

## ESCAPE FROM A SACTUARY FULL OF LIES

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As the plane climbed over the ocean, I gazed out the window at the city I'd called home, now shrinking into the distance. A weight I'd carried for years finally lifted from my soul. 1

Goodbye, Xavier.

The following day, I landed in Greece. After some online searching, I found a private, whitewashed villa to rent on a secluded island.

At the same time, Xavier was in Monaco, preparing to finalize the transplant.

Just before signing the final contract with the illicit surgical team, Xavier was seized by a wave of panic, so he called the rehabilitation center one last time.

A nurse on his payroll assured him, "Since you left, Mrs. Colton has been resting peacefully. We're monitoring her closely. We'll let her know you called when she wakes."

Only then did Xavier enter the meeting room, feeling somewhat calmer. Yet despite the

reassurance, his thoughts remained fixed on Miranda.

The previous night, he had woken up in a cold sweat from a nightmare where she handed him divorce papers. The dream had shaken him, prompting an immediate call to the center to confirm she was still resting. This had calmed him, but an undercurrent of dread persisted, growing stronger by the minute.

His focus dissolved. When the surgeon asked if he was ready to sign, Xavier didn't hear a word.

It wasn't until Jennifer's father gently touched his arm that he snapped back to reality. However, instead of the anxious faces around the table, all he could see was Miranda's betrayed expression staring back at him.

Horried, he instinctively pulled his hand back from the pen and shot to his feet, bolting out of the room.

"Mr. Colton, the deal isn't finished! Where are you going?" a voice called after him.

It was too late. Xavier finally understood Miranda's place in his world. How could he carve



her up for someone else?

'Miranda, please just wait for me,' he thought frantically.

Xavier raced back to the rehabilitation center, his heart pounding. Upon arrival, he sprinted to her suite, breathing a sigh of relief when he saw her shape under the covers.

He opened the door quietly, a smile forming as he called out, "My love, I'm back!"

But only silence answered him.

He cautiously pulled back the blanket, only to find pillows arranged in her place.

"Where is Miranda?" he roared.

Panic seized him as he tore the suite apart.

"Miranda! Miranda, where are you?" he shouted, his voice cracking.

The room was empty. Desperate, he pulled out his phone and tried to call, only to hear the automated message: "The number you have dialed has been disconnected or is no longer in service."



Stunned, he quickly tried to message her, but every text was marked "undelivered." Miranda had erased and blocked him completely.

The nightmare from the previous night returned in full force, draining the color from his face. Xavier immediately summoned the head nurse.

The nurse, equally baffled, explained, "We don't know. Last night, Mrs. Colton left instructions not to be disturbed. No one has entered the room since."

After checking the security logs, the truth became clear—Miranda had calmly walked out of the center less than an hour after Xavier had left for the airport.

Now in a full-blown panic, he called his security chief and sped to their penthouse.

Upon arrival, he burst inside and grabbed the nearest member of his private staff.

"Where is she? Did Miranda come back here?" he demanded.

"Yes... Mrs. Colton came back briefly yesterday, but she left shortly after. She said she was just

collecting a few things before returning to the center," the staff member stammered, fear in their eyes.

Just as they were about to say more, Xavier's eyes fell on a document on the coffee table.

Releasing the staffer, he walked over and picked up the papers with trembling hands.

It was a divorce agreement.

His gaze fell to the last page, where Miranda's signature was sharp and clear. It felt as if his world had imploded.

"This can't be happening. It's a lie. Miranda would never divorce me. This has to be a mistake!" he muttered to himself.

Consumed by rage and disbelief, he ripped the agreement to shreds, scattering the pieces across the floor.

"Find her! Use every resource we have! I don't care what it takes, find her now!" he screamed at his security chief before storming out of the penthouse.

No matter where Miranda had gone, he was



determined to drag her back.

Meanwhile, I had settled into a quiet, whitewashed villa overlooking the Aegean Sea.

The view was breathtaking. Each morning, I would pull back the curtains to an endless expanse of cerulean sky and the glittering, turquoise water. Seabirds soared gracefully overhead, diving into the sea for their breakfast. The peace and raw beauty of the place surpassed anything I had ever known.

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