

## ESCAPE FROM A SACTUARY FULL OF LIES

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Throughout my life, I've always been drawn to the ocean, but my difficult childhood made me wary of love. 1

In my youth, my mother's illness and my father's absence taught me to be self-reliant. I built walls around my heart, believing that depending on anyone else was a weakness that would lead to pain.

The emotional scars of my upbringing followed me for years, haunting my quiet moments. I loathed the vulnerability that came with caring for someone and resented the idea of love as a force that could break you.

These experiences left me guarded and hesitant to form deep connections with anyone.

That all changed when Xavier entered my life.

After inheriting a financial empire, he fell for me instantly and spent five years relentlessly pursuing me.

He was a force of nature, always there to

support me, bulldozing any obstacle in my path and providing for my every need. He often overwhelmed me with his devotion and extravagant gestures.

Every year on my birthday, he would fund a new research grant in my name, presenting it to me with the reverence of a king bestowing a crown. If I showed even a passing interest in a rare marine specimen, his excitement would rival my own, as if my passion was his.

Aware of my love for the ocean, he took me on diving trips around the world until we married. Only after much persuasion did he reluctantly agree to let me go on solo expeditions, calling it a "painful sacrifice."

Xavier was like a lighthouse in my stormy world, offering stability and purpose.

Yet he was also the one who caused the most devastating shipwreck. He showed me the terrifying duality of human nature—how someone who adored you could still plan to destroy you.

His betrayal wasn't just infidelity. It was a cold, calculated decision to steal my kidney to ensure

another woman's survival.

I confirmed this with a specialist in Athens. My kidney was gone.

Even though I already knew the truth, seeing the medical scans horrified me. My heart ached with an unbearable sense of violation.

On our wedding day, I shared with Xavier my fears about my demanding career and how it might affect our life together. He had smiled, embraced me, and said my work was part of who he was in love with, and he would never stand in its way.

However, fate had other plans. A few years into our marriage, a diving accident left me with minor but persistent health issues.

For four years, the resulting complications made it difficult for me to undertake long expeditions. I was overwhelmed with guilt, often feeling like a fraud in my own field.

Xavier would always comfort me, offering sincere words of encouragement. He would assure me that my mind was what mattered most, and that my physical limitations didn't



diminish my brilliance.

He spoke as if he truly didn't mind, but I could see the frustration in his eyes. He longed for me to be whole and unstoppable even more than I did.

Our perseverance finally paid off. This June, I was cleared for a deep-sea project, my first in years.

When I saw the official clearance, it felt like my life was starting over. I was ecstatic and couldn't wait to tell Xavier.

But his reaction wasn't what I expected. He didn't share my joy; instead, he looked deeply troubled.

At the time, I didn't understand. I assumed he was worried about the risks.

It wasn't until now that I realized the truth—he was afraid. Afraid that my restored health would make it impossible for him to sacrifice my body for Jennifer's.