

ESCAPE FROM A SACTUARY FULL OF LIES

8 Chapter 8

Xavier continued to plead, saying, "We're still married. I shredded the divorce papers. You're my wife. About Jennifer, let me explain. It was a moment of madness. I swear, you're the one I've always loved, and that will never change." 1

"You know my position. In my world, you think you can solve any problem, bend any rule. Women are always an issue. I was desperate. I couldn't control my... my savior complex, so..."

His self-serving excuse felt like a final, deliberate insult, mocking the years of devotion and trust I had placed in him.

Unable to restrain myself any longer, I slapped him across the face, the sound echoing in the quiet lane.

"That's your excuse for betrayal?" I exclaimed, my voice trembling with rage. "I told you before: if you ever cheated on me or lied to me, you had to tell me. But you? You've been with her for two years. Two years! You had countless chances to be honest, but you chose deceit. You even

planned to carve me up like an animal so she could live!"

The fury I had suppressed for so long finally erupted, my voice rising with every word.

Xavier stood there, stunned into silence by my vehemence. But he didn't get a chance to reply as the dive instructor, Jasper, called my name from the shop's entrance.

I had no desire to waste another breath on Xavier. I walked past him and headed toward the dive shop.

From the corner of my eye, I saw him standing motionless, like a statue. His back was to me, so I couldn't see his expression—not that I cared to.

The instructor was a local man named Jasper, with sun-kissed skin and a calm strength that was the complete antithesis of Xavier's manic energy. Many of the local women seemed to have joined the dive group just to be near him.

However, Jasper maintained a professional focus, only answering questions related to the dive and politely ignoring anything else.

Before we began our descent, he carefully checked everyone's equipment. When he got to me, he gave me a long, thoughtful look.

There was a strange flicker of recognition in his eyes, as if we had met before.

But he said nothing, simply ensuring my regulator was secure before leading the group into the water.

When I was with Xavier, he never let me do deep-water dives, convinced my body couldn't handle the pressure.

What he never understood was that I had always been an adventurer. The more challenging the environment, the more alive I felt.

After we married, I gave up my more extreme passions to avoid causing him anxiety.

Diving had always been my true love. For years, watching documentaries about the deep ocean made me ache to be there.

I never thought I'd have the chance to dive freely again. The moment I descended into the silent blue, I felt a profound sense of coming home. A



rush of pure joy coursed through me, making me feel whole.

But just as we were exploring a reef wall, another diver in the group panicked and thrashed wildly, knocking my regulator from my mouth.

In that heart-stopping moment of weightless silence, Jasper was there, pushing his own octopus regulator into my mouth and guiding me through a controlled, life-saving ascent.

The others rushed to check on me, with Jasper leading the way. He helped me onto the boat, his grip steady and reassuring.

"Are you alright?" he asked, his clear, calm eyes filled with concern.

I coughed up some seawater and nodded. "I'm okay, just a little shaken. It should pass soon."

But Jasper looked serious and said firmly, "No, we need to get you checked out by a medic. Some effects of a rapid ascent aren't immediately obvious."

