

TAKE MY BREATH AWAY

CHAPTER 38 MY DEAR

"A one-week leave? Why am I just hearing about this now?"

Philip lowered his head in silence, lacking any explanation.

"From now on, I want you to report her every move to me. Do you understand?" Carlos ordered sternly and took out his phone.

"Yes, Carlos."

"Where is she heading? And why?"

"Um..." Philip hesitated for a second. "Debbie didn't mention anything." 'Didn't mention anything?

I guess she is avoiding me, ' Carlos wondered. Without further delay, he called Tristan and said, "Inform the airport immediately that..."

Within one hour, Debbie and her luggage showed up in the CEO's office at Hilton Group.

As soon as she stepped into the office, she left her luggage against the wall, and hastened towards Carlos' desk. "Carlos, what's this supposed to mean? Why did you do this? Don't I have my own freedom anymore?"

Carlos didn't say a word until he had finished going through the papers in his hand. He raised his sights to her face and said, "Come to the university with

me this afternoon."

"No." Debbie refused him outright.

Disappointed, Carlos got out of his chair and asserted, "Too bad, you don't have a choice!"

Debbie slumped in an armchair in shock. Stunned, and not to mention angered, she finally spoke again after a moment. "Since you are not so busy right now, let's get to the matter we've been talking about without mincing our words. I've already signed the divorce papers. I really hope that you would do the same for me, for us, so that we can go our separate ways and carry on with our own lives." Ever since the idea of a divorce had popped into her head, it had always been there at the back of her mind.

Moreover, Carlos had been interfering with her personal life lately. Far from feeling like she had married a husband, in truth, she felt like she had found herself a father.

As stubborn and proud as she was, Debbie had never flattered anyone to gain favor, but lately she had been trying very hard to please her husband. As if that weren't bad enough, he wasn't making it any easier for her. Instead of having to see him only in the mornings and the evenings at the villa, she would now have to put up with him in her school.

Debbie just couldn't catch a break with this man. It had to end today. She would much rather lay her cards on the table and get it over with.

Carlos walked around the desk to the sofa across her and sat down. "Divorce

is not an option." He made himself very clear.

"Why? I told you I don't want your money. I don't want anything from you. Why are you still refusing to sign the papers? What else do you want?" 'What's wrong with this guy?' By then, she was so angry she wanted to rush over, choke him, kick him in the head, and throw him in Arctic Ocean.

Giving him no time to respond, she went on, "I know I've spent a lot of your money in the past three years. Don't worry. I'll pay every penny back as soon as I find a job."

Carlos sensed anger in her tone. When she finally finished speaking, he said, "I didn't do right by you in the past three years. I neglected you. I won't make the same mistake again in the future."

'Eh? Did he just apologize to me?' Debbie didn't see that coming.

"There is no need for an apology. Anyway, you don't love me and I don't love you either. A loveless marriage between two people is meaningless. Furthermore, according to the law, married couples who stay apart for two years or more are automatically considered divorced. So if you still refuse to sign the divorce papers, I will have to sue you."

Her last few sentences forced him to let out a chuckle. After all, this young lady was too naive.

'Sue me? No problem. I can help her find the best lawyer in the city.'

But automatically divorced?' Carlos felt obliged to correct her. "Listen. First of

all, to be automatically divorced, the couple must be separated for two entire consecutive years. One year, nine months and ten days ago, I went back to the villa and slept next to you, but you were too sound asleep to know it."

Being the gentleman that he was, Carlos had kept the lights off so she wouldn't wake up and it was too dark to see anything anyway. Nothing had happened between the two of them that night. Besides, he had only stayed for two hours and then left for work again.

Debbie's eyes nearly popped out at his reply. 'Hell no! I didn't even know a man was sleeping next to me?'

Carlos took out a cigarette, but since Debbie was present, he didn't light it. Playing with the cigarette in his fingers, he continued, "Secondly, the separation must be caused by the falling apart of the couples' relationship. In our case, I was working overseas. It doesn't fit the requirements, my dear. Besides, a divorce must be consented by both parties. There is no such thing as an automatic divorce."

Debbie was so puzzled her face fell faster than a corpse in cement boots. In that instant, her mouth hung with lips slightly parted and her eyes were as wide as they could stretch. She started wondering if she should hire a lawyer to see if Carlos was trying to fool her.

"Thirdly." He suddenly stood up and moved towards her. Leaning over her with his hands on the arms of the chair, he pressed his face close to hers. Debbie was forced to lean back.

'Wh-What is he doing? Why is he so close? Is he trying to seduce me?'

Debbie thought nervously.

All of a sudden, the air became thick with intensity.

Sensing her tension, Carlos spoke again. "The court requires evidence of a separation, which I am unable to present. What about you, my dear?"

'Why does he keep calling me "my dear"?' That form of address was starting to mess with Debbie's head. "Y-Yes, I can," she stammered.

"Oh really? Where? How?"

Debbie scooted backwards in the armchair until there was no space left. "... I can ask Julie and Philip to help me. They can provide evidence."

"Do you think they will listen to you or me?"

Debbie didn't answer. Both of them knew very well what the answer to that question would be.

Carlos was so close she could feel the man's warm breath on her face. Her rosy cheeks blushed red and her heart started beating faster. The worse part was, she had lost the nerve to push him away.

"Finally, let me tell you this..." With that, he pressed his lips to hers, sending her to a blissful trance.

Fortunately for Debbie, the kiss didn't last long. "During the separation, neither of the couple fulfils their marital duties. My dear, if you will allow me, I'd love to

fulfil my duties to you as a husband." As soon as he finished his last sentence, he stepped closer. When their faces were about to touch, Debbie shook her head in shame and said hurriedly, "No, no, no, no..."

Out of the blue, Carlos pulled her up and took her in his arms. "Therefore, my dear, I think your best option is to stay married to me and stop letting your mind wander."

By then, Debbie had already been bewitched. She looked at his gorgeous face and nodded her consent.

His scent was intoxicating. The smell of his presence gave her a sense of security. And his lips... tasted like heaven!

Satisfied by the spellbound look in her eyes, Carlos smiled.

'No! No! This isn't right.' Debbie suddenly pulled herself back to reality and shook her head to clear her mind. "Why don't you want a divorce? You know it as well as I do that we don't love each other," she asked.

"Why?" Carlos ran his fingers gently through her smooth hair. "First of all, you need money to pull yourself through university and make your dreams come true. Secondly, I need a woman as an alibi to block all the other women out of my life. And lastly, my grandfather once said that he had our fortunes read. The fortune teller convinced him that our Eight-Characters and constellations matched perfectly. What are the odds of two people being so perfect for each other?"

Debbie was at a loss for words. 'Eight-Characters and constellations?'

Seriously? He is so crafty and smooth-tongued he should be a lawyer, ' she mused.

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