

## Briar POV

I step inside the two-story brick building with an awning that reads Klien Real Estate. An older woman is sitting behind a large desk with a vase of beautiful red roses. She smiles when she sees me. "Good morning, can I help you" she asks. "I have an appointment with Mr. Klien. My name is Briar Martin. He should be expecting me." "Of course, Ms. Martin. Please have a seat and Mr. Klien will be right with you." I take a seat and pull out my phone. I'm shocked to see there are no more messages from Calob. Part of me is glad, but the part that still loves my husband is hurt. I know how crazy I sound, but I have loved this man for ten years. I expected to spend the rest of my life with him. We have had our share of arguments over the years, but I believed in my heart that we had a good marriage. I hate him for what he has done to us. I never thought you could love and hate someone at the same time, but I do. "Ms. Martin" a deep male voice calls me. I stand to my feet and offer him my hand. "Mr. Klien, thank you for meeting with me on such short notice." "Don't mention it. Derek Coleman is one of my most important clients, so when he asks that I make time for you, that's exactly what I am going to do." I don't know what to say to that, so I just stay quiet and nod. "Follow me to my office, and you can give me some ideas of the type of home you're looking for." I follow him to a large spacious office. He takes a seat behind his desk and I take the one across from him.

"Derek, didn't really tell me anything about the type of home you are interested in. Is there a specific location that I need to keep the search limited to? The number of bedrooms that you consider ideal. The style of home and if you want a backyard. These details will help me narrow down your options," he says. "I was hoping for a home that is close enough to the hospital that the commute won't kill me but far enough away from the bustle of the city. I would like the house to be in a gated community. Ideally, I would like three bedrooms and two baths. I don't have a specific style of home in mind, but I would like to have a yard." As the words leave my mouth, thoughts of my discussions with Calob about buying a house with a yard for our future children makes the ache that I've been trying to ignore worse. "Briar" he says my name bringing me out of my thoughts. "Was there anything else that you would like to have in the house?" "A large tub and a modern kitchen, if it's possible." "All those requests sound more than reasonable. Now the difficult question. Is there a price range that we like to remain in?" "I'm not a millionaire tycoon like Mr. Coleman, but I make good money. I would like to keep my options open, so let's keep the price out of it for now." He smiles again, and I'm sure he is thinking about this commission. "It won't take me long to come up with a list of properties for you to check out," he says with a smile. "That's great news. I would like to be in a new home as soon as possible. I'm staying in a hotel right now, and I have to return to work in two weeks. I would like to have a property purchased before I return." "Of course, just leave your contact information with Maggie on your way out. I will be in touch within the next two days with the list." I stand offering him my hand, which he takes. "Thank you, again, Mr. Klien for making time for me today." "You're very welcome, Briar." I head out and once I'm back in my jeep, I used the hands-free option to call my mother.

She picks up on the second ring. "Hello my beautiful daughter. I am so happy to hear from you. You are always so busy, I miss you" my mother says. "I miss you too, mom" I say fighting back the tears. I didn't realize hearing her voice would be such a balm to my broken heart. "Briar, are you crying? Baby what's wrong?" "Calob, cheated on me mom. My husband of ten years cheated on me with a woman I considered a friend." There is silence for a long stretch and I wonder at first if the call dropped. "Mom" I say and she nally answers. "Briar, are you sure?" I fight the urge to roll my eyes. "Mom, I caught them together." "What did Calob say sweetheart?" "What could he say? He was screwing her and I caught him." "Did he apologize?" I feel like I'm in the twilight zone. His mother immediately offered me her support and called her son an idiot and here my mother is asking me if he apologized like that should make everything better. "Do you think that his apology changes what he did mom?" "Of course not, Briar. I just think that you need to take a step back and think about all the good that you have had in your life with Calob. I'm not saying to just forgive him, but he is your husband, Briar. You took vows for better or for worse. He made a mistake. If he is truly sorry, I think you owe it to yourself to give him a chance to prove it. You have never been a quitter, Briar and Calob loves you."

"I love you mom, but I'm going to hang up now because if I don't, I am going to say something I regret." "Briar, please just come to the house, and we can talk about this in person. I understand you are upset, and you have every right to be. Just don't throw away your marriage over a mistake that meant nothing. Come home so we can talk this through" she pleads. "I don't think so mom. I expected you to be on my side mom. To tell me what an asshole he is for cheating on me, but instead you want me to sweep his affair under the rug. Be the dutiful wife who knows her husband screws around but turns a blind eye. I'm not you mom and I never will be." I hear her gasp and part of me feels bad but the bigger part of me doesn't. I cut the call and start the drive back to the hotel. I think a tub of chocolate ice cream and a bottle of red wine are calling my name. I reach the hotel and stop at the reception desk. An older woman with a soft smile greets me. I order my wine and ice cream before I take the elevator up to my room. Once I'm inside, I change into comfortable clothes. It doesn't take long for them to deliver my order. I climb on the bed and dig into the chocolate goodness. An hour later, half of the tub is finished, and my stomach is rolling. I'm on my feet and rushing to the bathroom. I empty my stomach and curse myself for eating my emotions. I splash water on my face and make my way back into the bedroom. I slide into bed and put on reality tv. It doesn't take long until sleep takes me under.

## Calob POV

I walk into the coffee shop and Lucy is already sitting at a table. I grab a coffee before I go to the table and take a seat across from her. She smiles at me like she believes I want to be here with her. "I missed you, Calob" she says as she reaches for my hand. I pull back before she can touch me like her skin will burn me. The smile falls from her face. "Calob, why are you acting like this? I told you that I'm pregnant. Our baby will need a father. I thought that you were ready to be together when you told me to meet you here today." "Lucy, I'm not sure if you are delusional or just stupid. We are never going to be together. The only reason I agreed to meet you here is to make something perfectly clear. I don't want you. If you are pregnant, which is a big if, I want proof that the child is mine. If by some unfortunate fact, it is mine, I will be in the child's life, but not yours. I am getting my wife back. I love Briar. I don't even like you." I drop my voice to a whisper. "F\*\*king you was the biggest mistake I have ever made in my life. The thought of it makes me physically ill." I sit back and watch anger flash in her eyes. She stands up and slams her hands down on the table. "If you think you are just going to use me and throw me away like garbage, you are sadly mistaken. What will your precious Briar feel when I call her and tell her I'm pregnant with your child? She told me how you two have been trying to have a baby together. I'm sure finding out your child is growing in my womb will destroy any love she has left for you." I grab her arm and pull her down into her seat.

I look around and people are staring at us. I nally look back at Lucy, who has a smug smile on her face. "Nothing you do will change that I don't want you. I will beg Briar for her forgiveness and I pray she takes me back. Understand this Lucy, even if she never takes me back, hell will freeze over before I ever touch you again. I hate you with every fiber of my being." I push my chair back and stand. I turn and walk out of the coffee shop without sparing her another glance. "Calob, you get back here right now. You are mine" she screams, but I don't stop. I take the phone from my pocket and debate whether to try to get ahead of Lucy's craziness. If she calls Briar and tells her she is pregnant, she will never forgive me. The only person I have ever wanted to have a child with is Briar and all I can do now is pray that Lucy is lying. I can't believe how f\*\*ked up my life has become in the last twenty-four hours.