

## Chapter 81 - Divorced Heiress

The surprise of everyone present was more than noticeable, no one missed the slightest detail of the arrest of the Lancasters and Rachel. The latter and Gina kept screaming that everything was false and that I had manipulated everything as I pleased, even that the evidence was fake.

No one could believe that two women from one of the most important and renowned families had been arrested in that way, but even less could they believe that they were capable of doing something like that, especially shocked by the serious accusation against Rachel, of which I had a few pieces of evidence and I would take care of finding the rest, because I couldn't get the idea out of my head that someone was behind her.

I calmed the audience that began to get restless and ended my presence on the stage because I had already achieved what I wanted. I had hit them where it hurt the most, I had destroyed them in front of society and public opinion, I had ruined their reputation and publicly exposed them for the kind of people they were. Furthermore, I revealed my identity to everyone, thus clearing my name from the countless fake news about me and my -Messy- life.

I was going to return the favor, just as they had destroyed my reputation, but without the need to invent any gossip, but with mere reality.

Backstage, I let out the air I had been holding without realizing it and smiled satisfied because I had achieved more than I had planned.

My father came in behind me and looked at me with a smile on his face before hugging me.

-I know it hasn't been easy for you, but you have taught those women a lesson. They will have to think twice before even mentioning your name in a casual conversation.- My father said. I sighed on my father's shoulder and felt that it was all worth it, this journey, having to endure certain people, everything had turned out so well, even though it was last-Minute plans.

-Thank you, Dad.- I thanked him, not just for his words, but for everything, everything my father had done for me, despite leaving my family aside for a few years.

-I apologize for interrupting.- a male voice came from the entrance, and I was forced to let go of my father to see the man standing there with a cold aura, staring at us. -I would like to talk to you for a moment.-

-Mr. Lancaster, if you came to discuss your family's situation, I'm afraid that won't be possible.- I said as soon as he finished speaking.

Although he hadn't lifted a finger to defend his family before, he could come to negotiate the Lancaster's situation, but the truth was that there was nothing or no one to save them, not even the president himself. They were going to pay for what they did without even thinking about it.

-In fact, no, I didn't come for that.- He said. I furrowed my brow, thinking it must be his strategy to converse like civilized people, but that idea vanished when he said the following. -You can proceed with my mother and my sister however you see fit, there is no way I can vouch for them. They brought it upon themselves despite the countless times I asked them to leave you alone. You are the mother of my son, so you have my full support.- I remained silent, looking for the slightest sign that would tell me he wasn't serious or that he was just saying it to please my father.

However, his gaze reflected sincerity, and I couldn't help but feel amazed by the drastic change. He would do anything for his family, even if they didn't deserve it, and now he was leaving all that behind to stand by my side, just because I was the mother of his child.

-So, what you're saying is that I should have had your child for you to give me my place with your family from the beginning?- I asked, amused but with a bitter taste in my mouth.

That was what he was implying, and to be honest, it made me uncomfortable, especially because we were having this conversation in front of my father.

Alexander narrowed his eyes at my words and clicked his tongue while shaking his head. -And did you let me know?-

I raised an eyebrow at his response and wondered internally if he had no shame in saying that in front of my father.

-There's no need to say what is more than obvious.- I replied calmly, and I felt that even though we had discussed that topic for the sake of Tristan, we were still at the same point.- Mr. Lancaster, what is the reason for your sudden appearance? - My father asked, breaking the tense atmosphere that had formed after the deathly silence following my words.

For some reason, I still didn't let my guard down even though I had made it clear that I wasn't here to defend his family.

Alexander approached, standing in front of us ready to speak.

- Mr. Doinel, I want to sincerely apologize for the behavior of my family, I... - Alexander's words hung in the air, as my father raised his hand to speak.

I looked at my father and noticed his harsh and severe gaze, as if he didn't like the presence of the man I had given up everything for.

- The apologies should not be directed at me, Mr. Lancaster, but at my daughter. Do you think it's fair that your family continues to denigrate the woman who used your last name? The

malicious intentions of those women have been to slander my daughter without caring who they hurt along the way. They didn't think about the consequences of their actions. What kind of family was my daughter involved with? - My father expressed his discontent with a cold and harsh voice.

My father didn't usually treat people harshly, he always appeared friendly and with a smile for anyone, but Alexander didn't deserve his kindness, not after hurting the apple of his eye and allowing his family to trample on me as if I were nothing.

Alexander put aside his serious attitude and appeared ashamed to be scolded by the man he admired so much. But he knew very well that he deserved it and that, if anything, it was too little punishment.

Chapter 52 A resounding no part 2

## Chapter 82 - Divorced Heiress

- I have apologized to your daughter, I admit that I didn't play a good role as a husband in the past. That's why now I want to be a good father and have peace for Tristan. However, my family's actions have nothing to do with me, so you can do with them whatever you see fit. I won't lift a finger to save them from a situation they brought upon themselves despite my warnings. I don't want you to think that I'm doing this to please you. I'm doing it as a way to redeem myself, because I truly hope that one day Sarah can forgive me. - Alexander's tone sounded sincere, so much so that my father's expression relaxed, but not enough to cease looking like a formidable man. - Putting aside this whole matter. I wanted to reintroduce myself to you, Mr. Doinel, and let you know how much I admire you and how grateful I am for the opportunity to collaborate with Doinel. I hope that my family's issues won't affect the project in the future.-

My father cast me a quick glance, as if he wanted to see my reaction to everything Alexander was saying, but at this point, I didn't know whether to believe his words or not.

- Mr. Alexander, let me tell you one thing. I have no intention of forming a friendship or treating you as part of my family. If I am engaging in a conversation with you at this moment, it is because you are the father of my grandson and because we have a project that we must carry out. After the regrettable role you played as my daughter's husband, I have no desire to deal with you in the slightest. For a supposedly respectable man, you lack a lot of character. - My father's words struck Alexander like daggers to the heart. He wasn't going to hold back what he thought of him and he said it straight to his face.

However, although my father didn't have any fondness for my ex-husband, he had never agreed with me hiding Tristan's existence from him. If it hadn't been for my father, I would have never come to my senses or realized the harm I was causing. After all, Alexander was lucky.

- Mr. Doinel, I accept that I was not a good husband. I understand your point of view and respect it. And speaking of business, I would like to discuss a matter with you privately. - I looked at my father, hoping he would tell him that anything related to the project could involve me, but my father frowned at Alexander for a few seconds before speaking.

- Daughter, leave me alone with Mr. Lancaster. - I took a step back from my father, feeling confused, and looked at him in disbelief that he was asking me that. - Please, Sari, we won't take long. Go with Tristan and the others. I took a glance at Alexander, but he had his eyes fixed on my father seriously.

I thought better of complaining, because whatever they were going to talk about regarding the project, I would find out at any moment. Plus, I didn't feel comfortable after the back and forth where my name and my past were involved.

-I'll be waiting for you.- I replied, shifting my gaze towards my father and realized that they were both holding each other's gaze, my father challenging him with his cold eyes while Alexander was the complete opposite, looking serious as if he wasn't willing to give in.

I left the two men alone in the dressing room and went straight to the seats assigned to the Doinel company, where everyone was admiring the models' designs on the runway, except Michelle, who had returned to Paris after being fired from the company, and Paul was also not in his seat.

-You've outdone yourself, did you see the faces of those scum? You don't know how much I enjoyed it when Amelia fainted. You're a goddess.- Abby was the first to speak when I arrived at my seat and I smiled to myself while accepting Tristan in my arms, who had been with my mother all night.

-You've handled everything with such patience, it impresses me. If it were me, I wouldn't have let them take her away without slapping them.- I laughed at my mother's remarks, even though I know she wouldn't be capable of doing that, her way of punishing was not with violence and neither was mine.

-This is just the beginning, I will take them to court and no one will be able to do anything to save them. Just wait until today's event is over, Sarah Doinel started strong. Isn't that right, my boy?- I spoke to Tristan as if he understood what we were talking about, and all he did was release a contagious laugh before hugging me around the neck.

Vincent was silent beside Abby, not saying a single word, but from his expression, he was just as satisfied as everyone else with my show.

-Ms. Petit... I'm sorry. Doinel. May I have a few minutes?- I looked at the man with that unfamiliar voice and met his ocean-blue, serious gaze, Julian Ferrer.

Tristan's arms wrapped around my neck, hiding his face in my neck as he laughed shyly. When Julian saw this, he smiled to himself, but he didn't stop looking serious.

-Of course, Mr. Ferrer. Is there something wrong with the project or the contract?- I asked, thinking that whatever he had to talk about was related to the collaboration.

-First of all, I want you to know that I admire your work and what you have achieved in such a short time without having to use your real surname.- He smiled without showing his teeth with his flattering comment.

Then, I realized that I had achieved what I wanted, I managed to be recognized for my own work and not for a surname.

-Thank you, Mr. Ferrer. I also admire your work and your effort, your company has a lot of potential, that's why it was chosen by Doinel.- I replied sincerely as I adjusted Tristan in my arms.

-Is this your son? I didn't know... Never mind, excuse the intrusion. Thank you very much for trusting my company. I hope you can accept Lancaster's proposal to carry out the project in New York. I'm sure we will do a great job together.- My brow furrowed in confusion, not understanding what he was talking about.

The project was supposed to be in Paris, there was no way in hell that...

Alexander's words came to my mind and I understood.

-I would like to discuss a matter with you alone.-

Alexander was going to talk about that matter with my father, he was going to propose that the project start in New York.

No, my father wouldn't accept it, and I wouldn't agree to stay in charge of the project in this city that brings me such bad memories.

I looked at Julian, who seemed to agree with Alexander's idea. Of course, it suited them, Julian because his company was here, and Alexander because he knew I would take Tristan with me, and it was very likely that he wouldn't have many chances to go to France when he had a company he should take responsibility for. I trusted that my father would give a sensible answer, a resounding no.

Chapter 53 Talk about me behind my back.

## Chapter 83 - Divorced Heiress

I had the desire to return to the place where I left my father and Alexander talking, but I held back for two reasons.

The first, because I was talking with Julian, and it would be very rude of me to leave him talking alone. And second, because I didn't want to intrude on their conversation.

-It is regrettable what those women did to you, will you take legal action? I can recommend the best law firm in New York for defamation cases.- Said Julian, completely changing the subject when he saw that I didn't respond.

I looked at him, trying to guess what was going through his mind, but it was impossible for me. Julian knew how to hide his emotions behind an expressionless face that made him look mysterious and attractive.

-Please don't bother, Mr. Ferrer. I have my contacts that will help me with the whole process. Even so, thank you for your concern.- I replied kindly, and he nodded in agreement with my decision.

-I have no doubt that you will handle the case very well. I wish you the best, Mrs. Doinel. If you need anything, you can let me know. I may not have much influence, but perhaps I can help you in the smallest way possible. With your permission, have a good night.- He said politely with his deep and masculine voice before turning around and going to the models wearing his innovative and avant-garde clothes.

As for me, I went back to my mother and Abby. Tristan wanted to rush into his grandmother's arms, who looked at me with complicit eyes, while my friend seemed displeased.

-What's going on? Did I miss something?- I asked confused, not understanding why both of them were looking at me like that.

-That Julian Ferrer gives me a bad feeling.- Abby said almost immediately, unable to keep her opinion to herself. My confusion grew.

-Why does he give you a bad feeling?- I said. -It's absurd, she was one of the ones who chose the Innova brand for the collaboration, and now it turns out that she doesn't trust the CEO.-

-But what are you saying, Abby? I don't agree with that. I think he is a gentleman, not to mention how serious he looks when it comes to work. I believe that the collaboration will be a success with Julian Ferrer.- My mother contradicted Abby, while she took Tristan in her arms and listened to everything he told her.

I looked at them even more confused than before.

-What did I miss? Why are we talking about Julian Ferrer now?- Abby rolled her eyes and decided to remain silent. I looked at my mother, and she was so engrossed in what Tristan was saying that I didn't want to continue with the topic.

-Where is Paul?- I asked, changing the subject, and Abby looked towards the exit before looking at me with complicity.

-He went out a moment ago to take an important call from one of the branches, but he's coming back, don't worry about him. Look at the beautiful dress you have, Patrick stood out with this design, and it looks better on you than any runway model.- Abby looked at me from head to toe with a smile. My concern grew in my chest at the thought that something bad was happening with the branch.

-Is something wrong with the company? What could have happened? It's strange. I'll go see what happened, I'll be right back.- I completely ignored Abby's compliments and turned to head towards the exit where Paul was supposed to be, but my friend stood up and took me by the hand, stopping me from moving.

-Sari, let Paul handle it. He is capable of solving it. I don't think it's something out of this world. Wait for him to return.- She said. I looked at her thoughtfully and after debating between going with Paul or waiting, I decided on the latter.

Abby was right, Paul was capable. After all, he had managed a branch all on his own, and everything had gone wonderfully. I shouldn't worry.

Just as I was about to start a conversation with my friend, Vincent called me and gestured for me to come with him.

-Give me a moment, Abby.- I apologized to my friend and made my way to my cousin. He didn't wait for me to fully arrive before getting up from his seat and walking away from the crowd with me. I felt confused, as Vincent was not one to speak privately when accompanied by colleagues or family, whispering or secrets in front of others was not his thing.

I looked at him patiently, waiting for him to speak, until he did.

-I don't mean to alarm you, but there's something strange about Paul.- He said with a neutral expression but a voice that left me completely intrigued.

Something strange about Paul?

-What are you talking about?- I asked, not hiding my confusion. Vincent looked at me for a few seconds before looking towards the exit, where some guests were heading.

-He's not taking a call from the company, I can assure you that. Something inside me tells me that Paul is hiding something and it has to do with you, if you want to find out, it would be convenient for you to go with him.- My brow furrowed upon hearing that and I couldn't help but feel bewildered.

Perhaps Vincent was exaggerating, if it wasn't a call from the company, it could be any personal problem and he didn't want to announce it to everyone. But something related to me, I doubted it.

What could he be hiding?

Did he have a suitor? It was not like it affected me. It was his life and he could do whatever he wanted. He was not tied to me, nor was I to him.

There were things that simply couldn't be said.

-Hold on, what he does or doesn't do is his business, he can do whatever he wants with his life, and I...-

-You're not understanding me.- Vincent suddenly interrupted me, and he looked at me with a serious expression.- I'm not talking about him doing something with his life because I couldn't care less about what he does, but if any action or decision affects you in any way, I won't allow it. You're just meters away from knowing what he's up to.- He discreetly pointed to the emergency exit, a door that was on the opposite side of the door Abby told me about.

Did my friend lie to me?

I didn't want to give too much importance to this matter, but Vincent's concern, seriousness, and insistence sparked my curiosity to know more about what he suspected.

-I'll go, but just to show you that you're making a storm out of a teacup, Paul is my lifelong friend, what could he do to affect me?- I wanted to sound unconcerned just so that my growing curiosity wouldn't be so obvious.

I didn't wait for my cousin to say anything else and walked casually towards the door that Vincent pointed out, without Abby noticing, because I knew her so well that if she saw me heading to where her brother was, the same brother she was covering up for, she would be capable of doing anything to stop me until he returned and his mission was over.

Halfway there, I thought about how silly this was, I was on my way to listen to a conversation that probably had nothing to do with me, just because Vincent had a hunch, but I had nothing to lose by going and making sure that everything was as normal as always.

I barely touched the doorknob and heard his cold and authoritative voice, I had never heard him like that before, but it sounded so annoyed and serious that it made my skin crawl.

-You don't understand, Mr. Richman, you have to do your best, I'm paying you better than any lawyer, no matter what you have to do, I want everything to turn out perfect.- I frowned, not understanding a word of what he was talking about, maybe I was right, it was his business and I was meddling, I didn't even know a Mr. Richman. I was about to turn around and leave when I heard what he said next.

-Don't you know who Sarah Doinel is? She is more powerful than you can imagine, she will win the case in no time.-



He was talking about me, about the case. Was he talking about the lawsuit?

A burning heat ran through my body and settled in my chest, and for a moment, I thought I was completely wrong about Paul, that didn't sound good at all.

My hands moved on their own and I opened the door of the emergency exit, revealing a flushed-faced Paul with a furrowed brow, which relaxed and was replaced by a look of confusion as soon as he noticed my presence.

- Did you talk about me behind my back?-

Chapter 54 Well, Eat It

## Chapter 84 - Divorced Heiress

Paul's face turned as white as a paper, he left no trace of his flushed cheeks and looked at me as if he saw a ghost, I never expected to see me here, if it wasn't for that, I wouldn't be here right now thinking that my cousin was right and that he was plotting something that, in reality, I had a lot to do with.

As soon as he could, he ended the call with the so-called Mr. Richman, who until now, I had no idea who he was, because no matter how hard I tried to remember, that last name didn't ring a bell. I could swear I'd never heard it in my life.

I closed the door behind me, leaving the noise behind. I was face to face with Paul and had no choice but to answer myself. I heard very well what he said and how he said it. Honestly, I didn't like this situation at all, especially coming from him.

- Sarah, what are you doing here? It's getting a bit cold, you'll freeze in that dress, I'll lend you my jacket. - His voice returned to normal, nothing compared to how he spoke a few minutes ago. He was about to take off his jacket, but I stopped him by raising my hand in a stop sign.

- I'm not cold, I just want to know what you were talking about me and with whom. -Paul stayed paralyzed in his place and was only able to adjust his clothes.

Obviously, he was taken by surprise, it seemed like he didn't know what to answer and I was starting to get impatient. I didn't want to distrust him, my lifelong friend and my best friend's brother, but I couldn't help but misinterpret his silence.

- Sari, I didn't want you to know until I had everything sorted out. -I looked at him confused and in silence, not understanding what he was talking about, until he continued after cracking his neck. - I know how busy you are and will be from now on with the collaboration project, so I

took the trouble of looking for the best law firm for the defamation lawsuit against those women. I'm sorry for not telling you earlier, but I felt the need to help you with this, if you're okay, I'll be okay too. - I was astonished by his words and crossed my arms trying to understand why he was so interested in helping me with the case.

Not even an hour had passed since everyone found out about the lawsuit and Paul didn't even wait to ask me about it, when he was already looking for lawyers and saying how quickly he would win the case.

- Paul, there's no need for you to go through the trouble of finding lawyers, everything has been under control from the beginning. In any case, you should have asked me first before contacting your connections, I just announced the lawsuit, you could have waited a few minutes to consult it with me, don't you think? Also, why all the secrecy? Abby lied to me about your whereabouts, how should I take this? -I spoke calmly, but inside I felt disappointed with the Dubois siblings. Abby for lying to me and Paul for taking liberties that didn't belong to him and behind my back.

- I asked Abby to lie for me, if there's someone you should be angry with, it's me, I just wanted to seize the opportunity and help you as much as possible. Sari, forgive me, I messed up. -Paul sounded remorseful and affected, suddenly I felt bad for dismissing him once again when, according to him, he just wanted to help me.

I let out a tired sigh and immediately felt the cold on the parts of my body that were still uncovered by the dress.

Secretly, I wondered over and over again if I could trust his word. After all, why would he do something against me? Maybe I was taking this too far because of Vincent's ideas.

- Alright, Paul, just cancel any lawyer. Shall we go inside? It's cold. -I ended the subject or I would get a headache from all the issues I had in my head.

Paul nodded his head and turned around to go back, but before opening the door, the cold in my body disappeared when I felt something covering my shoulders. I quickly realized it was his suit jacket and to top it off, he put his arms around my back and his hand stopped at my shoulder, I had to admit that I liked his warmth on this cold night.

When we returned, Abby's face turned pale and she nervously smiled before quickly glancing at Paul, I let it pass because after all, she's his sister and of course he would have her back. I met my cousin's confused gaze as he saw me arrive with Paul in this way and I gently shook my head, letting him know that there was nothing to worry about. My father arrived with Alexander and Julian just as I was taking off Paul's jacket. I thanked him and he didn't let go of me, not even when I reached Tristan, who was calling his father excitedly.

-Hey, Ales, Ales, hi.- My son greeted him with a wave of his hand while in my mother's arms, and I couldn't help but smile with tenderness.

Paul stopped hugging me by the shoulders and instead grabbed me around the waist in a possessive way that suddenly made me uncomfortable.

-Hello, little dark-Haired one.- Alexander greeted him back from his spot, a gleam in his eyes. He seemed uncomfortable under the unfriendly gaze the Dubois family had been giving him since he arrived.

I shifted slightly under Paul's touch, causing him to let go of me. I looked at him as his long fingers intertwined with mine, and under my watchful gaze, he planted a fleeting kiss on the back of my hand. I opened my mouth to let him know that I didn't feel comfortable being displayed in that way in front of everyone, but my father's voice made me fall silent.

-Thank you all for the work you've done this week.- My father began to speak, capturing everyone's attention. I looked at him expressionless, waiting for the moment he would say that the project would be carried out in New York instead of Paris, as Alexander had requested. How could everything change just because of Alexander's request? We could find another way to handle Tristan's visits without having to reconsider the project that was about to start. I looked at the dark-Haired man, and his scrutinizing gaze never left me for a second. -Tomorrow we will have a business dinner where the representatives of the collaborating brands have been cordially invited. There are some pending issues to discuss.-

Upon hearing that, I let go of Paul in one tug and felt uneasiness in my chest as I interrupted.

-Is there any change in the project that we don't know about?- I asked directly and somewhat suspiciously after requesting permission to speak. I gave Alexander a glance so he would know that I already knew about his intentions and that I didn't agree with his drastic changes.

My father fell silent for a few seconds, looking at me with a furrowed brow. I couldn't guess what was going through his mind. Was he really able to accept the suggested changes?

It couldn't be true.

Staying in this city for a year would be torture. Not only would I be unfamiliar with the work area where the project would take place, but I also wanted to be as far away as possible from everything that brought back bitter memories and with such unpleasant people, starting with Mrs. Amelia, whom I would make pay in court. And knowing her as I do, she wouldn't sit idly by seeing that the woman she despised so much was even more powerful than her and that she had been completely ridiculed in front of everyone.

-Sarah, we'll talk about that at the meeting tomorrow, there's no rush.- My father responded calmly, planting a big doubt within me. -Once again, I want to congratulate Innova and Lancaster Collection for the great work. I'll be waiting for you at the agreed upon time at the mansion.-

I laughed silently, unwillingly, while Julian and Alexander said their goodbyes to everyone. Abby rejected Alexander's greeting directly and half-Heartedly kissed Julian on the cheek.

One disliked the other even more.

Alexander approached me, and I stepped back when I saw his intention to kiss my cheek as a goodbye.

-You look more beautiful when your brow isn't furrowed.- He said as I looked at him indifferently, raising an eyebrow at his words.

Why should he care if I looked beautiful or not with a furrowed brow?

-Thanks, but it's none of your business. I'll see you tomorrow, Mr. Lancaster. Oh, and I hope the changes have nothing to do with our return to Paris.- I said for his ears only, as everyone said their goodbyes to Julian until he courteously said goodbye to my mother and Tristan. The latter couldn't stop smiling and hiding shyly in his grandmother's neck.

Alexander's mocking and indifferent gaze only intensified my uncontrollable urge to leave a mark on his cheek with my hand.

-Not everything revolves around you, Ms. Doinel. Remember, there's no rush.- He emphasized my last name and walked away towards where my mother and our son were, leaving me speechless and in a bad mood. I couldn't even say a word to him from where I stood, as Julian appeared in my field of vision after finishing saying goodbye to an embarrassed Tristan.

Would Alexander never stop being an idiot?

-Ms. Doinel, it's been a pleasure talking briefly with you. I'll see you tomorrow.- My bad mood faded slightly as I saw Julian's genuine smile. I could tell it was the first time I had seen him smile, a man usually serious and expressionless. I didn't want to come across as rude or impolite. He extended his hand to me.

-The pleasure is mine, Mr. Ferrer.- I shook his hand thinking he would release it after a handshake, but he didn't.

He brought my hand to his lips and left a kiss on my knuckles like a true gentleman, leaving me completely surprised. I could swear he didn't say goodbye to other women in the same way.

-Have a good night.- He let go of my hand, leaving me perplexed, and just when I thought he was going to leave, he spoke.

-Oh, and ignore the comments of certain people. You look truly radiant even when you're upset, you don't need to smile to shine with your own light.- His comment completely caught me off guard, I didn't expect someone to have heard what Alexander told me earlier, let alone give their opinion about it in front of everyone.

Julian walked away without expecting a response from me, and then I realized that everyone, absolutely everyone, was looking at the scene as surprised as I was.

Well, eat it.

Chapter 55 What did he intend?

## Chapter 85 - Divorced Heiress

There were minutes left for the guests to arrive at the work dinner at the mansion, I was finishing up some matters with my lawyers, as the case was going so well in my favor with the evidence, that I already considered it won. They would have to pay a large sum of money, since for them, money was everything, not to mention the humiliation of being behind bars until the verdict was given.

The comments on social media had shifted direction, there wasn't a single insult directed towards me like in the past few days, now the negative comments were aimed at the three vipers who made such bad decisions.

I said goodbye to my lawyers when we finished discussing the matter and they both left the office and seconds later the mansion.

Just as I was going to Tristan's room, Maga invited Julian to come into the house, who upon seeing me, came over to greet me with a kiss on the cheek.

It was inevitable that my muscles would tense just by remembering his words from yesterday in front of everyone present.

-Welcome, Mr. Ferrer, please take a seat, the others will be here in a few minutes.- I pointed to the sofa and before he could sit down, he approached me with his usual serious face.

-Ms. Doinel, I want to apologize to you for what I said last night. After I left, I spent the whole night thinking about it and I don't want you to misunderstand me. I just found it very rude of Mr. Lancaster to refer to you in that way, especially considering he's your ex-husband. It sounded very disrespectful and I wanted to lighten the mood, but it ended up sounding worse than it did in my mind. Can you forgive me?- I analyzed every word that came out of Julian's mouth and in a way, I felt more relieved.

I was aware that it sounded more like flirtation than anything else and I was glad to know that his intentions towards me were not at all what I had imagined.

Although I admitted that I felt really uncomfortable after he left and left me with all those stares, some curious, others annoyed. It was so uncomfortable that I took my son in my arms and went straight to the car to wait for the others. Luckily, my parents accompanied me home and didn't

say a word during the drive. Since then, I hadn't exchanged a word with anyone in this house, except with Maga and my parents.

I smiled without showing my teeth and nodded my head.

-I accept your apologies. I'm relieved to know the true meaning behind your words.- Julian tilted his head looking embarrassed and I waved my hand, downplaying it. I had already clarified everything, it wasn't such a relevant issue that needed to be overanalyzed.

-Excuse me, I'll go get my father.- I said.

-Go ahead.- He replied.

I climbed the stairs, leaving Julian alone in the living room, until I reached my father's room where he told me he would be before I locked myself in his office with the lawyers.

I knocked on the door with my knuckles and after a few seconds, my father appeared, opening the door with a weak smile. Behind him was Vincent with his neutral expression and my mother who seemed worried.

-Father, Mr. Ferrer has arrived.- I informed him, pointing downstairs with my thumb, but I couldn't concentrate enough because of my mother's face. Anyone could hide their emotions except her, something was happening.

-Why wouldn't I be fine? Has Julian Ferrer arrived? Come on, dinner is about to start.- My father linked his arm with mine and made me walk towards the stairs. At that moment, I knew he was hiding something from me.

I stopped before descending the stairs and let go of his grip to look at him intently with narrowed eyes.

-Can you tell me what's going on? Do you think I'm stupid?- I looked at Vincent who remained expressionless and soon realized that he had something to do with it. -Vincent...-

-Princess, how about we talk about this after dinner? We're running late, we can't be late, especially if the guest is already here.- Vincent responded without emotion in his voice and I huffed, feeling annoyed.- Sari, there's nothing to worry about, we'll talk about this after dinner, it's most convenient, shall we? - My father said, trying to take my arm again, but I refused.

- You can go ahead, I'll go get Tristan. Vincent, will you come with me? - I looked at him sternly and he knew he couldn't escape from me.

I let my parents continue their way after giving Vincent a glance, and walked with him to Tristan's room.

- Sari... - I raised my hand as a stop sign and left the word hanging in the air.

Upon entering the room, I saw Abby lying on the couch with her cellphone, while Tristan peacefully slept in his bed. I barely looked at Abby, still not forgetting the lie she told me, and I didn't have time to talk about it with her.

- Abby, everyone is waiting downstairs, dinner is about to start. - I told her as an excuse to get her out of the room and be able to talk to Vincent alone, for it was the only way I could release what my parents were hiding.

Abby stood up with her gaze fixed on the floor, it was clear she felt sorry about something and even though she wanted to talk to me, she knew it wasn't the right moment.

She passed by and I approached Tristan's bed without the desire to wake him up, he looked so relaxed sleeping, it would be a crime to interrupt his sleep.

When Abby left, I waited a few seconds before turning to Vincent and looking at him with a raised eyebrow. His serious gaze never disappeared and after letting out a sigh, he began to speak.

- I have told Leonardo and Joelle about my suspicions regarding Paul - He suddenly blurted out without any anesthesia, and I looked at him confused. - I'm sorry, princess, but I know there's something wrong with him, and last night they came back from outside as if nothing had happened. I don't want you to get hurt again, you've had enough with the husband you found and the people around him, to have another disappointment with Paul. You trust him a lot, don't you? - I crossed my arms, holding back my annoyance at people making decisions about my life.

Just because I was like that with Paul, didn't mean I acted as if nothing happened.

- First of all, it's not necessary for you to intervene, Vincent. I know you don't want me to have more disappointments, but I'm not a child. If you have something to tell me, say it to my face. Why involve my parents? - I complained in a low voice, careful not to wake up Tristan.

Vincent approached me and held me by the shoulders, looking at me intently.

- Sari, I know you're not a child, but you'll never stop being my princess and I'll never stop watching your back. I stopped doing it when you got married and look where it got you. That won't happen again. And I'm sorry, but you know I'm very observant, and I know Paul is up to something and you're caught in the middle. Don't you feel curious about why they lied to you so blatantly? Who was he talking to? Because it certainly wasn't about the company. - I didn't want to make my cousin feel bad, but I felt he was overreacting. Although what I heard from Paul last night wasn't right, I didn't feel like it was something that would harm me.

- He was talking to a lawyer, a certain Mr. Richman. He wanted to find the best lawyers for the defamation case. - I replied almost automatically, hoping he would drop the subject.

Vincent chuckled without any humor and looked at me after a few seconds in which he looked at the ceiling as if thinking about something.

- Is that what he told you? He himself asked me about the case after you publicly accused those women. Of course, I told him you had the best lawyers and that the case would go in your favor. A few minutes later, he received a call, said it was from a branch office, but I didn't believe him because of how restless he looked and the words he exchanged in secret with Abby. What do you think about it? - The information my cousin was giving me awakened the suspicions that disappeared the night before.

If Paul knew I had lawyers and that the case was leaning in my favor, why call a lawyer? Why did he lie to me? Who was Mr. Richman? And what was supposed to go perfectly?

- Did it really happen like that? - I asked, bewildered and trying to find some answers or logic to the matter. But it was impossible, maybe if I hadn't interrupted the call last night, I would have heard something else, now doubt lodged in my chest thanks to Vincent.

-Why lie to you? I wouldn't have told you if it wasn't this way. Besides, if I hadn't told your parents, they would be making a decision right now based on a conversation Leonardo had with Alexander, I must admit your ex-husband is very audacious wanting to change the project. -The sudden change of topic was not enough to distract me from my thoughts.

It was hard for me to think badly of Paul. He was the brother of my childhood best friend. He had been my friend since I could remember and his parents were my parents' best friends. It would be easier to believe that he was with different women because of his reputation as a playboy in the past. What did it have to do with lawyers and me?

Soon Vincent's last words echoed in my head and I snapped back to reality.

-What changes did Alexander want? - I asked after a few seconds of silence. Although I already knew what the big change that Alexander wanted was, Julian had told me last night.

-Alexander wanted to carry out the New York project and your father was still unsure about it, God knows what he said to make him consider his proposal, but after today's conversation, he prefers to have you close, back in Paris.-

What did Alexander intend?

Chapter 56 Business dinner.

## Chapter 86 - Divorced Heiress

That my father considered carrying out the project in New York left me really perplexed. Alexander must have begged on his knees and that wasn't even enough for my father to even



consider it, but I was relieved that thanks to my cousin, he reconsidered, although it left a bad taste in my mouth for what Paul brought to light.

Tristan was so deeply asleep that I preferred not to wake him. I made sure his bed was secure and, with Vincent, we left the room to join the dinner that was about to begin.

Before descending the stairs, Vincent stopped me to talk.

- Sari, whatever Paul is plotting, just act normal. He might get alarmed and we won't know what he's up to. - I nodded, agreeing with his plan, and we resumed our path to the living room, where everyone was already gathered.

Of course, Alexander had already arrived and we barely greeted each other with a “Good evening.” I wonder what he would come up with to persuade my father.

My father invited us to enter the dining room when Maga announced that the table was already set. I didn't leave my cousin's side for a second, as I felt he was the only person, apart from my parents, whom I could trust.

Relaxed, I silently ate my dinner while my father exchanged some words with the new partners, although he spoke more with Julian than with Alexander.

The man with blue eyes tensed when my father asked a question.

-How did the idea of building your own company come about?-

It turned out that the young entrepreneur started from the bottom, grew up in a very humble family, and at the age of twelve, when his parents died, he was completely alone. It wasn't until his half-brother, who is nine years older, took care of him that he was able to graduate from university with honors and start his own company in memory of his mother, who always dreamed of having her own clothing brand.

The brief summary of his life really moved me. My heart ached at the mere thought of how difficult it must have been for him to lose his parents and continue on his path without their love, without the warmth of family, without their advice. On the other hand, I felt happy for him because he never deviated from his path, and through him, his mother's dream was coming true.

Suddenly, I felt satisfied that his brand was part of the project, although he had earned it with his brilliant proposal and the quality of his brand.

There was no doubt that he was a capable, intelligent, and audacious man.

-What does your half-brother do?- Vincent joined the conversation, interested in knowing more about Julian's life. It seemed that he, too, was touched by his tragic childhood.

-He's a lawyer, he has his own law firm. I dare say he's the best in New York.- He replied after taking the last sip of his water glass.

My eyebrows raised as I remembered that he had recommended a law firm for my case. Now I knew it was his half-brother's firm.

When I lifted my gaze, I met a pair of honey-colored eyes looking at me as if I were the only person at the table. I quickly averted my gaze with indifference and continued to enjoy the dinner, pretending he wasn't present at this meeting.

Once dinner came to an end, my father ordered wine for everyone. We toasted and he began his talk about the project, highlighting some terms and conditions, talking about the line we were going to launch with our designer Patrick, the times set in the contract, the quality of the materials, and finally, he touched on the topic we had been waiting for.

-I considered Lancaster's proposal to start the project in New York. He himself has offered us his extensive facilities.- My father said, and I looked at Alexander, who had the corners of his lips slightly curved in an almost nonexistent smile.

He was probably thinking that my father would approve that idea.

On the other hand, Abby was more than surprised by the recent news, and Paul immediately tensed.

-But, Mr. Doinel, the signed contract specifically states that it will be in the original company, that is, in Doinel. Everything is ready to receive the representatives and assigned workers from both companies. We can't change everything at the last minute because of a proposal from one of the parties.- Paul disagreed with the topic. He placed his empty glass on the table and looked at Alexander with a displeased expression, and the latter didn't fall behind and returned his gaze with annoyance. The tension in the atmosphere was more than evident, however, my father remained undisturbed.

-Of course, Paul, you're absolutely right, that's why, here and now, I inform you that the project will continue as planned in Paris. Doinel will be leaving in two days and we will be expecting the collaborators on the scheduled date.- My father announced his final decision, and Alexander immediately stood up from his seat, looking incredulously at my father.

I quickly glanced at Vincent and caught him looking at Paul, who had let his guard down after hearing my father's last word.

-Mr. Doinel...- Alexander was about to complain, but my father interrupted him.

-I appreciate your offer, Mr. Lancaster, but I have priorities. Are both parties in agreement?- My father looked at Alexander and then at Julian, who had been silent, listening attentively to everything my father was saying.

-I agree.- Julian was the first to respond. He seemed to have no problem with any decision, and this was his golden opportunity. Of course, he would agree to any change that would benefit him.

Alexander remained silent for a few seconds, and his gaze landed on me as he sat back down. I felt overwhelmed by his expression, it wasn't mocking or annoyed, no, it was more than that, it was one of concern, leaving me confused and completely stunned by his unexpected reaction.

-I also agree.- He finally said, before my father moved on to the next topic.

When my father ended the meeting, I said goodbye to everyone before going to Tristan's room, as Maga had informed me moments before that he had woken up from his nap.

Being alone with my son, I looked at him tenderly, admiring how big, beautiful, and talkative he was now. Time went by so fast, it felt like yesterday when I first held him in my arms.

I responded to everything he said until he fell silent, looking behind me and smiling from ear to ear before shouting with great excitement.

-Ales!- I quickly got up from the sofa next to his bed and looked in the direction where my son was looking, meeting Alexander's honey-colored eyes.

Damn, what was he doing here?

-Who let him in?- I asked annoyed by his audacity to come here without consulting me first.

-Your father.- He responded, and I frowned at his answer and looked at Tristan, who got off the bed and ran to hug Alexander's leg. The latter picked him up in his arms.

-Little one! You're so big today, did you grow while you were sleeping?-

-Yes! I'm big, right, Mom?- Tristan looked at me from his father's arms, and I gave him a smile, nodding my head.

-It seems like it's very late for your visit.- I said, pretending to smile for Tristan's sake, not wanting him to notice how much Alexander's presence at this hour bothered me.

-I just came to say hi to my son, I hope there's no inconvenience with that.- He replied before kissing Tristan's soft cheek.

Only then did I realize that I wasn't being empathetic with him. In two days, I would be leaving for Paris with Tristan, and I didn't know if Alexander would be able to visit him. Today, we were both so busy that it was impossible to find a time for him to be with his son. Now he was just saying hello, it wasn't a big deal.

-I'll give you your space.- I said, crossed my arms, and settled on the balcony. I was far away but attentive to everything.

I didn't miss any detail. Alexander sat where I had been sitting before and played with the dinosaurs his son gave him. I couldn't deny that it was a very tender scene. I would have never imagined seeing the coldest man of all melted like that with the little version of himself.

I took the opportunity to check my phone messages while they enjoyed each other's company. My lawyer informed me that the vipers had already hired their lawyers, and the trial would take place tomorrow.

It was a relief to know that because I was worried that the trial would be delayed, and I would have to stay in New York for longer, neglecting my responsibilities and my family. I was not aware of how much time had passed when I heard faint footsteps behind me. When I turned around, I was surprised to see Tristan asleep and Alexander approaching me.

- Are you leaving already? - I asked in a low voice so as not to disturb Tristan. It's late and I prefer him to keep sleeping until tomorrow.

- Yes - He replied simply. And as I was about to pass by him to guide him to the door, he stopped me by taking my arm with his long fingers. - We need to reach an agreement for Tristan. Do you realize that you're going to separate him from me again? It's not fair, I'm his father, and I don't want to miss any more stages of his life.

I looked at his hand as if his touch burned me and I pulled away abruptly.

Of course I knew, but there were other options for both of us to enjoy Tristan without me having to stay in this city.

- I can't stay, Mr. Lancaster. You more than anyone know how serious a contract is, and more than that, my father's word. But can we talk about this later? It's very late and not the right place, how about tomorrow? - He seemed to agree and nodded his head.

- Then, tomorrow it is - I continued on my way to the door, and just as I was about to open it, Alexander called me. - Sarah...-

I turned to look at him and his gaze stopped on my face for a few seconds. I raised an eyebrow, waiting for him to speak, but all he did was suddenly close the distance between us, and his lips pressed against mine, taking me by surprise.

My body tensed up and the urge to punch him until exhaustion bubbled inside me, and I was not able to give in to something as stupid, disgusting, and inappropriate as a kiss from him.

I pushed him away with all my strength, moving his face away from mine, and slapped him on the cheek, causing his face to turn.

I ran my hands over my lips, feeling like I was about to throw up the dinner he had just eaten.

Why the hell did he do that?

Was he drunk?

- Do not kiss me again. You have no idea how repugnant it makes me feel.-

Chapter 57 Will you speak?

## Chapter 87 - Divorced Heiress

The next day, I woke up in a bad mood and knew it was because of last night's incident with that shameless audacious man, but that was not all.

My mother noticed that something had happened in Tristan's room, because after slapping him and saying those hurtful words, he looked at me sadly for a few seconds without being able to say a word, before disappearing from the room without waiting for me to open the door. My mother was close enough to see Alexander's drastic change of mood when he left, and although she looked at me questioningly, I preferred not to bring up the subject.

What was I going to tell her?

How was I going to tell her?

My mood improved a little when I arrived at the trial and saw the Lancasters looking miserable, with no trace of makeup on their faces and their imperfections showing, not to mention their hair, it seemed like they hadn't combed it in a month, compared to the image they were accustomed to.

I smirked when they looked at me with hatred; it was clear that they were biting their tongues to avoid insulting me in front of so many people.

To my surprise, the Lancaster twins attended the trial, but they kept their distance and didn't get involved, unlike the grandfather, who stayed on top of the case and even used his contacts to help his daughter-in-law and granddaughter out of the trouble they got into.

Rachel had a gray-Haired male lawyer and a very well-dressed woman; even with the best defense, she wouldn't escape punishment for the crimes committed.

At the end of the trial, the Lancasters had two options: pay a hefty sum or serve two years in prison.

Old Lancaster, although he looked furious, agreed to pay the hefty sum out of his own pocket, so that the women wouldn't set foot in jail again.

As for Rachel, apart from paying a hefty sum for defamation, she was found guilty based on all the evidence collected, as the mastermind behind the attempted murder against me, so she would spend more time in the women's prison.

I was content with the outcome; in the end, I had given those vipers what they deserved. I was humbling them in return, they earned the public's repudiation.

Before they took Rachel away, I hurried to talk to her because there were still many doubts regarding the attempted murder. Was she really capable of ordering me to be killed just for a man?

God, it couldn't get more ridiculous.

When she saw me entering the visitation room, she rolled her eyes as if she were annoyed to see me.

I walked slowly around the table, making my heels resonate with each step I took. I looked at her with pity for how far she had fallen.

-Why did it have to end like this? What need was there to soil your hands for a man? Was it worth it?- I asked, keeping my hands behind my back.

Rachel laughed and looked at me with a smile on her face, as if she weren't miserable enough.

-And you, why lie for a man? Was it worth it?- I stopped in my tracks when I heard her answer and let out a dry laugh. Okay, in my case it wasn't worth it, but at least I didn't commit any crimes for it. I had my reasons.

-I knew who you were, and by the time I found out, you were already married to Alexander, and no matter how much I tried to destroy his marriage by seducing Alex, he never saw me as anything other than his college companion. It didn't seem fair to me that you always got everything I wanted, the best grades, you graduated with honors, you became the girlfriend of the man I liked so much, you got married, you are the daughter of a billionaire, you are heir to the most prestigious fashion company in Paris, you had a child with the man I always wanted. You had and still have the perfect life, and what do I have?- I looked at her in disbelief that she was telling me all this.

She was telling me she did everything out of envy, seriously?

How could a woman stoop so low, set aside her dignity, and focus on what others had and what she lacked.

Undoubtedly, a woman's worst enemy was another woman.

Although now she was admitting that she did everything to destroy my marriage, just as Alexander had told me, it wasn't a justification for her infidelity. Were there no other solutions to protect me?

-You know, it's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard. You had my sincere friendship, and you chose to betray me despite everything I did for you. You could have had everything you wanted, but your mistake was focusing on what others had and you didn't. Now tell me, what did you gain from death threats? Why hire a hitman? Who is that hitman? Do you have that much money?- I asked calmly, keeping my distance from her, as she seemed like a demon in person. She stayed silent longer than she should have, and after a long wait, she opened her mouth to speak.

-I don't have to answer your questions if my lawyers aren't present.- She replied. With her response, I deduced that she was covering up for someone and that she wasn't alone in this.

-Who paid the hitman? Because I'm sure you don't have enough resources to waste on a criminal. Who are you protecting?- I didn't stop asking as I approached the table. Her expression changed to one I couldn't decipher, but her gaze suggested I was right.

-I'm not protecting anyone. I won't answer if my lawyers aren't present. Do you want to blame me for anything else?- Rachel spoke defensively, and I sighed before saying,

-Do you want me to believe that? Are you capable of sinking yourself just to cover the back of whoever got you into this?- I asked softly, looking directly into her eyes. I had to be more persuasive to get answers without mentioning her lawyers.

-Don't you want to talk? Do you have any dignity left? I'm the only person who can help you right now. You have the final word, Rachel. Do it for yourself, think about your freedom. Will you speak?-

Chapter 58 No more betrayals.

## Chapter 88 - Divorced Heiress

Rachel remained silent for a long time, her expression gradually changing, to the point that her eyes slightly glazed over.

A glimmer of hope was born in my chest, her eyes met mine and when she opened her mouth to speak, she closed it again as soon as the door to the room opened, revealing Rachel's pair of lawyers.

-Good afternoon, Ms. Doinel. Is there a problem with my client?- The lawyer spoke immediately, positioning himself behind Rachel.

I stood firm in my place, feeling irritated by the untimely arrival of the lawyers. It was obvious that I wasn't going to say anything with them present, so I remained silent while giving Rachel a look.

-None, right Rachel?- I dared to ask the question directly to her, only then would I realize if she considered my proposal.

Her eyes remained fixed on my face and I saw her swallow before answering.

-Mr. and Mrs. Richman, you can rest assured, nothing is happening.- She said, and one of her eyebrows moved up and down. My body remained still for a few seconds upon hearing that last name.

I looked at the gray-Haired lawyer and the well-dressed woman, never imagining they could be married. Soon, the call that Paul was taking the night of the fashion show came to my mind and I was astonished.

I couldn't formulate any words. Was this some kind of clue? Because if it was, everything points to Paul being colluding with Rachel.

How many lawyers were named Richman? Was it just a coincidence that the

”two” Richman lawyers were aware of the defamation case?

Was this what Vincent suspected so much about him? This had to be a joke, a misunderstanding, a big coincidence. Paul wouldn't be capable of hurting me. He had been a great friend for many years, not to mention that his family was friends with mine.

What the hell was going on?

-Thank you, Rachel. This conversation has helped me a lot.- I said, her face paled and she moved restlessly in her seat, as if she had realized she said something she shouldn't have. -Mr. and Mrs. Richman, if you'll excuse me.- I gave them a smile without enthusiasm and left the room, without waiting for them to say a word.

On the way to the car, I felt short of breath and a pain appeared in my head. I felt truly betrayed, although I didn't have the complete certainty that Paul was involved with the hitman who had me in his sights. I didn't want to believe that my suspicions were true, but all the arrows pointed to him.

I hastened my pace to the car, where the driver was waiting for me. I needed to get to the mansion as quickly as possible. I had to talk to Vincent before making any decisions about it.



The driver opened the back door for me and I entered without hesitation. Just as the car was about to start, I heard some knocks on the window. When I looked up, I found Alexander's face.

I let out a tired sigh and although I had no intention of exchanging words with him, I rolled down the window when I saw that Alexis was with him.

-Sarah, can I have a word with you?- Alexis was the first to speak, and I looked at him hesitantly.

What I wanted most at this moment was to get home as soon as possible, but I wasn't going to be so rude to Alexis, not after how our last encounter ended at Alexander's house and knowing that tomorrow he would leave for Paris indefinitely.

I liked Alexis, I didn't want to be on bad terms with him, especially since he was Tristan's uncle and the one I liked the best among all the Lancasters.

-Just a moment, Tony.- I said to the driver, and he nodded his head. I got out of the car, leaving my things inside. -Good to see you, Alexis. How's the therapy going?- I asked, completely ignoring Alexander who was holding his wheelchair.

To be honest, Alexis looked better than the last time I saw him. He could move more easily and his demeanor had improved significantly. At this rate, he might be able to walk faster than anyone can imagine.

-Very well, actually. There are more and more results, the progress is noticeable.- He replied fluently, which impressed me because before, it was difficult for him to pronounce words.

-Alexander, can I have a moment alone with Sarah?- Alexis looked at me with concern, and after a few seconds, Alexander distanced himself considerably.- Alexis...-

-Sarah... - we both spoke at the same time and I made an embarrassed gesture, giving her the floor. -I haven't had the chance, but I want to apologize if you have felt offended or uncomfortable because of me, also for the damage caused by my mother and sister, it won't happen again, they have gone too far and will have to face the consequences.- Indeed, his speech improved quickly. No one would realize he had been in a coma for so many years.

I was relieved to know that he also wanted to touch on that topic and leave behind the idea of being together.

- I accept your apologies, Alexis. I think by now you must have understood why there cannot be anything between us. I had a child with Alexander after we divorced and it wouldn't be right or well seen if you and I...-

- I understand and believe me, I feel ashamed now, if I had known earlier that there was a child involved, I wouldn't have been so bold. - I laughed embarrassed, mostly because it was me who hid my child for years. - I would like to meet my nephew someday, if you allow me.-

I nodded my head more times than I should have.

- Of course. We are going back to Paris tomorrow, is that okay for you today? - I agreed to his request and his mouth opened in a perfect O.

- Don't tell me, it's a shame that you're leaving so soon, but you have a project to take care of. Tell me the time and place, I'll be there. - I gave him the address of my house and scheduled it for six in the evening. I would have invited him immediately, but I need to talk to Vincent about what I just found out.

Alexis gestured with his hand and Alexander approached us. Alexis' eyes went from his brother to me, over and over again, he surely noticed the tension between us and it was not for nothing, we didn't even greet each other.

I couldn't even look at him without feeling the anger bubbling up in my system after last night's kiss, he well deserved the slap.

- So, I'll see you at six. - I told Alexis after a few seconds of us sinking into a really uncomfortable silence. When I was about to return to the car, Alexander's voice stopped me.

- I suppose I should also attend, we have a pending conversation about Tristan, remember? - I looked expressionless at Alexander, holding back the desire to slap him in the face again, last night's slap wasn't enough to release my anger.

I took a discreet breath and focused on what was really important, my son. Of course, we had to reach an agreement for Tristan's visits, he had to cooperate or the worst that could happen was that we take the case to court and it wouldn't be very pleasant for either of us.

- Of course, I hope you won't confuse things again, Mr. Lancaster. - I responded pretending to be calm. His eyebrows raised slightly and he gave a small half-smile.

- Don't you know me? I'm not someone who confuses things. - He responded in a soft voice and I didn't know how to take his words.

What was he trying to tell me?

Big idiot, he was really mistaken if he thought that having a child together gave him a free pass to do and undo with me, that was in the past and I wouldn't make the same mistake twice.

I gave him a fake smile and without saying anything else, I got back into the car to disappear from the sight of the twins and feeling dazed again as I remembered the topic of Paul, Rachel, and the lawyers.

I hope it was not what I was thinking.

No more betrayals.

## Chapter 89 - Divorced Heiress

While helping Vincent pack his things, I told him in great detail everything that happened in the trial and the conversation with Rachel before his lawyers arrived. I mentioned my slight suspicions about Paul, and he remained thoughtful, never stopping the folding of each garment.

-I'll use my contacts, I'll investigate Paul and the lawyers. Whatever they're hiding, I'll uncover it. It's important not to mention this to anyone, at least until I get results, not even to Leonardo. We have to make sure before taking action.- Vincent spoke after a long while, and I agreed with his plan.

A bitter sensation settled in my chest because I still found it hard to believe that Paul was capable of this. What the hell did he want to achieve?

At this point, I didn't trust anyone, not even my best friend. I hadn't even had time to talk to her, or maybe I just didn't want to speak to her.

-Tomorrow, we'll be back. I'd like to meet with your contacts and you. I want to closely follow the case.- I asked, finishing folding his shirts neatly, and he gave me a genuine smile.

-Of course, princess. Whatever Paul is involved in, we'll find out. I'll help you with everything.- He nodded, and I returned his smile.

-I appreciate it.-

Before we could continue our conversation, Maga knocked on the door from the other side.

-Sarah, the Lancasters have arrived.- Maga said, and I looked at the door as if I could see through it, feeling Vincent's gaze on the back of my neck.

They had arrived. Had time passed so quickly?

-The Lancasters? The witches and the scoundrel?- Vincent asked as soon as he heard Maga, and I let out an amused laugh at how he referred to some members of that family.

-I'm coming, Nana!- I shouted to Maga, who expected a response from me, and I turned to Vincent before answering him. -The scoundrel and his good twin.-

He looked confused, and I took advantage to leave his room before he bombarded me with questions.

Maga was with Tristan outside his room. Before going to Vincent, I asked her to get him ready for his father and uncle's visit. I saw her surprise on her face, but she didn't ask anything, and now seeing her astonished expression, I knew that she had already realized the existence of Alexander's twin.

-Sarah, Tristan is ready, and they're waiting downstairs.- Maga said. I stroked my son's soft hair and took his hand for him to walk beside me.

-Thank you, Nana. I'll take care of the rest of the night. You can have the rest of the day off.- I said, waiting for Maga to go to her room. I took a deep breath before kneeling down and speaking to Tristan. -Son, you look very handsome. Are you ready to meet your uncle? He's Alex's brother, and you know what? They look very similar.-

-Is he like Aunt Abby?- He asked with his childish voice, his honey-colored eyes looking at me curiously. I smiled, seeing that he understood, at least in his own way.

-Yes, something like that. Shall we go?- His head moved vigorously up and down in response to my question, and without further ado, I led him to the living room where the pair of men were waiting.

-Ales!- As soon as Tristan saw him, he let go of my hand and ran to him. But to everyone's surprise, he reached Alexis and hugged his motionless legs in the wheelchair. Alexis looked astonished and did nothing but return his hug, running his hands over his small back.

-Wow, can you give me a ride on your chair?- Tristan's question provoked laughter from Alexis, and I looked embarrassed. I didn't expect the introduction to get out of hand.

-Tristan, this is Uncle Alexis. And this is Alexander, your dad.- I took his hand and made him look beyond Alexis. When he saw Alexander, he remained still, his eyes going back and forth between Alexander and Alexis.

-Mom, two Ales.- Tristan's sweet voice made me laugh at the same time as the two men in front of me.-

-Daddy Ales.-

Alexander approached his son, who couldn't stop looking at them, showing his confusion, but in the end, he focused all his attention on Alexander, who was squatting in front of him. -He is my twin brother. You can call him uncle, call me dad.-

I couldn't help but feel moved by Alexander's constant efforts to get Tristan to call him dad instead of Alex.

-Ales. Uncle Ales.- Tristan pointed to each one with his finger, as if it hadn't been difficult to tell them apart. I could see a bit of disappointment on Alexander's face because he still couldn't get

Tristan to call him dad. But as if he had noticed, Tristan wrapped his arms around Alexander's neck before saying to him. -Daddy Ales.-

My heart skipped a beat as I watched that scene, and I noticed that Alexander stood frozen, even managing to see a sparkle in his eyes that matched his smile of disbelief.

I let them enjoy their father-son moment and approached Alexis to apologize for Tristan's earlier actions and thank him for coming to meet him.

After telling me how beautiful and smart Tristan was, he finally approached him to get to know him, and even lifted him onto his lap to take him for a ride in his wheelchair.

I sat next to Alexander on the couch, at a considerable distance, as we still had a pending conversation that couldn't wait any longer.

-It hasn't turned out so bad after all.- Alexander said as he watched Tristan laugh heartily while being taken for a ride. And now that I thought about it, he was right, they were getting along very well. -I've thought of the best solution for everyone.- He said after a few seconds.

I stopped looking at Tristan to focus my attention entirely on Alexander. I didn't think that finding a solution to something so important would come so quickly.

-What do you have in mind?- I asked, having no idea what the supposed solution was and if I would agree to it.

-I'll be the one to go to Paris on behalf of LC.- My eyebrows rose in surprise; I never believed he would be capable of leaving his company to go to France. Anyway, it would only be for a year. And then? As if he had read my mind, he finished by saying. -I'm going to move there indefinitely.-

Chapter 60 Half-empty glass.

## Chapter 90 - Divorced Heiress

My gaze couldn't be taken away from Alexander's face, I was waiting for the moment when he would tell me he was joking, but it never came. It was hard to believe that he would be capable of leaving his company behind, his businesses, his family, everything to move to Paris where he would be very close to Tristan.

After a few seconds, I let out a little laugh, assuming that he was just joking and I found it really silly on his part, but even sillier that I almost believed him.

- Who are you trying to fool, Alexander? You're not capable of leaving everything that has always mattered to you and that you've worked so hard for, to move to Paris. - I said calmly, as if what was coming out of my mouth was the whole truth, however, Alexander seemed very serious.

Wasn't it like I was saying it?

It was then that I set aside any hint of amusement, to take this matter very, very seriously and focused on his honey-colored eyes, which were shining more than ever as they stared at me.

- I don't want to deceive anyone. The things that used to matter to me stopped mattering as soon as I met Tristan, my son, my heir, my blood. I want to reclaim our time, to keep him calling me dad and teach him things that only a father can teach, I want to see him grow up, I don't want to be far away from you... from my son again. - One of my eyebrows arched almost automatically when I corrected myself immediately, although I couldn't help but feel guilty.

It was entirely my fault that they hadn't spent the time together they should have and that, after almost four years, they both knew about each other. I was selfish for thinking only of myself and the damage Alexander caused years ago. Guilt ate at me because my little son wasn't to blame for his parents' conflicts.

Finally, I couldn't do anything but accept Alexander's decision and let him make up for lost time as he saw fit. I swallowed the displeasure of having to be close to him again for a year and ended the silence that had fallen in seconds.

- Alright, I hope you won't have any problems in the future. - I said calmly, trying to be as understanding as possible.

The truth was that I was increasingly surprised by his role as a father, I would never have imagined it that way and honestly, I was really happy for Tristan, because Alexander was willing to have the best relationship with him.

- And if I do, it would be worth every second, the only thing that matters to me now is making up for lost time. - Alexander's words surprised me more and more, I looked at him in silence for a few seconds and felt inexplicably uncomfortable under his scrutinizing gaze and the meaning I secretly attributed to his words.

Was I just imagining things? Or did he say that with a double meaning?

Because if he was insinuating something more than the father-son relationship during his stay in Paris, he was daydreaming.

All of this was for Tristan.

- Then, I'll see you in Paris, Mr. Lancaster, if there's nothing else. - I got up from the sofa, after pretending to be polite with Alexander.

Since we had reached an agreement so quickly and without so much fuss, I wasn't going to stay and chat with him as if we were best friends, besides, if it wasn't about Tristan and business, there was nothing else we could talk about; or at least that was what I thought, before he got up from his seat and prevented me from taking a single step away from him, when his long fingers delicately wrapped around my arm exposed by my strap dress.

It irritated me every time Alexander held me like that, stopping any movement on my part, couldn't he just say there was more to talk about?

I freed myself from his grip with a jerk and looked at him completely serious, waiting for him to say what he had to say.

His warm gaze stopped at my face and he opened his mouth to speak, but no words came out, it seemed like the words were stuck in his throat. I raised an eyebrow after a while and only then did he clear his throat and speak.

- Sarah, forgive me. - I was stunned by that simple yet powerful word. Forgive him? What does he mean? - I want to make up for the harm I've caused you in the past. I'm willing to do whatever it takes to earn your forgiveness, please, Sarah... Can we at least get along better, without you looking at me as if I were the most despicable being? Do you hate me that much? - His questions seemed completely ridiculous to me. Wasn't Mr. Lancaster the most despicable being?

Wasn't it enough that he slept with Rachel? For whatever reason, he did it, they made me look like a fool so many times. The worst part was that if I hadn't found out back then, he wouldn't even have had the guts to tell me what was going on and end that supposed blackmail and death threat.

Wasn't it enough that he never realized how his family treated me, as if I weren't Mrs. Lancaster, as if I were a maid? Although I preferred not to make a big fuss about it, was he blind enough not to notice?

Wasn't that enough?

Didn't that make him the most despicable and repugnant man on the planet?

If it weren't for Tristan, I wouldn't have anything to do with that man, or his family, or his environment, or anything related to his last name.

How could I not hate him? He destroyed me almost four years ago, made me regret leaving everything for him. The only good thing that came out of all this was that three-year-old who became the most important person to me, whom I loved with all my being.

-Mr. Lancaster, I have no intention of being good friends, just limit yourself to spending time with Tristan and don't get involved in my affairs. I'm just the mother of your child, don't expect anything more from me, remember that we are happily divorced. The damage has already been

done, an 'I'm sorry' won't fix anything.- I responded calmly and indifferently, as if the topic we were discussing wasn't suffocating enough for me.

Alexander's honey-colored eyes turned sad, as if my words hurt him as much as if thousands of pins were piercing his chest, slow and painful.

I almost laughed without grace at the wonderful act the man in front of me was putting on. When did he become such a good actor?

-Happily divorced? Is that how you feel?- He asked softly after glancing at Alexis, who was still playing absentmindedly with Tristan in his wheelchair.

My lips formed a straight line as my expression became neutral.

-Why talk about the past? Will anything change if we continue discussing such an irrelevant topic? I have said enough, but if it makes you feel better. I am perfectly happy now.- I responded with my best smile, making it clear that I was happily divorced. Alexander couldn't shake off that expression of pain. His expression was miserable, and I felt no guilt whatsoever for it.

-Now, may I leave? Or is there something else?- I asked, intending to prevent him from stopping me in that way that he had become accustomed to and that I detested so much.

-Nothing more.- He barely replied, enough for me to turn around and walk away from him. But he spoke again when I took two steps.

-Although you didn't ask me. Divorcing you hasn't brought me happiness. Happily divorced? I don't know what it's like to be happy since you left. I regret a lot, not giving you the place you deserved as Mrs. Lancaster, not protecting you in a better way without having to go so far, not being honest in many things. I regret not being even half of what you were. An excellent and admirable wife. So, no, I am not happily divorced.-

A bitter taste filled my mouth and an unpleasant feeling ran through my body upon hearing him say those things in front of everyone, and when I said everyone, I was not only referring to Alexis and Tristan. They were joined by my father, Paul, and Vincent, who heard every word coming out of Alexander's mouth, standing at the bottom of the stairs.

I felt my cheeks burning with shame because the last thing I wanted in life was for my family to hear a bunch of lies from my ex-husband and, above all, for him to expose the main reasons that made our marriage a complete failure and the role of submissive fool I played during that time.

I glanced over my shoulder at that lying man and lowered my head to laugh quietly before responding.

-It's a pity you see the glass half empty.- I said with a smile, without even facing him.



Immediately, I resumed my walk towards the kitchen in search of a glass of water, far away from all those men who didn't look away from me, including my own son. There was no doubt that Alexander had no shame whatsoever, what did he intend to achieve by saying all that in front of so many people?

What did he want to achieve by deliberately spitting so many lies?

What game did he plan to play?

The repentant ex-husband? What a nonsense.

If that was the case, I wouldn't mind playing along, in fact, it would be the best therapy to kill the only feelings I had for him.

Hatred and resentment.