it myself, I can handle it. The Lancasters are mistaken if they think they can mess with me and I won't retaliate." My father didn't seem very convinced by my answer, but he nodded his head.

"You know you have my support and the company's. Don't think we'll leave you alone, you are the most important person in my life." I smiled genuinely and put one of my arms around his waist in an attempt to hug him as we walked to the parking lot.

"Thank you, dad, I don't know what I would do without your support."

"You're my little Sari, I would never leave you alone. Now, let's go so you can take the place that has always been waiting for you." He said, putting his arm around my shoulders and giving me a kiss on my head. I knew he was referring to the position of vice president of Doinel, I didn't feel completely prepared, but, after all, I had studied for that.

I just deviated a bit along the way and now everything was returning to its course.

"We will have special guests tonight." He said when we arrived at the car, where the driver was waiting for us with the door open.

"What kind of guests?" I asked curiously and my father chuckled.

"It's a surprise, don't be so curious, let's go, they're waiting for us."

I wasn't satisfied with his answer, but I didn't protest because I knew very well that I wouldn't get any information out of him.

On the way to the company, I took the liberty of checking social media. The support of internet users was directed towards me since Damien's news came out, only a few still stood on the side of the Lancaster family, claiming that Sarah Petit had no status, that she was a gold digger who was only with the highest bidder.

I smiled without grace at the screen and let out a sigh.

The only post that was on the internet was Damien's, the posts from NY Entertainment had been completely deleted, which surprised me tremendously. I didn't expect him to give up so soon, in fact, for a moment I thought he would make this scandal even bigger.

I couldn't continue reading the comments, as Damien sent me a message.

"Dear Sarah, a member of the Lancaster family and responsible for starting this war, wants to take down my post, he thinks it's only fair after having deleted the posts from NY Entertainment."

Upon reading that, I couldn't help but laugh and my parents' gaze automatically fell on me, Abby had a smile next to me, as she was attentive to every movement on my cell phone and read Damien's message.

"Is everything alright, Sarah?" My mother asked next to Abby, and I nodded my head.

"Everything's perfect, mother." My father turned his gaze forward, and although my mother didn't seem entirely sure with my response, she continued doing her thing.

"What are you going to say to him?" Abby whispered, so only I could hear, and I didn't say anything, I just typed a response on my phone.

"Damien, tell Mr. Lancaster that he should have thought twice before starting a media war. I don't care what he considers fair or not, I am giving my version. I am defending myself from his slander."

"What a beautiful day, isn't it?" I said, focusing my gaze on the road, the sky was clear and the sun was shining brightly, yet it wasn't too hot.

"I'm your number one fan." Abby said beside me, holding back her usual celebration, she didn't want to cause a scene in front of my parents, especially with my mother by her side.

"How could it not be a beautiful day? Today we saw my grandson for the first time." My excited mother took the ultrasound from my hands and silently admired it.

My phone rang, indicating that I got a message. Damien's response.

"Oh, no, dear, it wasn't Mr. Lancaster who was responsible for this. It was Mrs. Amelia Lancaster who ordered the photos to be published and taken out of context. Mr. Alexander Lancaster has asked her to apologize publicly, but she is hesitant. She only intends to lower my score. I am pleased to announce that you won the war."

I was surprised to learn that. But, no, I hadn't won the war, I had won a simple battle. If it hadn't been me, if this attack had been directed towards a woman who didn't have the means to defend herself, then it would be considered a war, and something inside me told me that Mrs. Lancaster would not stand idly by.

My friend couldn't hide her impression as she let out a gasp, however, she covered her mouth with her hands when she realized my parents were looking at us again, expecting me to tell them what was happening on this side, and she came up with the worst excuse.

"I forgot the keys to my house."

I suppressed a mocking laugh that was threatening to escape. Could she not come up with something more convincing?

"Sorry, you can continue with what you were doing."

She made a dismissive gesture with her hand, downplaying her "carelessness," and turned back to me to whisper, "This doesn't look good at all, that idiot, the coward, is using his mother to act innocent."

I admitted that idea crossed my mind, but knowing Amelia, I knew she was capable of inventing any gossip in which I came out looking bad and her son as a saint, like the innocent saint he wasn't.

What she didn't expect was that it would backfire and I would respond to the slander, exposing to the public eye what was behind the divorce of the great CEO of Lancaster Collection and the insignificant Sarah Petit.

"Leave it a while longer, they have brought it on themselves."

I sent the response to Damien and Abby moved her arm in a sign of victory.

"Ms. Amelia played dirty, I hope she learns her lesson, thinking that I will continue to let her humiliate me without lifting a finger to defend myself." I whispered to Abby, feeling a relief in my chest.

This was the first time I stood up to Amelia's attacks and humiliations. It felt so good to do it after two years of just keeping quiet and swallowing her mistreatment. I focused on respecting them because they were my husband's family, but now that I was divorced, I wouldn't let her or anyone intimidate me. I hoped it was clear to her that it wouldn't be the first time I took retaliation.

We arrived at the grand Doinel company, and I looked at the building in awe, it looked even more impressive and imposing than I remembered.

"Miss Dubois, my driver will take you home." My father spoke seriously as he got out of the car, and Abby let out a laugh.

"Oh, Father, you say the funniest things. I want to be present when my best friend takes her seat as vice president of Doinel." Abby hooked her arm into mine and walked with me towards the elevator in the underground parking lot.

I heard my father snort before telling my mother how impertinent and sassy my friend was. Before my parents arrived by our side, my phone rang indicating a call.

I frowned realizing it was a New York number, but no matter how hard I tried to remember that unknown number, I couldn't recall.

"It's that idiot, I assure you, I'm a hundred percent sure." Abby said, realizing that I was staring at my phone screen for too long.

"Answer and tell him to leave you alone and go back to that bitch Rachel, Richel, or whatever her name is."

I answered the call, but not to talk the way Abby suggested. That wasn't me. It wasn't my way of putting people in their place.

"Hello?" I answered with a racing heartbeat, thinking that maybe Abby was right and the person on the other end of the line was Alexander.

No one spoke for a few seconds, and when I was about to hang up the call, they deigned to speak.

"Sarah?"

My heart skipped a beat and the hair on the back of my neck unexpectedly stood up. I closed my eyes upon hearing that voice that had become my favorite sound for so many years and now only made my blood boil with rage.

Was Abby a witch?

"Yes, this is Sarah, who is this?" I asked with a cold voice and without a hint of kindness, while trying to catch my breath and the confidence that threatened to abandon me just by hearing his voice again.

Even though I already knew who it was, I didn't want him to know that I would be able to recognize his voice anywhere and by any means.

"Alex... Alexander Lancaster."

Chapter 10 Rivalry.

## Chapter 14 - Divorced Heiress

I gave Abby a quick glance and immediately knew that I was right, so she approached with flushed cheeks, clearly angry, and brought her ear to my phone to listen to what the man on the other side was saying.

-Mr. Lancaster. I hope your sudden call is to inform me that you have already signed the divorce papers.- I said coldly, trying to stay strong, although my hand began to tremble slightly. Abby noticed it and placed her hand on my back to encourage me and calm my nerves.

Be strong, Sarah, don't let that idiot's call affect you.

He was only calling to clear his name, but that wouldn't be so easy for him. He should have thought about it before authorizing his mother to use NY Entertainment to harm me.

Mrs. Amelia had no limits. All she ever wanted was for me to separate from her son, and I did. What more did she want from me?

-I have already signed them, Ms. Petit. However, the reason for my call is not precisely for that, but because of the recent news in which we have been involved. Do you think you have a few minutes to talk and clarify the wave of rumors? - I arched my eyebrow and internally let out a bitter laugh.

Abby signaled me to refuse emphatically to his request and I smirked.

-I don't have time to talk at the moment. I have a very busy schedule, as you can understand.- I replied reluctantly, ready to end the call at any moment.

Mainly because my parents were approaching and I didn't want them to know I was talking to the man who destroyed me. They hadn't noticed that I was on the phone because they were immersed in a conversation, which relieved me a little, giving me a few seconds to finish listening to what Mr. Lancaster had to say.

-I won't take up much of your busy schedule.- He insisted after releasing a tired sigh. I rolled my eyes and he continued speaking just as I was about to respond. -Tell me the time, and I will call you back.-

-I'm afraid that won't be possible. If what you want is to lower the rating of Rousell Entertainment, where your reputation is affected, you should have thought about it before contacting NY Entertainment to defame me in such a way.- My voice was firm and without a hint of nervousness. I was impressed with how confidently I was speaking, making it clear that he was not talking to the submissive Sarah he was married to.

-If it is true that NY Entertainment is associated with Lancaster Collection, it was not me who was responsible for this. I have already reprimanded them for the published articles.- I realized that I was giving him the time he asked for to talk to me, so I opened my mouth ready to end this conversation here; I didn't plan on giving him any importance or my valuable time to this shameless man.

-Mr. Lancaster, I'm not interested in knowing more. The damage has already been done, my reputation is tarnished, and even if you are not responsible, you are partly to blame. After all, they won't speak of Sarah Petit, but of Mr. Lancaster's ex-wife. Have a pleasant day.- I finished the call with a victorious smile on my face, leaving him speechless.

I knew that would infuriate him. He hated it when people left him talking alone, and that gave me satisfaction.

-That's my friend! Brilliant! Let him know who's in charge now!- My friend celebrated with an excited expression on her face and raised her hand for a high-five.

-Who are you going to yell at?- My mother asked, amused, catching on to my friend's good mood.

I froze when I realized my parents were there and quickly put my phone in my purse as if nothing had happened.

-Uh,well...- Abby got nervous at my mother's question but quickly recovered not to expose me. Because even though I didn't say a word, she knew I preferred to hide the call from that man.

-To my brother, I just remembered that he hid my keys. You'll see what will happen to Paul! How dare he play such a prank on his younger sister?-

I let out a laugh at my friend's ability to come up with such unbelievable excuses.

-He needs a girlfriend. Sarah, since you're available, do me the favor of marrying him. It will take a huge weight off my shoulders.-

My laughter disappeared and was replaced by a cough that was followed by my father, who didn't make an effort to hide the surprise in Abby's direct words.

-I like Paul, but it's a decision that only Sarah can make. Abby, don't try to force your brother onto Sarah!- My mother said amused, unable to help laughing at my friend's remarks.

-I never want to get married again!- I said between laughter, joining in the good humor of my mother and friend, taking Paul's situation as a joke.

-I don't hate the idea.- When I heard that deep, masculine voice behind me, my body trembled and my laughter disappeared.

Heat rose to my cheeks and I didn't dare turn around to face the man I had just snubbed. God, I was so embarrassed.

-Brother! It's great that you're here! Wouldn't Sarah be so happy if she married you?- My friend's impudence made my entire face turn red. Was she my friend or my nemesis?

Abby hooked her arm with her brother's and I had to regain my composure so he wouldn't notice that I was dying of embarrassment. His eyes met mine and I couldn't help but give him a quick up and down glance. He was dressed in a tailor-made gray suit, his white shirt was impeccable and wrinkle-free, and the black tie with gray lines was a good match.

His brown hair was neatly combed back and his stubble made him incredibly handsome.

-Miss Dubois- My father scolded her just by saying her name and looking at her disapprovingly. However, Paul laughed as if what his sister had said hadn't been uncomfortable enough for everyone, especially for him and me.

-I apologize, Mr. Dubois, it's a pleasure to have you here representing your family.- My father said with a calm voice and shook hands with Paul, who only looked away from me when he saw my father approaching him.

-Mr. and Mrs. Doinel, it's an honor for me to work in the company that my parents cherish. I'm sure we will achieve great things, especially with a vice president like Sarah.- Paul took the liberty of also greeting my mother, who looked at him with a smile on her face and I knew what she was thinking.

He was the man she wanted for me, even though she didn't say it. So respectful, educated, with principles and values, from a rooted family, and he was also the son of their best friends.

-Young Paul, I'm glad to see you here.- My mother said with a smile that widened when Paul kissed the back of her hand like a true gentleman.

I didn't know if he was pretending to be extremely polite, but my parents were amazed by him and his good manners. I straightened my neck when I saw Paul turning to me after greeting my parents.

In a way, I felt a bit upset with him for the news that was spread about us, even though it was not his fault. I should rather apologize to him for involving him in this scandal, but it was inevitable.

-Sarah, you look great as an executive.- He took my hand, and although I was initially stiff from his touch, I let his long fingers take hold of mine and looked away when he kissed the back of my hand, which made me feel really uncomfortable.

Okay, a simple "hello" would've been enough. He didn't have to be so chivalrous when the day before he had greeted me with a hug that the social media misinterpreted.

-Thank you very much, Paul.- I responded simply and without too many adornments. The last thing I wanted was for our affectionate interaction to be misinterpreted, especially now that we would be working together.

He let go of my hand very carefully, as if it were made of porcelain and he was afraid it would break. Then he smiled at me somewhat slyly with a sparkle in his eyes that made me shiver.

It was the same sparkle he had had since he first saw me at the banquet, the same look he held throughout the night.

Chapter 10 Rivalry part 2

## Chapter 15 - Divorced Heiress

Although I had spent most of the time with my parents, I took the time to mingle with the elite guests, so I could get to know them well. It wasn't until Abby interrupted me to spend time with her and her brother that we spoke a little.

We toasted a couple of times for my appointment as vice president of Doinel, and when I was about to return to my parents, he gave me another warm hug that made me feel comfortable, to the point where I genuinely smiled. What I didn't expect was for someone to take a photo of us and make up so many lies about me with that picture.

"Well, we're all going to the same place, aren't we? Let's get in the elevator now, they're waiting for us in the boardroom," said my father, breaking the tense moment for me, which seemed quite pleasant for Paul. I could see it in his eyes.

We entered the elevator together while my mother exchanged words with Paul about how much he had changed and matured, and how happy she was that both families' children were following in their parents' footsteps.

"He's really cute, don't deny it," Abby whispered by my side as the elevator started to ascend. I didn't even look at her. I knew she would insist on the topic of her brother, and I was already tired of it.

Yes, he was very chivalrous, but that didn't mean I liked him or felt any attraction towards him. No, I'd seen him as a friend my whole life, almost like an older brother. We grew up together, I couldn't see him any other way, and no one could make me change my mind.

Besides, after my failed marriage, I didn't want anything to do with men. The only person who deserved all my attention and love was growing inside me.

"Abby, it's not going to happen, forget about it already," I whispered, looking at the metal doors as if they were the most interesting thing, completely ignoring the conversation my parents were having with the brunette behind us.

My friend didn't say another word. She had given up, but only for now. I was sure she would insist again at any moment. For now, I could be at ease knowing she wouldn't mention that we would make a nice couple.

Upon reaching the executive floor, the employees greeted us with smiles. I returned the greeting to everyone, even though I didn't know them.

I had never set foot in this place before, as my father wanted me to see it on the day I assumed the position that belonged to me. So, I was more than surprised by the elegant and ostentatious decoration.

The walls facing the street were made of glass from floor to ceiling. The white walls were adorned with paintings featuring models wearing Doinel designs. The reception area was very eye-catching, with a wall behind the blonde that looked like a fountain behind glass, the Doinel logo standing out prominently.

"Good afternoon, welcome. The boardroom is ready and they're waiting for you. Would you like something to drink?" The receptionist approached us with a tablet in hand and walked a step ahead, leading us to the boardroom.

"This place is amazing," Abby said, unable to hide her surprise at the company's design. And she was right, it was truly amazing.

"For now, just water. Before the meeting starts, offer drinks to everyone," my father said, confidently walking along the corridor until reaching sliding glass doors with a sign that read Boardroom.

The woman opened both doors and invited us in. I entered behind my parents and the first thing I saw was the long table almost completely occupied by well-dressed executives who focused their attention on us, but mainly on me.

"Good afternoon, everyone. Sorry for the delay. Please, have a seat," My father sat at the head of the table, my mother on his right side, and me on his left. Abby sat beside me, and Paul sat next to my mother.

The blonde who had guided us here kindly attended to us, and I ordered a tea to relax.

My father began the meeting, congratulating everyone for the great work they had done so far. I remained silent, amazed as I observed what a great leader he was. Then, it was time to officially announce the new vice president, namely, me.

"As you may already know, Sarah Petit will be the company's director from now on. I hope everyone can cooperate with her and maintain the harmonious work environment that has always been here. This position has been vacant for a long time, and Sarah is the right person for it." My father finished speaking, and I smiled at everyone present as a form of introduction.

Then, a brunette woman in her thirties stood up. Her eyes were slightly red, and she had a furrowed brow. It seemed like she wasn't happy with my father's announcement.

"Excuse me, Mr. Doinel, but I don't think Ms. Petit is the right person for this position. Is it just because she's Mr. Lancaster's wife? I don't agree with this sudden decision. I've been preparing for years and I am the most qualified to assume and manage this position. I'm sorry, but I would rather resign than be in the company with Ms. Petit as vice president."

The woman was furious as she raised her objection, I looked at her intently with an eyebrow raised, and upon realizing my gaze, she looked at me with evident hatred in her eyes.

Abby whispered next to me, "Who does this bitch think she is."

And I couldn't help but release a mocking smile that made that woman's face turn even redder.

My father looked at her without any expression on his face and my mother seemed as offended as if it had been an attack towards her and not me.

After a few seconds, my father got up from his expensive chair and walked back and forth with his hands in his pockets, no one at the table took their eyes off the boss's every move, expectant of what he was about to say.

"Mrs. Boyer, are you questioning my decisions?" His voice came out so icy and insensitive that the woman with the last name Boyer trembled and sat back down, she must be regretting having said that.

"Mr. Doinel, I have worked hard for many years to assume this position. I am the best candidate. How can you give this position to a newcomer? We don't even know if she's competent or capable of taking on such a big responsibility. If she couldn't handle the role of a wife, what can we expect as vice president?"

I could feel that all eyes were on me, however, I didn't divert my gaze with a slightly raised eyebrow, from that frustrated woman, a mocking smile appeared on my face.

She thought that with that she would hurt me and I would react in the worst way, so I noticed her expression of confusion when she saw how calmly I was handling her words.

"Those who disagree with my decision can submit their resignation letter, I will approve them immediately." My father said indifferently as he returned to the table, only to place his hands on the glass.

Silence reigned and the face of the woman who had been flush with anger turned pale within seconds, suddenly she stopped being defensive and looked at me as if I was a thorn.

And I was, she had felt humiliated by my father's words, who didn't care how well she spoke of herself, that was a slap in the face for her.

"Mr. Doinel, I respect your decision, I will cooperate with the vice president."

Despite Mrs. Boyer's regret, my father didn't say a word, I looked at him and saw the stern gaze he was giving the woman, he was forcing her to apologize to me without saying anything.

"Ms. Petit, I hope you can forgive me for my transgression, the news caught me off guard."

I smiled grimly and nodded my head after several seconds, although my attitude made it clear that I didn't accept her forced apologies after everything she said.

"Very well, the meeting is adjourned, everyone can return to their positions."

Chapter 11 Rome was not built in a day.

## Chapter 16 - Divorced Heiress

My parents gave me a tour of the entire company, from the executives' offices to the production plant, and finally took me to the workshop of the great designer Patrick Moreau, the place where he has created the most successful haute couture collections.

"Mr. Patrick, I see that you did not attend this morning's meeting, I would like to introduce you to the new vice president of Doinel." My father spoke to the man who was creating new designs with his back turned.

Upon hearing my father's voice, he stood up, revealing his six-foot frame, and turned towards us with a furrowed brow. His ocean blue eyes fixed on me and the corners of his lips curved slightly into a smile that seemed arrogant. He didn't seem as old as I imagined, I suppose he couldn't be much older than his thirties, which surprised me.

"Mr. Doinel, I apologize for not attending the meeting. As you can understand, the launch of the new collection is approaching, and I cannot afford the slightest distraction." He said with a deep voice, accompanied by his furrowed brow.

It made me think that he was one of those who didn't like the idea of my appointment. However, I dismissed that thought when he approached me, took my hand, and kissed my knuckles, making me feel a little uncomfortable.

"The pleasure is mine, Mr. Moreau. You are a legend in the fashion world." I replied, not wiping the smile off my face. Apparently, he liked hearing that, judging by the sparkle in his eyes.

Patrick was a globally renowned designer for the success of his designs for Doinel. He had been on trend in recent years, and a great part of my father's company's prestige was thanks to him. But I never imagined he would be so young.

"Please, just call me Patrick." He said before I could say another word. My mother hurried to speak.

"What news is Patrick referring to?" My body tensed, as did my father's, and Abby was the only one who could do something to get us out of answering that question.

"I'm Abby Dubois, daughter of the partners of Doinel and, of course, Paul's sister. Let me tell you, I am a big fan of yours. I love all your designs." My friend said as she shook hands with Patrick, who looked at her indifferently, erasing his slight smile.

I took the opportunity to approach my mother, who looked confused by Patrick's words about the wave of gossip.

"Don't worry, it's about the news of my divorce. It couldn't go unnoticed, considering Alexander is the president of a renowned company." I reassured my mother, telling her only part of what had happened. Judging by her relieved expression, she believed it all.

"But of course, Alexander wouldn't wait to announce his divorce. Anything can be expected of him." My mother replied. With her response, it was clear that she still didn't know the real news, and I hoped she wouldn't find out. Otherwise, she would be outraged that we had kept it from her.

After finishing the tour of Patrick's workshop, my father guided me to what would be my office. I smiled as I saw how spacious and well-decorated it was, with an incredible view of the city. He gave me clear instructions for my work.

I would be in charge of the upcoming collections alongside Patrick. He would work his magic, while I would handle the finances and production of each design. I couldn't be more excited.

He introduced me to my assistant, Jack. He had been my father's right-hand man for a long time, and although I initially refused, my father insisted that he was the only person he trusted for me.

Besides Paul and Abby, he was the only one in the company who knew my true identity. I ended up accepting because my father would leave the weight of the company on my shoulders, and he would only make an appearance when necessary.

This was undoubtedly a great challenge, and I was more than delighted to accept it.

After a long time catching up on the state of the company, my parents left to spend time together. My father had missed my mother since she went to Orlando to see me, and he had prepared a romantic date.

I couldn't help but smile with happiness for my parents. Their love was still so alive as the years went by, they were made for each other. They were the ones who made me believe in true love, although my true love was within me.

My friend stayed in the office and stopped Paul when he was about to leave my office.

"Well, now that you're officially the vice president of Doinel, I was wondering if you need a right-hand man, I mean, I know they assigned Jack to you, but I can be your right-hand woman."

My friend offered to work by my side and honestly, it didn't seem like such a bad idea, after all, she would be representing her parents as a partner just like Paul.

"You're hired." I said.

Chapter 11 Rome was not built in a day part 2

## Chapter 17 - Divorced Heiress

Her surprised face let me know that she didn't expect that response at all and she clapped her hands excitedly.

"I will be the best right-hand person you've ever had in your life. I might be sassy, but I'm very serious about business. And now, to celebrate, I want to invite you all to Secret Bar. Of course, Sarah won't have a drop of alcohol in her condition, but we have to go for old times' sake."

Abby was bursting with excitement, and I didn't know if it was because we would be working together or because she was remembering the years we used to go out with Britney, my second-best friend.

"In her condition?" Paul's question made me want to kill Abby for her loose tongue. Nobody was supposed to find out about my pregnancy and she was already spilling the information.

Abby looked at me after wiping away her smile and sat up straight in the chair, ready to come up with a bad excuse.

"Yes, in her condition as vice president, she can't come to the company with a hangover. What impression would she be giving? She would be proving that bitch right, the one who thought she could take such an important position. So, just water, my friend." Abby said, although it sounded believable, Paul kept looking at her as if he knew she was hiding something.

He knew when she lied. Abby was an open book to him.

"You might be able to lie to everyone, but do you think you can lie to your brother? I've known you since the day you were born, and I know when you lie." Paul said. Abby's face looked shook. She had been exposed by her own brother.

"I'm pregnant, Paul." I said calmly before he could chew my friend alive for covering me.

His brown eyes didn't take long to look at me. He couldn't hide the surprise at my sudden confession. His mouth was slightly open and his tense body didn't move a single muscle for a few seconds until he cleared his throat, as if coming out of a trance.

Of course, the news was going to shock him, just like everyone else.

He got up from the couch, adjusting his expensive suit jacket, and walked calmly to the desk to sit in the chair across from me. For a moment, I thought he was going to reprimand me, but I erased that idea when he spoke softly.

"Sarah, you're pregnant? Are you serious?" He asked in a low voice, as if he didn't want Abby to hear what he was saying. I nodded in response, and he closed his mouth to tighten his jaw.

"And that idiot was able to make up so many rumors about you, knowing that you're carrying his child. What a sorry excuse for a man." Paul looked annoyed just mentioning my ex-husband. I assumed, just like Abby, he felt disgusted by him, and I didn't blame them. Thanks to him, I left behind my elite life, my luxuries, my family, my friends—I gave up everything for him.

"He's a womanizer who doesn't even know. It was the best thing Sarah could have done. That baby doesn't deserve to have such a horrible father like him." Abby intervened in our conversation, and Paul turned to give her a sharp look for interfering in our chat.

"I understand, I won't say a word." She said.

"Paul, I don't want to talk about that. Instead, I take this opportunity to apologize for involving you in such rumors, they've taken everything out of context." I touched his hand on the desk, and his gaze settled on it before he took it in his hands, making me feel uncomfortable.

"You have nothing to apologize for, Sari. Out of all the rumors I've been involved in, this one has been the one I liked the most. Even though everything is false, it doesn't change the fact that I would like to be that person everyone talks about. I would love to help you forget the bad times you went through with that family." He confessed, and I was left dumbfounded, unable to do anything but look at him as if he had gone mad.

What were you talking to me about?

Didn't you care about the slander and bad comments that you earned thanks to a simple hug that was taken out of context?

Despite the bad time and bad experience you were going through because of me, being labeled as my lover and the cause of my divorce, you still wanted to stay by my side and not as my best friend's brother or my partner.

Was that what you were trying to tell me? Because if so, you'd gone completely mad. I didn't want to keep involving you in gossip or damaging your image by being so close to Lancaster's divorcee, I would never allow that. Let them talk all they wanted about me, but never about my loved ones!

Didn't it matter to you that I was a divorced and pregnant woman?

Why were you telling me this?

Besides, the last thing I wanted was to start a romance after my bad experience. I couldn't think of anything else but my baby and getting back the life I left behind for a man who didn't deserve it.

"Oh, how much love is in the office? Love, love. Why am I single? Where is my love?" Abby's whispers snapped me out of my thoughts, and I wanted to sew her mouth shut so she would stop being so rude.

Paul, who was looking at me with a twinkle in his eyes, let out a chuckle upon hearing his sister's craziness.

"Paul, I don't want to give you false hope. Right now I want to be alone and focus on my baby and my work. Don't get any ideas about me, I don't want to hurt you." I said, being so direct with Paul, but it didn't erase the smile from his face. On the contrary, he kissed my knuckles before letting go of my hand.

"Oh, my heart. I don't want to find my love anymore." Abby sounded as if I had said it to her and not to her brother.

Paul quickly glanced back at her and then looked at me intensely, still not losing the twinkle in his eyes.

"I understand you perfectly, and I know everything is still too soon for you. You're hurt, and I understand that. You don't know how much I admire your strength. You're still standing here despite the difficult situation you went through."

I squirmed uncomfortably in my expensive swivel chair. I didn't want to touch the subject of my marriage or my divorce because, even if I wanted to, I couldn't heal the wound so soon. It hurt to talk about him and what I had to endure for love.

"However, it's me who decides whether to have hopes. In any case, I would be hurting myself by insisting. But remember, Rome wasn't built in a day."

Chapter 12 Unexpected order.

## Chapter 18 - Divorced Heiress

NARRATED BY ALEXANDER.

I woke up before the alarm went off, as I heard the notifications bombarding my phone one after another.

I barely grabbed my phone and an article with a picture of me and Rachel appeared, I didn't remember when that picture was taken, but seeing that it was in my room, the one I shared with Sarah, I knew it was the day she came to my house and I also confirmed that she had secretly put

something in my drink without me realizing it. That was why I didn't remember anything from that night.

I was surprised to realize that Sarah had given her statements to Rousell Entertainment, the most prestigious media outlet in Paris and the rest of the world for the accuracy of its articles, and this was no exception.

"An affair has ended the two-year marriage of Sarah Petit and Alexander Lancaster, but it wasn't by Sarah's hand, but by that of renowned businessman, CEO of Lancaster Collection, Alexander Lancaster, who had a secret relationship with Sarah's best friend and former university classmate, Rachel Duncan. Want proof? We have proof!"

I had exposed myself to the whole world, that was Sarah's response after all the attacks against her. Although I ignored what was being said about me and read line by line looking for information that clarified her relationship with this guy called Dubois.

I didn't find it.

I threw my phone aside, feeling suddenly irritated, and it wasn't because of the attacks now directed at me after that article, but because I still had hope that Sarah would deny the alleged relationship with that man, and she didn't. She didn't speak about Paul. I didn't know what he had to do with her and that frustrated me, although I tried to deny it.

I didn't want to know anything more about the gossip we were involved in, but my mother's visit completely disrupted my plans.

"Alexander! That woman is shameless! How dare she spread false rumors about you with an obviously edited image? Can't you see the kind of woman you were married to? She's willing to harm you in order to protect her lover." My mother burst into my room, interrupting my attempt to meditate and calm my anger, without even greeting me.

Who the hell let her into the house without my permission?

I had made it clear that I didn't want to receive visitors or calls from anyone under any circumstances.

I let out a tired sigh as she moved the blanket aside and showed me the screen of her phone with the article from Rousell Entertainment.

Did she come here just to ruin my mood with that?

"Mother, that photo is real, it's Rachel with me, on this bed." My mother stayed still with her eyes wide open as if she were seeing a ghost.

Whatever, I prefer that she knows the truth and insult me rather than continue attacking Sarah as if she were the culprit of all our misfortunes.

"How dare that bitch upload such an intimate photo on social media? Do you realize she's harming your image? Didn't she learn her lesson with the article from NY Entertainment? I'll have to hit her even harder so she leaves the Lancaster family alone."

My mother spoke contemptuously about the woman who was once my wife, and I felt my blood boiling in my veins because she kept attacking her despite me telling her that I was the one who disrespected our marriage, but above all, realizing that NY Entertainment was involved in this and so was my mother.

So, she was the one who started this wave of gossip?

Was my own mother capable of inventing such a thing about Sarah?

With that discovery, I realized that everything was fake.

Sarah had nothing to do with Paul after all, it was just a simple hug, not a compromising photo like the one she used to defend herself, because that was what she did. She defended herself against what my own mother invented.

Did my mother despise Sarah so much that she would harm her image in that way?

"Amelia! Just shut up! It was you who started all of this! You yourself tarnished my image and Sarah's image by involving my name and that of my ex-wife in such a slander! I forbid you to speak ill of my wife, she is innocent! If you're going to speak ill of anyone, do that to me. I ruined my two years of marriage!"

I couldn't help but raise my voice as I got out of bed and looked disapprovingly at my mother. What kind of monster was my mother? How dare she attack Sarah like that after everything, when she had been so kind to everyone? And I could vouch for that.

Since when did my mother hate Sarah and why didn't I realize it before?

"Your wife? Don't make me laugh. I remind you that you are already divorced and it was the wisest thing that gold digger could do, she didn't fit into this family, she's not at our level. And if I was the one responsible for the gossip to open your eyes and realize the kind of woman you married. What do you plan to do? That poor woman's reputation is already ruined."

Despite everything I told my mother, she turned a deaf ear, badmouthing Sarah when it was obvious that I knew her much better than she did. I let out a loud snort and grabbed my mother by the shoulders, staring her in the eyes. I had to put a stop to Amelia.

"What you're going to do right now is contact Sarah and publicly apologize. You're going to clarify that it was you who started all this shit and that she is innocent." I spat out each word, resisting the urge to scream in her face, because after all she was still my mother.

Her surprised and ashamed gaze landed on my face. She didn't seem to agree with my order, but it was the least I could do for Sarah.

She didn't deserve this. She didn't deserve my mother's constant attacks just because of the difference in social classes or because of the little or nothing that was known about her background, and now she was also being attacked by public opinion because of my mother, being portrayed as a gold digger and that was far from the truth.

After a few seconds in which she seemed intimidated by my sudden reaction, she raised her head and smiled without grace. At this moment, I didn't recognize my mother. How could she let herself be carried away by the difference in social classes? It seemed absurd to me.

"Don't even think that I'm going to apologize to that woman, let alone publicly. If you want to redeem yourself for your infidelity, the only thing I can do is lower NY Entertainment's grades and that would be too much, I'm not going to lift a finger for that orphan." She pulled away from my grip with her arrogant attitude and it angered me even more.

"None of this would be happening if you hadn't invented gossip about her. I'm not redeeming myself, I just won't tolerate you attacking Sarah anymore. Did you want us to get divorced? We are already divorced. Don't interfere with her or my life anymore." I asked her this time in a more reasonable way, holding back the annoyance and the stab in my heart.

"Has your protective side come out after the divorce? You didn't even look at her the last few months of our marriage, that's very hypocritical of you. To be honest, I like Rachel more, she's the one who is at your level." My mother's words were like needles directly to my heart, they hurt because she was right.

The last few months I was so stressed because of Rachel's blackmail that I couldn't even hide it, I simply distanced myself from my wife when I was supposed to tell her everything from the beginning. She wouldn't judge me for my past and on the contrary, she would push away that woman who claimed to be her best friend.

But I was a victim of panic, the last thing I wanted was for the whole world to find out what Alexander Lancaster did in the past. Fear engulfed me and I fell like a lamb into Rachel's trap.

Chapter 12 Unexpected order part 2

## Chapter 19 - Divorced Heiress

"Mother..." I spoke in a warning tone and my mother interrupted me.

"Enough with the hypocrisy. I'll only remove the news and ask your ex-wife to remove the article from Rousell Entertainment, but I will never apologize to her publicly."

And without further ado, my mother left the room, leaving me alone and wanting to destroy everything in my path.

What a heartless person I had as a mother.

The news disappeared minutes later, still, I called Gerard, the president of NY Entertainment and scolded him, questioning his professionalism. I ended the call with a warning that our partnership would end if he published notes at my mother's request again without the company's consent.

I arrived at the company earlier than usual. There were few employees. However, my assistant was at her workplace as always.

"Good morning, Mr. Lancaster, you're here early today." I gave Cristina a unfriendly look and walked past her to my office without saying a word, or I would end up taking out my bad mood on the poor woman. I didn't even finish getting to my desk and my mother was calling my cell phone. I let out a tired sigh and answered.

"What's going on now?" I asked indifferently, with a cold voice. I was tired of my mother sticking her nose in my business.

"You don't have to talk to me like that. That woman is the worst!" My mother sounded furious and frustrated from the other side of the line. She didn't have to put up with Amelia mistreating Sarah. I had made it clear to her countless times before, so I ended the call without listening to what she had to say.

I sat in my swivel chair and looked at the morning traffic from the window. I wanted to pick up my phone and call Sarah, apologize a thousand times, talk to her, tell her the secret of my past that I never dared to tell her. She would understand the reason why I distanced myself, why I neglected my marriage.

But she had blocked me everywhere.

I cursed myself over and over again for believing in the NY Entertainment article. Of course, she wouldn't be capable of it. I was the one who failed, the only one responsible for everything going to shit, because of my cowardice and disgusting actions.

"This better be the last time you hang up on me!" My mother's loud voice snapped me out of my thoughts, and I found myself obliged to turn my chair to see her standing in the middle of my office, with Cristina trying to stop her.

"Cristina, leave the lady. I'll take care of her." I ordered my assistant, and she nodded with blushing cheeks before leaving the office and closing the door behind her.

"I'm listening." I said indifferently, as if it was just any other person visiting my office.

"I've reached my limit with that shameless woman. I contacted Rousell Entertainment to have the article removed. It's only fair after I had all the articles about her taken down, and she simply refused. She ordered them to keep the article up for longer. She's a disgrace, who does she think she is?" My mother vented, once again mistreating Sarah. But unlike previous times, I remained calm, observing her every move.

"You have to do something. This can't just be left like this."

I raised an eyebrow, feeling that this was the perfect excuse to do what I had planned since Sarah blocked me.

I asked my assistant to come to my office and within seconds, she was peering through the door.

"Do you have a cellphone with you?" I asked Cristina, and she took it out of her blazer pocket in response.

"Call Ms. Sarah."

My mother's face showed surprise, but this was what she wanted, right? For me to solve the mess she caused herself. And in the meantime, I could talk to Sarah about everything that had happened. I didn't care if she decided to distance herself forever after listening to me. At least I would have clarified everything.

I felt nervous as Cristina held the phone to her ear, and my mother sat silently in front of my desk, impatiently waiting for Sarah to answer the phone.

My hands got sweaty when Cristina passed me the phone, just in time to hear the voice on the other end of the line.

"Hello?"

My heart skipped a beat when I heard her sweet voice after several days of her absence. I stayed silent, with my mouth slightly open, unable to utter a word. Until I remembered that this was my chance to talk to her after the last time I saw her.

"Sarah?" I asked the dumbest question. Of course, it was her. I would recognize her voice even if she had a cold.

"Yes, this is Sarah. Who am I speaking to?"

Suddenly, her voice turned cold, and I felt inexplicably annoyed. Did she forget me so quickly? Did she forget my voice?

"Alex..." I stopped myself, thinking that she wouldn't want to call me that anymore.

"Alexander Lancaster." I said uncomfortably under the curious gaze of my mother and my secretary.

"Mr. Lancaster. I hope your sudden call is to inform me that you've already signed the divorce certificate."

I turned in my chair towards the window, to avoid the two women realizing how much Sarah's cold response affected me. Her emotionless words pierced my heart.

I gathered myself, remembering the main reason for the call.

"I have already signed the divorce papers, Ms. Petit. However, the reason for my call is not precisely for that, but about the recent news in which we have been involved. Do you think you have a few minutes to talk and clarify the wave of rumors?" I spoke normally, as if I didn't taste bitterness in my mouth from Sarah's coldness and indifference.

I didn't remember her that way.

"At the moment I do not have time to talk, I have a very tight schedule as you can understand."

"A tight schedule? I highly doubt you don't have a few minutes from your 'tight schedule' to listen to me." I let out a tired sigh, trying to remain calm.

"I won't steal much of your time from your busy schedule. Tell me the time and I will call you back." I insisted, refusing to accept the idea that she wanted to avoid me at all costs. I needed to talk to her.

"I'm afraid that won't be possible. If what you want is for me to lower the rating of Rousell Entertainment where your reputation is affected, you should have thought about it before contacting NY Entertainment to defame me in such a way."

I clenched my fist on my leg and refrained from throwing Cristina's phone on the desk because of how stubborn she had become.

I didn't care about talking about my reputation, I deserved it after all. I just wanted to tell her that I needed to see her and clarify everything. I didn't want her to hate me or be left unaware of my reasons and my biggest secret, but I couldn't do it with the women in my office attentively listening to the conversation with Sarah.

"If it is true that NY Entertainment is associated with Lancaster Collection, it was not me who was responsible for this. I have already reprimanded them for the published articles." I clarified to make the idea disappear that I was the one responsible for the wave of rumors in which she ended up being the most affected.

Was that what she thought of me?

Did she think I was capable of speaking ill of her?

How mistaken she was.

"Mr. Lancaster, I'm not interested in knowing more. The damage has already been done. My reputation has been tarnished and even if you were not to blame, you have a lot to do with it in some way. After all, they won't talk about Sarah Petit, but about Mr. Lancaster's ex-wife. Have a pleasant day."

I was about to speak, but she ended the call, leaving me with the words stuck in my mouth and with boiling blood in my veins from the anger of being hung up on like that.

I closed my eyes, containing the anger that was bubbling in my system and turned off the cellphone screen while trying to calm my irregular breathing and the anger that unleashed by hanging up without even paying the slightest attention to me.

The worst part of it all was that she was absolutely right.

Even though I was not the mastermind behind all of this, I still remained responsible, if not more than the person who started it, because they will see her as Lancaster's ex-wife, not as Sarah Petit.

Damn it.

I turned my chair and met the curious gaze of both women. I handed Cristina the phone at the same time that my mother spoke.

"What did that woman tell you? Look how she left you, with a red face from anger and you still defend her."

I put on a big smile, even though I was furious inside.

"I couldn't convince her to take down the article, but I have come up with a better idea to fix this whole mess that you yourself have started."

And I really hope it worked. It was the last option I could resort to.

"You should sue her for defamation, that would be the best idea." My mother said, convinced that I would do something that would further harm Sarah.

I laughed loudly. I would never do that. I looked at Cristina, who was motionless in her place waiting for me to give her an order, and of course, I would, I would give her an unexpected order.

"Cristina, please. Prepare the private jet for Mrs. Amelia and me, bound for Paris. We are going to the Doinel fashion house."

## Chapter 20 - Divorced Heiress

NARRATES SARAH

The driver stopped at the Secret Bar parking lot at the same time as Paul's car. Abby was focused on her phone and when she realized we had stopped, her eyes brightened like a little girl visiting an amusement park for the first time.

Although I didn't agree with the idea of going to a bar, being my first day as vice president and being pregnant, I also didn't want to offend my friend. We would only spend a short time at the bar and then go to Doinel Villa, as my parents had a surprise for me and I shouldn't arrive too late.

"Finally! Tonight, I'm going to get drunk!" Said my crazy friend as she got out of the car and I looked at her with a frown.

"No, Abby, you're not going to get drunk. We have a meeting at my parents' house and you can't arrive in that condition." I hooked my arm with hers to make sure she paid attention.

"Abby, you'll have plenty of other opportunities to drink all the alcohol you want. Tonight you should stay sober." Paul scolded his sister and she sighed resignedly.

"Alright, I didn't really want to get drunk anyway. I want to be sober for the big reunion."

I furrowed my brow, not understanding the last thing she said, but I imagine she meant our first night at the bar in so many years.

We didn't take long to enter the exclusive bar, the security guard greeted Abby as if he had known her forever and she whispered something to him that we couldn't hear. In response, he led us to the inside of the bar that looked just as I remembered it, until we reached the second floor, the VIP area.

"It can't be!" I heard a familiar female voice as we arrived at the area the guard assigned to us.

I automatically looked to where that voice came from and stood still when I saw her with her huge smile and blonde hair, capturing everyone's attention.

"Britney!" I let go of Abby to reach my friend and wrap her in my arms, inhaling the sweet scent of her perfume.

"I thought I wouldn't see you again when Abby invited me here. The last thing I imagined was seeing you. Oh my God, you're more beautiful than ever, the divorce suits you."

I laughed uncomfortably at the last thing she said. Couldn't anyone talk about me without mentioning the divorce?

"It's just that she divorced to finally marry my brother." And there was Abby, being as imprudent as always.

"What?! Impossible, I'm going to marry Paul." Britney contradicted Abby as she had always done, but she didn't realize that Paul was behind us.

"Britney, I'm afraid I can't accept your proposal."

Britney's face went pale when she heard Paul's deep voice and her smile disappeared when she saw him arrive next to Abby.

"Why didn't you tell me that he was coming too?" Brit whispered to Abby, although I managed to hear her.

"Paul, no, don't misunderstand me, it's not that I want to marry you, it's an old joke I make with my friends, don't believe everything you hear." Britney said, recovering from the embarrassment she just went through by blurting that out without thinking.

Britney was a beautiful woman with blonde hair, honey eyes, and a well-maintained body. Our friendship was always fantastic before I left Paris, and it would continue to be so despite the time that had passed.

My friends couldn't wait any longer and ordered a bottle of wine, while I ordered a strawberry smoothie, to celebrate that we were all together again after so long, although for a night out, there were still more people missing, and I didn't even know where they were in the world.

A very familiar song started playing and Paul immediately got up from his seat to invite me to dance. Of course, I refused, but after my pair of friends insisted loudly, I got up to go to the dance floor with him.

His hand rested on my waist to start dancing and I focused on following his smooth steps.

"Sari, I know you take all this as a game, but I actually want to be more than just your friend to you." Paul started speaking in my ear and I couldn't help but tense up under his touch. I didn't know in how many ways I had to tell Paul no for him to understand.

"Please, Paul, I am aware of your cheerful life. Don't disappoint your admirers by being with a divorced and pregnant woman." I said sincerely, causing Paul to laugh.

"Yes, it is true that I will disappoint more than one person, but the relationships I've had haven't been as serious as what I want with you. I don't care if you are divorced and especially if you are pregnant. I would be a good father. Just test me."