

## Chapter 10 No.10

The ride to City Hall was silent. Elias worked on his tablet, but he wasn't reading. He was watching her reflection in the glass.

She was calm. Too calm for a woman about to end a marriage.

Do you still love him? Elias asked suddenly.

Aurora didn't look away from the window. "I loved a version of him that didn't exist. I loved the potential. But potential isn't reality."

That's a very business-like way to view love.

Marriage is a contract, Elias. You of all people should know that.

The car stopped in front of City Hall.

Wait here, Aurora said.

No, Elias said. He opened his door. "I'm coming."

They walked up the steps together. A visual power couple. Elias in his charcoal suit, Aurora in her simple clothes, radiating an newfound confidence.

Sterling Thorne was waiting in the lobby with his lawyer. He looked impatient, checking his Rolex every thirty seconds.

When the doors opened, Sterling looked up, ready to see a broken, weeping Aurora.

Instead, he saw her walking beside Elias Thorne.

Sterling's jaw dropped.

Uncle Elias? Sterling squeaked. "What... why are you with her?"

Elias didn't even look at Sterling. He looked at the architecture of the ceiling.

Aurora stepped forward.

The papers are ready to file? she asked the lawyer.

Yes, Mrs. Thorne-er, Ms. Vance. Just the final signature on the petition.

Aurora took the pen.

Sterling stared at Elias. "Did you... are you two...?"

She's an associate, Elias said coldly. "And frankly, Sterling, your taste in women is the only thing about you I respect. Too bad you were too stupid to keep her."

Sterling flushed a deep crimson. "She's nothing She's a trailer park girl!"

Aurora signed the document. The final stroke was a slash of ink.

She handed the pen back to the lawyer.

I'm free, she said.

She turned to Sterling.

One piece of advice, Sterling, she said. "Check the news."

Sterling frowned. "What do you mean?"

His phone buzzed. Then his lawyer's phone buzzed.

Breaking News: Vanguard Pharma crashes. Thorne Industries takes massive hit on quarterly earnings due to heavy investment.

Sterling looked at his phone his face turning pale.

You... you cursed me, he whispered, looking at her with superstition. "You bring bad luck, Aurora. You always have."

Call it what you want, Sterling, Aurora said.

She turned and walked toward the exit. Elias fell into step beside her.

Did you short the stock? Elias asked quietly as they walked down the steps.

Maybe, Aurora smiled.

Ruthless, Elias said. "I like it."

They reached the car.

Where to now, Ms. Vance? Elias asked, holding the door.

Aurora looked at the skyline. The city was hers. Pulse Interactive was hers. Her freedom was hers.

Drop me at the subway, she said. "I have code to write."

Elias watched her. He didn't know she was the new secret power behind Pulse. He just thought she was a brilliant, scrappy woman starting over.

I'll drop you at your office, he said.

As the Maybach pulled away, leaving a stunned Sterling Thorne on the sidewalk, Aurora Vance didn't look back. The rearview mirror was for the past. She was looking at the windshield.

And the view was magnificent.

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