

THE SHARES

CHASE COLES

I am standing right across the table, staring at a version of Ariel that I have never met before. I won't lie, she scares me. I have never seen her this defensive before. She never strikes me as someone who'd stand up for themselves like this. She makes me feel so uneasy because this could mean trouble.

I am looking at her, staring at my mother who has had enough of Ariel's drama as much as I am.

"Ariel, what has gone into you?" My mother asks.

"Oh, so are we all going to ignore the fact that Monica is here right now? Are we all going to ignore the fact I am getting divorced because of Chase's mistress?"

Oh, here we go again!

"Yes! You are getting divorced because of me, so what?" Finally, Monica joins in, fed up. "I have always been in Chase's life before you were even considered to be his wife, and you know that. Chase and I never stopped seeing each other because of you, you know why? Chase loves me and I can't think this same for you. Do us all the favour and accept defeat because you have no space in Chase's life! I have always occupied it,"

Monica bursts out, unable to take this anymore. She is breathing heavily, showcasing her anger and limited tolerance. She did not say anything to Ariel until now, and Ariel is looking at her tediously, unable to respond.

"Sit down, all of you!" Grandpa exclaims in authority.

"I was on my way out, anyway," Ariel spoke.

I held Monica's hand and motioned her back to her seat as well as I sit on mine.

"Are you okay?" I ask her, loud enough.

She nods and lies her head on my shoulder. My mother sits back on her seat and speaks,

"Don't ever come back here!"

"I am not planning to, Lisa!" Ariel disrespectfully replies, calling my mother by her name.

"No one is leaving yet. Sit down, Ariel!" Grandpa orders.

I growl in a low tone in annoyance.

Grandpa has always been fond of Ariel, so I wouldn't be surprised if they decide to team up as they both dislike Monica.

"I appreciate your kind gesture, Papa P, but I must go back to my place," Ariel says, ready to go.

"Fine, you don't have to sit down, but you will listen to what I have to say, then you can leave the Coles' Manor,"

Grandpa declares, pushing his untouched plate of food forward, then puts his hands intertwined on the table.

Ariel sits after a long sigh.

"Good." Grandpa turns to me. "Fifteen percent of the family shares belong to Ariel, and we have the rest of the eighty-ve percent. It has nevertheless happened before, but because of my dear late son, he decided to make changes in our family tradition and arrange a business marriage proposal with outsiders by marrying you off the Lopez daughter, trusting you both to run our companies, but you both failed, tremendously,"

"Grandpa, what is funny about what you said is that, you know that our marriage failed because you all made me a fool, knowing that my husband was still seeing Monica behind my back. You all supported this nonsense, and now you want to blame our marriage and the person who proposed this marriage who has sadly left us almost two years ago," Ariel spits.

"That's the thing, Ariel. I thought my company was in the right hands when I gave it to my eldest son, but I am so disappointed that he left us in such a mess. Which is why I want you two to halt the divorce," Grandpa suggests.

"What!?" I exclaim. "Unfortunately, I cannot! Ariel is not the person that I am in love with. The person I want to marry is Monica, the person I love," I declare.

Ariel makes a sound and rolls her eyes.

"Do you realise, if she leaves, our shares will be gone and hard to retrieve? Why don't you listen to me for once!?" Grandpa says, frustratedly.

"Then she rather leave! We will get the shares one way or another! I am not staying another second in this loveless marriage with her. If you want her so much to stay in our family, why don't you marry her, Grandpa?" My rage is at a point of exploding, and I don't know how to even control it.

Monica squeezes my hand to calm me down, while my mother reprimands me.

"Do not talk to you grandfather that way, Chase!"

"I am not surprised by your response, Chase. You are clearly your mother's son." Grandpa retorts, trying to say that I lived with my mother too long, so she did not raise me well.

I could not tell why I lived with my mother until I was six, but I found out why as soon as I was at least eleven , ve years later after we moved into the Coles Manor with my father. That is another story to talk about.

"Anyway, it does not seem like any of you want to compromise, so let me make it this way. You can marry Monica in one condition. Dispute the divorce, and make her your second wife,"

The more Grandpa speaks is the more I start believing that he is losing his mind.

"Second wife? Chase, I will never marry you while you are still married to her!" Monica exclaims, making a disgusted face.

Suddenly a chair screeches as it is pushed back by Ariel who has her game face on.

"You should be ashamed of yourselves for making me a fool all this time because you know how much I tried being the wife that this family requested. Grandpa, mother, and you, Chase, you all know that I tried, but I am tired now. If Chase wants to marry Monica, they don't need my blessings for it because they already had an affair for a long time, but what I know is that I will not be part of any of this. I want the divorce to be processed as soon as possible." With that said, Ariel stood up and started walking away, leaving everyone quiet.

Why is she so damn hard headed. Those shares belong to the Coles family, and if we must force her to give them back to us, it will be bad for her.

Not that I am considering staying married to her in order to marry Monica, but the only way I could get back our family shares is when I am close to her.

"Excuse me," I say, getting on my feet.

"Where are you going?" Monica asks.

"After having lunch, one of the guards will take you to your place. I will call you later," I tell her as I take my car keys and start leaving without waiting to hear how she reacts.

After leaving the Coles' Manor, I visited London Law Firm to personally speak to our family lawyer, Mr. Hamilton regarding the divorce.

"Sorry to keep you waiting, Mr. Coles. I had a meeting with a client." He says, taking off his jacket and sits by his desk. "How do you want me to help you?" He asks.

"I need you to stop the process of the divorce," I announce.

He furrows his eyebrows and sits back on the chair.

"I don't understand. How do you want me to do that?"

I want to cuss at him for not understanding my simple words. I hate repeating myself.

"Stop the divorce process. I do not want it anymore!" I say, agitated.

"Did you not see my email to you today? I already sent you an approval from the magistrate that your divorce has been nalised already. You and former Mrs. Ariel Coles have ocially legally divorced,"

Instantly, I felt my blood rushing furmingly in my body and my knuckles clenching. I did not check my emails today as I gave my attention to Monica all morning.

"F**k!" I cuss under my breath, irritated.

"I am sorry, sir... I..." I do not waste another second listening to him but stand up and head out, aggravated!

Not that I am not relieved about the divorce, but I am disappointed that the only plan to retrieve the family shares is gone.

Now I have got to gure out a different way to approach this matter. The only reason that my father wanted me to marry Ariel was because Ariel's family were facing bankruptcy and in order to save their company was for the Lopez family to sell their daughter in exchange for money and the shares.

I nd myself standing in front of my penthouse that is now in Ariel's possession. I was just about to enter the code to unlock the door, but I remembered what she said.

"I'm changing the door code. Set an appointment before you come and get the rest of your s**t!"

She has never spoken to me in that manner before. It makes me wonder if I had succumbed to our marriage and loved her with the impression she gave me, would she have changed to become like this and make me regret our marriage? I am somewhat glad that our marriage did not workout in order to avoid future disappointment.

"Chase, I didn't expect to see you here so soon," I hear Ariel's voice behind me speak.

I look back rmly, not trying to show my startled surprise to her as I thought she was in the house.

She is holding two bags of McDonald's and a drink from the same brand.

If she was so hungry, she could have just swallowed her pride and ate the lunch that was prepared and enough for everyone at the mansion.

She walks past me and enters the code of the door which she hasn't changed and the door beeped, indicating that it's been unlocked.

I sigh and follow her inside. I notice three black trash bags sitting across the foyer, but I do not bother enquiring about them.

"What do you want, Ariel?" I ask immediately when I follow her to the dining table.

She places the doggy bags on the table and starts unpacking the food that Monica would dismiss immediately if she was present.

"Your query is rather fascinating than alarming. You came to me yet you are asking me what I want. I thought you came here to collect your stuff which I kindly put in those trash bags for you. You do not have to thank me," She sarcastically remarks before shoving a chicken nugget into her mouth.

I notice there is nothing but lots of nuggets and fries and sauces.

No burger?

"I shall offer you two hundred million dollars for the shares. It is a lot of money for those mere shares; consider it," I state.

She chokes and ends up laughing, sitting on the chair.

"The Coles are very amusing today. Do you think I care about the money that you are offering me?"

"Don't be dicult, Ariel. You are a medical practitioner, not quite clever when it comes to an economic business, so stick to your lain,"

"Cole, are you doing all of this to impress your girlfriend?" She looks up at me bluntly. "Can I ask you one thing? Do you not feel a slightest thing between us regarding the divorce?"

I purse my lips and stand upright, not sure how to respond to her allegation.

"I do not know what you are asking me,"

"You know what I am asking you. I know you know that we could have made our marriage work, and you felt it because our souls have connected. I am not afraid to tell you that I love you, and if you could open your eyes to me the same way I open mine to you, you would realise that our marriage was just not a marriage in vain. We created something beautiful that we both would love together eternally. I am not going to force you to stay, but please do not forget me or that we connected in our own way," Tears rolled out of her eyes as she spoke.

I swear I understand the meaning of every word she said, but I do not understand her intentions behind them. She has left me so confused, but I am unable to soften up to them.

"It's too late for rekindling. I am not here to discuss us, and if you have come to consideration about the shares, contact my PA who'll gladly send you a contract, and you'll be rich overnight. You look like you'll need the money anyway,"

With that said, I turn around and leave as I leave the last words,

"I will send someone to pick my things up."