

Chapter 1

Separation

Lauren

I heard the door open and by the clean and citrus smell I knew it was Darren. I didn't bother standing up to welcome him home. What was the use? When I knew very well that he wouldn't appreciate it nor would he want me to.

I was surprised that he come home. I rarely saw him nowadays and when I did, he either ignored me,

avoided me or lashed out at me. He would at times stay away for days that I would forget I have a husband. The ever present pain in my heart is what constantly reminded me that I do have a mate. A mate that no longer wanted me.

His footsteps approach the dining room. I sat at the dining table with a cup in my hands. I don't look up when his steps near. I still don't look up when he stops a few feet from me. He throws some documents in front of me and that's when I raise my head.

"What are these?" I ask suspiciously, my eyes meeting his obsidian orbs.

Just like every other time we crossed paths, his eyes are cold and his face is set in stone. It's hard to believe that this was the same man who showered me with love and affection just a few months ago.

Was it all just pretend? Has he been faking it all along, waiting for Miranda to come back?

“Sign them, those are separation papers. Since I never marked you, it was easy to get the elders to agree and approve our separation” he glared, almost as if just talking to me was ruining his day.

Who would have thought him not marking me would one day be used against me? Marking was the only subject we ever argued about. He had always made excuses about it and kept postponing it. His refusal to mark me should have been a red flag. But I kept making up excuses for him, thinking he would do it once he was ready.

I looked at him surprised. Never had I thought he would go to such lengths though. We have been together for ten years, ten good years. We had built a good life together and now he wanted to destroy all of it in just a few months of her arrival back into our lives?

“You can't be serious Darren” I say sadly. My voice barely above a whisper

My tears were threatening to fall but I won't allow them to. I've cried enough over the past few months.

Couldn't he see the pain he in my eyes? Was he so ignorant of how he was tearing me apart? I stood by him when she left. I build him back up after she had destroyed him. I was there for him through it all.

So how could he carelessly throw away everything we had for a cheating slut?

"I am, now sign the goddamn papers" he snapped, his fist hitting the table, almost breaking it in half.

His face is contorted in anger. I jump away afraid and since he was close I collide with his body. This close to him I can smell her perfume. I can see the lipstick stain on his neck. He must have come from her place.

I am disgusted by his actions. That he would come to the house we turned into our home smelling like another woman. That he would blatantly disregard his vows and openly cheat on me with the same woman that broke him ten years ago.

The pain that cuts through my heart as I imagine them together is shattering. The image of him making love to her, touching her like he used to touch me refuses to leave my mind. Instead it tears my already shredded heart.

I step away from him and look at him defiantly. "I won't sign them!"

"Excuse me?"

His eyes turn dangerously dark and waves of anger roll from him. The hairs on the back of my neck stand on end. I rethink my decision but then

I decide to stand firm. I couldn't allow him to destroy what we've built. I was strong enough to fight for our family.

"I said I won't sign them!" I hiss, glaring back at him.

My heart may be broken but I refuse to give up on him. To give up on our union. Miranda wasn't going to waltz back in and ruin everything I have built. I refuse to let that bitch win.

"You'll sign them or I swear on the moon goddess I'll fucking destroy you" he growls.

"Do your worst Darren...you can't break me anymore than you already have"

I stare at his handsome face, willing him to remember our love. To see past her deception and lies. To see the damage he was wrecking on my soul. But he doesn't and I fear that just maybe he is already too far gone.

"Oh darling, that's where you're wrong... You have no idea how much more I damage I can do" he smirks evilly and I have to prevent myself from shuddering at his coldness.

He turns around and stomps out of the kitchen. A few moments later I hear him climbing the stairs and I sag against the table. I let the tears that I had been holding back to freely fall.

Where had I gone wrong? Had I done something that angered the moon goddess and she was now punishing me? I just couldn't understand.

I had been happy a few months ago. Content with my life. I had a loving family, great friends and my business was flourishing. I had even planned on getting pregnant. But in a blink of an eye everything came crushing down.

Miranda came back to our lives like an angry hurricane, leaving nothing but destruction in her wake.

She started by going to his company. When I heard about it, I confronted him and he assured me nothing was going on. That they just went for lunch to catch up. That I shouldn't worry because she was firmly in the past.

I should have worried. Because here we were, months down the line with him asking for a separation.

My greatest fear had come true. He was leaving me for her and I didn't know how to handle that.

I wipe away the tears furiously, mad at myself for being weak. I can't give in to weakness because if I do, I'll lose all I held dear to my heart.

I walk to my room unsteadily. Darren had kicked me out of our bedroom when he started seeing Miranda. Once there, I try to sleep but I'm unable. My mind refuses to shut down. It refuses to let me find peace in its dark abyss.

It was around nine o'clock so I knew she would be asleep. I get out of my room and tip toe up the stairs and into her room. Knowing her bedroom like the back of my hand I walk quietly to her bed.

I sit on Krystal's small bed and run my finger through her soft locks. I inhale her scent which calms me a little. I was too lost to realize that she wasn't fully asleep. Her bedside lamps turn on all of a sudden and when she sees it's me she screams.

"Get out of my room! Get out" she screeched.

"Daddy!" she yells at the top of her lungs as if I was going to murder her.

Darren burst through her door in seconds. He switches on the lights and scans for the intruder only for his eyes to land on me. The worried look changes to murderous and he stalks towards me. Krystal runs to her father and holds him tight.

"Daddy she scared me. I don't want her here, make her leave" she mumbles into his pajama pant. Her whole body trembles as if she just met a monster and not her mother.

It breaks my heart further that my own daughter no longer even refers to me as mommy. These days I've been relegated to just 'her'. As if I were nothing but a servant.

Darren's eye turns soft as he looks at our daughter. "Go to my room honey. I'll be there in few and then we can leave"

That was the only thing we had in common nowadays. Our love for our daughter. A daughter who looked like the perfect mix of me and Darren. She has reddish brown hair. The red coming from me since I'm a red head. The brown from her dad. She also has his obsidian eyes.

“Are we going to mommy Miranda? I love staying with her” she says her voice brimming with glee. Her excitement to see Miranda breaks my heart a little more.

That’s what she calls Miranda. She stopped referring to me as her mother months ago. She hasn’t spoken to me or let me near her in months. My own daughter prefers another woman over me. Just like

“Darren, Krystal now hates me and want nothing to do with me.”

“Yes, now go so I can finish up here” Darren tells her gently.

Krystal stares at her dad with a smile, then gives me a scathing look before leaving the room.

“What were you doing in her room?” he asks, the gentle look he had a few moments ago having turned lethal.

I stand up and sigh before answering. “She’s my daughter Darren, I wanted to be near her.”

I now couldn’t even come near Krystal without her screaming at me or shouting for me to get away from her. She had completely changed once Darren introduced her to his mistress. All the affection she had for me were transferred to her.

Goddess I hated the lying bitch.

“She doesn’t want you near her. Get that through your thick head!” His insult hurts me but this was my daughter we were talking about.

“That’s because you let that slut brainwash her. If you think that I will let that stupid hoe raise my daughter, you’re sadly mistake.” I spit out disdainfully.

I didn’t see the hit coming. I was standing, glaring at him and the next thing I knew I was on the floor.

My world spinning and my ears ringing from the impact.

“Let that be the last fucking time you speak like that about the woman I love.” he snarled his voice cold with anger. He looked at me in disgust before spitting on me. He left the room without even looking back, minutes later I heard them leave.

I can’t believe it. I sat there on the floor while tears ran down my face. My left cheek stinging. I knew it was going to bruise.

How could he? He held me with those hands. Wiped my tears with them, and caressed me with them.

So how could he hit me? And all because of her.