

Chapter 91 - Divorced Heiress

The next morning, I woke up with an unbearable headache, one of those that couldn't be eliminated with one aspirin, or two, or three, therefore, I was also in a bad mood, stressed, and anxious to finally return home, to my work, to my comfort zone. I couldn't stand another second in this city.

The flight was leaving in a few hours and I still had to finish packing some things in my suitcase and each time, it became impossible to finish packing without anyone's help, I was going crazy with so many things happening at once, with Tristan by my side, chatting and insisting on seeing his uncle who looked exactly the same as "Ales" again, to play in his wheelchair; checking the response from the Lancaster lawyers, stating that the agreed payment had already been made in the trial and on top of that, Abby suddenly showed up in my room, insisting on talking to me before leaving for Paris.

They were going to drive me crazy, if I was not already.

-Abby, I'm very busy right now, we'll talk later.- I said, trying to maintain the little patience I had left without even looking at her.

It hurt to treat her that way, after all, she had been my best friend since I could remember, but there was something clear and that I should not forget or take lightly.

And that was that, Paul, HER BROTHER, was involved in something that involved me in any way. If the suspicions that surround my head were true, we would be talking about the mastermind behind the attempted murder against me, in which Rachel was involved over three years ago and the main reason for my divorce with Alexander.

We would be talking about the accomplice, sponsor, and/or boss of Rachel.

And we would be talking about how Paul planned all of this to ruin any bond with Alexander because it was very clear that his intention was to separate me from my husband and he succeeded, but he didn't expect that I was expecting a child from him.

I had a slight suspicion that was why he didn't care at all when I told him I was pregnant, and even, he didn't mind taking care of my son, he didn't mind taking on such a big responsibility.

Everything was so calculated that just connecting the dots gave me chills.

Now a question was running through my head.

Why was Paul doing this?

It was difficult for me to believe that he was capable of something like that, but at this point, I didn't even trust my own shadow.

I could expect this from anyone, but Paul Dubois? A man from a good family, of good reputation (except for his former womanizer scandals), my friend since we were kids, shareholder and important piece of Doinel.

What did he gain from all of this?

What was he trying to achieve?

-I won't leave this room until we talk or at least you listen to me. Sari, please. I won't take too much of your time.- I left the garment I was folding inside the suitcase and looked at her in silence, counting to three in my mind so as not to go crazy and making a great effort to prevent the headache from getting worse.

Abby noticed my moodiness and sat slowly on my bed, taking Tristan as if he were the shield that would save her from me and my bad temper.

I took a deep breath and made my biggest effort to remain calm without reaching the extremes of my stress.

-I'm listening, but please, make it brief. I can't wait to leave this place.- I said the last part just for myself, although Abby managed to hear it.

I turned my gaze to the garments that still needed to be packed while listening to whatever Abby was going to tell me, something that couldn't wait.

-Sari, I know you're angry with me for that lie, but I didn't do it with bad intentions. My brother just asked me to tell you that he was somewhere else in case you asked for him, but I didn't think it was so serious and that you would ignore me like you have since that night, if I had known, I swear I wouldn't have lied for my brother.- She moved her eyebrows when she heard her words, although she sounded sincere, I didn't fully believe what she said.

I remained silent, not knowing what to reply, and she continued, -Sarah, I'm serious, just...- She sighed before finishing saying.

-Just tell me what's going on, why it bothers you so much that he trusted me with his little lie. I don't deserve your indifference, you should be mad at him, not me, we are best friends.-After finishing saying that, I put the last garment in the suitcase and finally gave it a look.

If I didn't know her so well, I would think she was lying and colluding with her brother, but I could tell she had no idea what was going on, nor what Paul was involved in. My indifference really affected her, especially because I had never treated her like this before, despite the years.

Abby was not aware of Paul's things. And if she was, she could find a way to tell me something, anything.

- Abby, it's nothing, it's just that the past few days I've been very tense, I have a lot on my mind, Fashion Week, the Lancaster lawsuit, Rachel, the three-way collaboration, Tristan, Alexander. I'm sorry, it has nothing to do with you. - I said, hoping that I wasn't making a bad decision.

After all, she was the only one who deserved the title of best friend, and even though I couldn't afford to believe in anything or anyone, something inside me told me that I could trust her.

- So, do you forgive me for lying to you? - She asked, getting up from the bed with Tristan in her arms. I looked at her hesitantly for a few seconds and finally nodded my head.

- It's okay, I have nothing to forgive you for, after all, if Paul wanted to lie to me, he must have had his reasons. - Abby's lips curled, forming an excited smile.

With Tristan still in her arms, she approached me to give me a hug that I didn't realize I needed.

The past few days had been complicated and stressful.

- Friend, as much as I want to see you with my brother, I won't let our friendship be ruined by him, you're like the sister I never had. - She moved away from me when Tristan complained about being uncomfortable between us and laughed before giving him a kiss on the cheek.

I smiled after hearing her words, because she was also like a sister to me. She would be the only person who wouldn't dare to betray me, I knew her.

Chapter 61 Unrequited love part 2

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Abby helped me finish packing in silence, and although she didn't say a word, I knew there was something she wanted to say for a while, I could tell by the looks she gave me.

- Just say it. - I said when I sat on the bed, relieved that everything was ready, just waiting for the time for the driver to take us to the private airport and finally leave this city.

- God, I can't stand it anymore. - She quickly glanced at Tristan, who was watching a video on the tablet his father gave him, and then fixed her serious gaze on me.

- Okay, I found out that Alexander is going to Paris, not just for the project, but to live there. Sarah, that man is a thorn in your side, I can't believe it, he's shameless. Why did he make that

drastic decision all of a sudden? And as if that wasn't enough, he had the audacity to tell you that he hasn't been happy since you divorced. Come on! He was happy when he was fooling around with that bitch behind your back. Does he think you're a fool? Now that he knows you're Doinel's daughter, he comes back with his tail between his legs and hides behind a facade of being the best father in the world. You have no idea how much I want to grab him by his expensive suit and kick him...-

- Abby! Tristan is here! - I interrupted her before she said any bad words in front of my son, even though he was focused on the video, he could hear her.

It was inevitable for the old wounds to hurt as if salt had been poured on them, by mentioning Alexander's infidelity. I repeated to myself a thousand times that it was a thing of the past and shouldn't matter to me at all, otherwise, I would be admitting that I hadn't completely overcome that cycle.

I cleared my throat and forced myself to bury the memories deep down, where they had been for years and where they should stay forever.

What did Alexander mean to me? He didn't deserve even the slightest thought from me. In addition, I didn't believe a single word from the night before.

He was no longer part of my life, if I had to endure him, it was for the sake of our son.

- I'm sorry, I'm sorry, it's just that he is a... - I gave him a warning look and he swallowed what he had to say. - Oh, I forgot, Tristan can hear my curse words.-

I sighed tiredly, rubbing my temples carefully. The headache was still present and I couldn't bear it, especially after bringing up the topic of my ex-husband.

What torture!

- I don't know what he expects, but whatever he has in mind, I will bring him down from that cloud and make him crash hard into reality. We are already divorced. He shouldn't think that with a few words in front of my father and cousin he will move me. I can forgive him, but I will never forget. - I replied with a bitter taste in my mouth, remembering the kiss Alexander gave me that night. I wasn't going to talk about him anymore. - Shall we go down? - I changed the subject as I got up from my seat, and Abby remained silent for a moment before speaking with a cheerful smile on her face.

- That's my friend, that man is daydreaming if he thinks he has a chance with you just because Tristan is in the middle. - I silently laughed at her unexpected reaction and wiped any expression from my face when an idea, or rather a test for my friend, crossed my mind.

- Abby, do you know the lawyer Richman? - I asked as if it were a casual topic, and she looked confused before nodding with a furrowed brow, as if she had no clue why I mentioned that man.
- He is the family lawyer along with his wife Mrs. Richman, they have been taking care of the

legal matters of the Dubois family for six years. Why do you ask? Has something happened? Don't tell me that Paul wanted them to take care of your case. My brother is always so attentive to you. Love, love. - She said the latter with a smile of teenage excitement, and I gave her an indifferent look.

With that response, I was certain that Abby was not involved in Paul's plans in the slightest. She had no idea about Paul's "kindness" gesture towards Rachel, and again, I felt bad for jumping to conclusions before talking to her.

If there was anyone who was transparent, sincere, and loyal, it was Abby. Perhaps, knowing this, Paul didn't involve her in his dirty acts, as she wouldn't agree to be part of a plan that would harm others.

If she knew what her brother was plotting, she would surely crumble, because for her, Paul was the most correct, serious, and clean man, almost like an exemplary figure. For her, he was the man I should be with, but she was unaware of what was behind that appearance, and I wouldn't be the one to let her know.

- Yes, he offered me his services, but you know, I already had my team of lawyers ready to win the case. - I played along so she wouldn't suspect anything, and she smiled genuinely again, expressing how much she would like me to accept her brother, but my answer was still a no, now more than ever.

Abby didn't say anything else, as she knew I would get angry if she kept insisting on the topic. She stood up when she heard Vincent's voice on the other side of the door, telling us that we should leave for the airport.

Abby's stance became rigid, and her bright eyes looked at the door as if she could see through it.

- Why does unrequited love exist? - She said with a hint of disappointment before grabbing two suitcases and leaving through the door, letting out a deep tired sigh.

I held back the laughter that was about to escape from my lips due to the dramatic scene I just witnessed. Without further ado, I took Tristan with one hand and dragged the remaining suitcase with the other, following the path that a disillusioned woman had taken. Goodbye mansion.

Chapter 62 I am no longer his wife.

Chapter 93 - Divorced Heiress

The driver stopped at the private airport where my father's private jet was waiting, ready to take us back to Paris, my home.

Abby, Maga, Tristan, and I were the last to arrive, as my friend wanted to take the longest route to take one last look at the streets of New York, as it was uncertain when she would visit the city again, since we would be extremely busy with the collaboration project upon our return.

Maga, who was in the passenger seat, was the first to get out of the van and took Tristan's things before walking away. Abby and I took longer to get out, as my friend was touching up her makeup and asked me to wait for her, while she kept talking incessantly about how cold and indifferent Vincent was to her since she dared to kiss him. He didn't speak to her again, unless it was for relevant matters, which amounted to a couple of occasions when he asked her about some company documents.

-Tell me, you're his cousin, you know him better, why does he reject me? Don't I appeal to him? Am I too horrible for him? Tell me, Tony, am I horrible?- Abby asked the driver directly about her appearance, and the middle-aged man looked at her through the rearview mirror, hiding a amused smile, and shook his head.

-Of course not, Miss Dubois, you are very beautiful, anyone would have their eyes on you.- Tony gave Abby words of encouragement, but that wasn't enough for her, her bad expression continued to overshadow her usual cheerful face.

-Anyone except the ogre Lefevbre. Anyway, thank you for your honesty, Tony, I hope to see you again in the future.- Abby said goodbye to the driver and got out of the car after regaining her usual smile.

As for me, I said goodbye and thanked him for his services, I got out alongside Tristan and walked, holding his little hand so that he would walk with me.

I didn't see anyone else but Paul and Vincent outside the jet, so I assumed the rest were already in their seats.

Both men had stern faces and apparently did not exchange words, the atmosphere was so tense and I knew it was because Vincent was trying to confront Paul, but I couldn't do anything, it was best to stay quiet and avoid the slightest communication with him.

Abby arrived first to them and after greeting Paul and blatantly ignoring Vincent, she boarded the plane as if she were a celebrity. I swallowed the laughter that was about to come out, as well as the anger I was feeling in this moment throughout my body, having Paul a few meters away as if he hadn't done something so cruel and perverse.

Still, I didn't show that I knew more than he thought and greeted him after he smiled at Tristan before taking him in his arms.

-I'm sorry for the delay, is anyone missing?- I asked Vincent, who approached me protectively after greeting Paul.

-It was just the two of you missing, in fact, they're already inside...- Paul replied for Vincent, and I interrupted him before he could continue speaking, feeling annoyed just by listening to him.

-What are we waiting for? Let's go in.- I took Tristan's small body to remove him from Paul's arms, it was not comfortable for me for him to hold him, not even for a minute, much less for him to enter the plane with him. However, Tristan refused to come back with me and clung to Paul's neck with his little arms.

-Mom, I'm going with Papaul.- My son's childlike voice left me frozen, I no longer found it cute or anything resembling that for him to call him that.

Before I could refuse, Vincent extended his hand, pointing to the entrance of the plane to Paul.

-Go ahead, go ahead.- I looked at Vincent in disbelief and he winked at me as if to keep calm, which seemed impossible, but Paul went up to the jet so quickly that I didn't have time to refuse.

-What are you doing? Have you forgotten who my son is with? - I said to him, a mixture of annoyance and concern. Vincent appeared so unperturbed, even a half-smile adorned his face.

- First, Paul will not have a chance to harm Tristan on the Jet, and second, I want to see with my own eyes how much fatherhood influences and if he is worthy of being in the same Jet as us.-

After saying that, I couldn't be more confused than at that moment. I didn't understand what he meant by fatherhood. Did he think I was going to let Paul play the role of a father? He'd gone crazy. Never.

-Get on, we're late.- Vincent made me move forward, without giving me a chance to speak or ask questions.

-You've completely lost it, he is not the father of my child, how do you think fatherhood that doesn't exist and will never exist will influence him? Not even in his dreams. I won't let my son stay in his arms for another second and...- I didn't stop complaining for a second as I got on the Jet, but my words were left hanging in the air, unable to believe what my eyes were seeing.

- Suddenly, Vincent's words made sense to me and I understood why he allowed Paul to take my son as if it weren't a problem, as if we didn't have enough suspicions about him. My body froze and I felt my legs weaken when I saw a pair of honey-colored eyes looking at Paul with disdain and anger. I glanced at my cousin over my shoulder, wanting to know if he was seeing the same thing as me or if the persistent headache was making me hallucinate, but his smile and satisfied look made me understand that no, it wasn't a hallucination.

-Who are you to tell me what to do with Tristan? - Paul asked halfway, where he had stopped thanks to the robust, expensively dressed man blocking his path.

-I don't think we've been properly introduced. I am Tristan's father, now let him go.- His cold voice gave me a shiver that ran through my body from head to toe. Anyone could feel truly

intimidated, as if it were a death sentence, yet Paul remained impassive, as if he didn't care at all that Alexander was standing in front of him, showing his overprotective fatherly side, and regardless of the fact that everyone was standing watching the scene without knowing what to say or do.

Chapter 62 I am no longer his wife part 2

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- What was Alexander Lancaster doing here?

-Daddy, this is Papa Ale.- Tristan's tender voice was the only thing that slightly diminished the tense atmosphere that had formed. Tristan was the only one who didn't realize the confrontation between both men and was even less aware of how poorly Alexander took the way he called Paul, although it was the way Tristan had gotten used to calling him since he started speaking.

Before the dispute continued, I approached Paul from behind and after tapping his shoulder, I gestured for him to give me my son. The last thing I wanted was for him to witness such an embarrassing scene in which he was involved.

-Paul, there's no need to bother taking Tristan.- I said quietly when I had him in my arms, and Paul hid his surprise at my words before giving Alexander a hateful look.

-Okay, Sari. I don't want to cause any problems. I'll be in my seat if you need anything.- Paul spoke as if he hadn't intentionally taken Tristan a moment ago to board the Jet and provoke Alexander, that was his intention, I knew it when I saw such a confrontation.

I didn't respond to his words, but he still placed a kiss on my head and sat in the front seats, away from everyone, leaving a tense atmosphere. I turned my gaze to Alexander, who was now in front of me. His expression was unreadable, his honey eyes had a certain gleam, but I could tell he was still upset at seeing Paul with our son. Behind him were my parents, Abby, Jack, Maga, even Cristina, Alexander's assistant, and Julian Ferrer, who I only just noticed was surprisingly present on the Jet. Alexander opened his mouth to speak, but I cut off anything he was about to say.

— Mr. Lancaster, what are you doing here? — I asked with indifference and let go of Tristan when he lunged his small body towards Alexander and he welcomed him with pleasure, before reciprocating his son's warm embrace.

That scene managed to move me, but I hid it behind my expressionless face.

— Good morning, Sarah. I'm sorry for what happened...

— Daughter, I have asked both brand representatives to come with us, they are our guests. —
My father took a step forward, interrupting Alexander's words.

I raised an eyebrow, as I was not aware of the situation, Vincent didn't even tell me, although he referred to it a few minutes ago and I suspected it was what Paul wanted to tell me when I arrived but I didn't want to hear it for a second longer.

I looked at Julian, who was standing expressionless, and I felt embarrassed because he witnessed a scene that I could have prevented if I had been informed about it.

— Good morning, Mr. Ferrer, I apologize for what happened, I hope you feel comfortable. — I greeted the well-dressed man, ignoring Alexander only a little, and he gave me a smile without showing his teeth.

— Good morning, Ms. Doinel. You can be at ease, I feel very comfortable. — I didn't know if he said it sarcastically or if he meant it, as he always had the same expression, you couldn't tell if he was angry or the opposite.

— Well, please take a seat, we have already delayed enough. — I said so that everyone would return to their seats and stop looking at us as if they were expecting something else to happen.

I turned to Vincent and asked him to stay with Tristan for a moment, he accepted and took him away from Alexander's arms with an almost nonexistent smile, then he sat next to Maga.

Alexander was still standing, not moving an inch, and I gestured with my head for him to follow me away from everyone, where no one could overhear us.

When I stopped, I turned on my heels and looked at him with an unfriendly face.

— I hope that now you can tell me in your own words, what are you doing here, Mr. Lancaster.
— I asked him the question in a low voice, without waiting for him to finish approaching.

— Mr. Doinel has already said it, he invited us last minute to come together to Paris, he's excited to show us the facilities and give us the first details of the project. If it wasn't that way, do you think I would come without an invitation, just like Mr. Ferrer? — He explained calmly, with a tone friendlier than the one he used with Paul.

I couldn't help but feel irritated with my father for doing such a thing without informing me first, he was being very generous with my ex-husband, and I knew that Julian's invitation was just to be prepared for the moment I asked about Alexander's presence.

There was something else they didn't want to tell me.

— What have you been talking about with my father? Because he's not the kind of person who can back down, especially with you.— I replied annoyed but calm. — Couldn't you take a separate flight and meet my father there? Wasn't it true that you were going to move to Paris?—

Alexander smiled when he heard my questions and looked towards the seats before looking at me as if he found it amusing. — Are you mocking me, Mr. Lancaster?—

— Why are you so upset? Can't you stand my presence for a few hours? What makes you think I won't keep my word? Just so you know, once I'm in Paris, I won't come back to New York unless there is an emergency that requires my presence. I don't know if you've forgotten something you liked so much about me, Sarah. What I say or propose, I fulfill it. —

My body tensed at hearing that, and when I wanted to deny it, he continued. — I'm not mocking you, it's just that... — He paused briefly and the corners of his lips lifted slightly, as he took a step forward and brushed his long fingers against my hand. — This situation feels so familiar to me. You still look so beautiful when you get mad and try to hide it, but your flushed cheeks give you away, just like when you were my wife...—His hand went up to touch my right cheek, but I quickly moved away causing his words to hang in the air.

I felt my blood boiling in my system, and it was nothing but anger for what he was attempting.

Before ending the conversation and leaving his side to go to my seat, I looked at him without a hint of grace.

— Don't continue, Mr. Lancaster. I am no longer your wife.—

Chapter 63 Direct indirects.

Chapter 95 - Divorced Heiress

During the flight, I sat next to Vincent, a sleeping Abby, and Tristan, who was looking out the window, without moving from my seat.

In an attempt to calm my nerves about the uncomfortable situation I had with Alexander before takeoff, I checked social media, stumbling upon a trending topic that had been circulating for days.

“The return of Sarah Doinel has made a mark.”

“Sarah Doinel took justice into her own hands with a million-dollar lawsuit against the ladies of the Lancaster family for defamation.”

“Revenge? Rachel Duncan has been sentenced for attempted murder against the Doinel heiress.”

I read the headlines that caught my attention the most and couldn't help but smile. Returning to New York wasn't so bad after all. I wouldn't have given what those vipers deserved, and I wouldn't have discovered what was behind my divorce.

I read a few comments in which they despised my ex-mother-in-law and ex-sister-in-law, but mostly Rachel. The lawsuit had caused a great impact, and her reputation was in the gutter. They would think twice before attacking me again.

I sent a message to Jack, who was sitting next to Maga and a quiet Paul. I didn't want anyone else but him to know what I was going to ask.

-Please, contact my lawyers and let them handle Rachel Duncan's case. No matter what they have to do, I need her to say everything she knows.-

Jack shifted in his seat, giving me a quick glance before answering, -Count on it.-

I took a quick look at the seats occupied by my parents and the pair of guests, each with their assistants. Then, my gaze met those honey-colored eyes that seemed to never be able to look away from me.

My father noticed me observing them and gave me a smile before calling me to approach them. I used Tristan as an excuse to reject his request, but my mother asked me to go with him.

-Do you want me to accompany you so you don't feel uncomfortable?- Vincent asked, realizing that I didn't feel like going back to the seats behind us.

-Don't worry, I won't be long. Nothing out of the ordinary will happen.- I said before taking Tristan's hand and making my way to my parents.

My father made room for me next to him, and I sat with Tristan on my lap, but it didn't last more than ten seconds before he jumped into Alexander's arms, who was in front of me.

-Daughter, we wanted to discuss a project matter with you.- My father spoke immediately, and I focused on paying all my attention to the topic. -We will have a press conference upon arrival, and I trust that you will do a good job. On the other hand, I was discussing with Mr. Ferrer and Mr. Lancaster about the first launch. The three of them will work together to make decisions regarding designs, fabric samples, test models, and runway models. Everything must be impeccable.-

I couldn't help but feel a little annoyed because my team and I would be in charge of that matter, and now I had to share the work with both collaborators.

I didn't want to show my discomfort. After all, the three brands will be working together, and it was fair that all three be fully involved in the decision-making process. It wasn't just a Doinel launch. Innova and LC were also participating.

-Of course, you can rest assured, Father. The launch will be successful. I hope we make a good team, Mr. Ferrer, Mr. Lancaster.- I said, looking at both men in front of me.

-Please, Ms. Doinel, just call me by my name. We will be working together for a year. We can have a little trust.- Julian said kindly, taking a sip of his wine.

Everyone fell silent and looked at Julian, my parents with a kind smile, and Alexander as if he had said something wrong.

-Alright, Julian, you can also call me by my first name.- I replied in the same way, and before Julian could say a word, Alexander cleared his throat and said,—Sarah, I think our son is hungry, will you join me in giving him something to eat? —I looked at Alexander and chuckled quietly as I saw Tristan so calmly playing with his father's long fingers.

It seemed childish of him to use such an excuse for his obvious discomfort.

—Mr. Lancaster, I already fed my son, I'm sure he's not hungry. Tristan has his feeding schedule. —I replied, amused by the situation, and he looked at me with narrowed eyes.

—Relax, Mr. Lancaster, no one is born knowing how to be a parent. —I looked disdainfully at my father, as I had noticed for a while now that he'd been very friendly with Alexander. — Parenthood is a wonderful stage; you want to be with your child all day, take care of him, see how quickly he grows and everything he learns, you want to keep him in a crystal bubble so that nothing happens to him, you want to protect him with your life, even though sometimes it's inevitable that he will get hurt. —My father spoke, staring at Alexander intently, and I could feel that it was a very direct indirect reference to my ex-husband. Alexander had a slight smile on his face, and it didn't fade even with the last words from my father that were directed especially at him. —But you will always be there to mend his broken wings, his broken dreams, and pick up every piece of his heart when it shatters.—

Everyone fell silent for a long time, my mother discreetly squeezed my father's arm, but he didn't flinch. Julian continued to sip his drink as if he wanted to disappear from the uncomfortable situation, and Alexander's smile diminished slightly as he looked from my father's face to mine. I was not sure if it was my imagination, but I could sense sadness and regret in his eyes.

I wrinkled my nose and averted my gaze to my father, who now had such a serious expression that it could scare anyone.

I didn't think it was the moment to talk about that; it was a thing of the past, there was no point in bringing it up, especially in front of others. Weren't they supposed to get along wonderfully?

—Dad, I think we're getting off track from the reason you called me; you can give your wise fatherhood advice in private. —I said to ease the tension that had been created.

However, Alexander didn't seem willing to let the subject go.

—Thank you, Mr. Doinel, your advice will be very helpful to me. I want to add that I will teach him something I have learned over the years, which is that we are all human and, like everyone else, we make mistakes. I will teach him to forgive and give second chances to those who deserve it. —I looked at him in astonishment, feeling the blood rushing to my cheeks.

This man was shameless, how dare he say that so deliberately?

What did he mean by this?

His gaze remained fixed on me, as if there was no one else at the table. I spoke up before anyone else could talk.

—To those who truly deserve it. —I said expressionless, holding his nostalgic gaze, and just then, the pilot announced that we were about to land. —I'll go back to my seat. Father, we'll continue the discussion in the board meeting.

My father nodded his head, and from his expression, I knew he was ashamed of starting the uncomfortable conversation full of indirect references.

I took Tristan, who refused to separate from his father, but Alexander whispered a few words to him, and he enthusiastically nodded before getting off his lap and walking hand in hand with me.

As I sat in my seat and fastened my seatbelt, Vincent looked at me concerned before asking.

—Did things go that badly?

I looked at Abby, who was waking up from her long sleep and lazily fastening her seatbelt.

—Oh, you have no idea. —I replied softly, and Vincent let out a laugh, teasing me.

—Oh, little princess, things don't always go as planned. I just hope the storm calms down a bit; it'll be a very long year for you. —He placed his hand on mine, giving it a comforting squeeze, but his words had the opposite effect.

- Thank you for reminding me, musketeer.

Chapter 64 The most beautiful woman.

Chapter 96 - Divorced Heiress

Upon landing in Paris, the first thing I did was practically drag Vincent along with Tristan and Maga, and we got into the Rolls Royce that was waiting for our arrival at the private airport,

heading straight to Villa Doinel. I didn't even wait for my parents and the others to get off the jet, I didn't want to have another encounter or, even worse, an uncomfortable conversation, at least for the next few hours with Alexander Lancaster.

Anyway, I had to get myself ready and prepare absolutely everything for the press conference that would take place in a few hours, I didn't even have time to rest for a few minutes, my father had everything planned out and failing him was not an option.

-Princess, take things easy or otherwise you won't be able to last even six months with the collaboration. If you feel too uncomfortable being close to Alexander, just let me know and I'll take care of your work. Don't stress yourself out.- I let out a long sigh, thinking about Vincent's words.

I knew he was right, I was treating this as if it were a nightmare for me, but it was all because of Alexander's attitude. It annoyed me to no end, I couldn't stand him trying to be so close to me and even worse, talking to me as if there was still some possibility between us. If I still tolerated him being close, it was because of our son and nothing else.

After all, it was a year of collaboration, in which the participating companies would benefit from the success of the three-way collaboration.

-Musketeer, don't worry, I will take things more calmly, yes, I will do it for the sake of work, because I am a professional and I will not mix personal matters with the company.- I squeezed Vincent's hand that was resting on his lap and he looked at me with a half-smile, as if he didn't believe my words but also wouldn't question me. -Let it go, Vin. Changing the subject, have you heard any news?- I asked, referring to the investigation he was going to take care of regarding Paul.

Vincent understood right away, as he glanced at Maga, who looked carefree out the window from the passenger seat, oblivious to our conversation. I wasn't worried about my Nana, because even if she accidentally overheard any conversation, she didn't interfere in other people's affairs.

Maga could keep a secret to the grave.

-The initial results of the investigation will be available tonight, so there's nothing more to do than wait. I'll take care of the matter, you just focus on upholding the Doinel name at the press conference.- He responded, almost speaking in code as if he didn't trust even the chauffeur who probably couldn't hear us from his seat.

-I managed to gather some information about the lawyers, and to be honest, it gives a lot to think about. I would like to share it with you as soon as we get home.- Vincent looked surprised by what I had just said and returned his gaze to the front before ordering the driver, -Please, a little faster.-

The driver obeyed his order and increased the speed, but not enough to put our lives at risk in a car accident.

We arrived at the Villa earlier than expected. Taking advantage that no one else had arrived yet, we locked ourselves in my father's office after putting Tristan in his room, as he had fallen deeply asleep in the car. It was then when I told my father everything that Abby had told me about the lawyers. He was greatly surprised, and before he could draw his own conclusions and suspicions about Abby, I clarified that she didn't seem to be aware of Paul's affairs, otherwise she wouldn't have given me such detailed information about the Dubois family lawyers.

-Sarah, Abby may be your best friend, but we can't trust her, she's still a Dubois. Do you understand what she was trying to tell you? It's likely that Paul's parents are also involved in the matter. There's something very shady behind all this, and I'm going to find out no matter what. I don't think Mr. and Mrs. Dubois are unaware of what their son planned years ago. They're using their lawyers to save Rachel's skin, and that makes them as suspicious as Abby. With what you just told me, I can deduce that the Dubois family is planning something against the Doinel family. Rachel is probably just a puppet who was influenced by money and her attraction to your ex-husband.-

The hair on the back of my neck stood up at the thought that my family's lifelong best friends could be involved in that death threat. Vincent's hypothesis might be a little crazy, but if I thought about it a little better, it made sense to me. Anyway, at this point, I trusted no one but my family.

-And if that's the case, why would they do something against us? After all, they have been my parents' best friends for years, I can't find any reason for them to have the cold-bloodedness to be involved in something so murky.- I remained silent for a few seconds and then I looked at Vincent, who was looking at me with a furrowed brow as if he was still thinking about the reason why they would do such a thing, but I had already found the answer. -The company.-

Chapter 64 The most beautiful woman part 2

Chapter 97 - Divorced Heiress

His furrowed brow was replaced by an expression of astonishment. It was the only reason I could think of for them to go so far. The company, power, money. Although they were partners of Doinel, they did not have enough power to make decisions about the company. On several occasions, there were differences between the two families because the Dubois did not agree with some decisions my father made. Anyway, if Leonardo Doinel's strategies were not carried out, the company would not be where it is now.

Before Vincent could give his point of view on the matter, we heard the voice of my parents, who had just arrived.

-That makes a lot of sense. But for now, we have to leave the topic here, your parents cannot find out anything of what we've talked about until I discover the truth. I don't want them to confront them before having evidence and take retaliatory measures. At least we have a huge clue, I will inform the investigator tonight.-

I nodded my head and got up from the seat, finishing the small meeting, to leave my father's office as if I hadn't had that conversation with Vincent a few minutes ago.

After greeting my parents, who looked tired but happy, I went straight to my room to get ready for the press conference where I would be in charge.

I didn't think it was necessary to dress up too much or call the stylists, I also didn't have enough time for something more elaborate. After taking a shower that relaxed all my muscles, I put on a black dress with thin straps. The skirt, which reached my knees, was adorned with diamonds that faded as they reached the waist. It had a slight back neckline, so I left my hair loose on one side, resting on my right shoulder. I applied very subtle makeup, nothing exaggerated, highlighting each of my features.

When I was completely ready, I went down to the living room and found Vincent wearing a gray suit and an impeccable white shirt without a wrinkle. He was going to be my companion tonight, as I had asked him when we got off the plane and he couldn't refuse.

When he saw me, he covered the smile that appeared on his face with his hand and looked me up and down as if he had never seen me so well dressed. He extended his hand and when I took it, he made me turn around to release his flattering words.

-Are you going to the press conference or to a beauty pageant? If it's the latter, I'm sure you're going to overshadow them all and of course, you're going to win without a doubt, just look at you.-

I let out a amused laugh at Vincent's remarks and lightly hit his shoulder.

-Don't exaggerate.- I responded, making sure my bag had the essentials.

The truth is, I didn't feel like I had made an effort to get ready, but it seemed that less was more.

-I'm just telling the truth.- He shrugged and changed the subject. -Your parents will be a bit late, they told me to go ahead.-

After being informed about that, I went to Tristan's room, who was still sleeping. I said goodbye to him and gave instructions to Maga for his care.

The Rolls Royce was waiting for us. I hooked my arm with Vincent's and with his help, I got into the back seat. After a few minutes, we arrived at the venue where the press conference would take place. The car parked right on the red carpet, where several journalists were waiting for the arrival of public figures or event organizers.

Vincent was the first to exit the Rolls-Royce, he opened my door and extended his hand to help me out of the car like a true gentleman, leaving no doubt that he would be my companion for the evening.

As soon as my heel touched the ground and the flashes appeared, I hooked onto Vin's arm and posed for some photos on the red carpet. As we moved inside the salon, I ran into Julian with his assistant as his companion, and also Alexander with Cristina hooked on his arm. Both men's gaze lingered on me longer than they should have.

-Good evening, I apologize for keeping you waiting. If you're ready, we can start the press conference.- I said, ignoring everyone's gaze.

-Sarah, you look amazing tonight, any wait was worth it. For my part, we can start whenever you decide.- Julian Ferrer was the first to speak politely and I nodded my head while a nearly nonexistent smile appeared on my face.

I noticed Alexander tense up at Mr. Ferrer's words, he waited for Julian to make his way to the table prepared for us and left Cristina in her place to come closer to me and say.

-Ms. Doinel, allow me to accompany you to the table.- He offered his arm and I looked at him disdainfully before looking at Vincent, who looked as serious as he always did in public.

I wanted to refuse his request, but the flashes captured any movement between us. I apologized to Vincent, and he knew that I would go with Alexander to not damage the image in front of others. After all, I had to go to the table alone and leave my companion with the rest of the audience.

-Thank you.- I said when I passed my hand over his arm, which received me warmly. I swallowed hard and walked, holding my breath, as I could smell his cologne with even greater intensity, and to be honest, that smell that I once adored now disgusted me.

We walked side by side, as the cameras captured the image of both of us for eternity. I just hoped they didn't take the images out of context.

Just a few steps away from reaching our destination, I heard Alexander's soft but hoarse voice.

-You're beautiful, and I don't say that just because of tonight, you look radiant. I say it because you're the most beautiful woman my eyes have ever seen.-

My back tensed at his words, and I was grateful that we had already reached the table where Julian was waiting. I found it uncomfortable that the shameless man dared to say that at this point. Did he not plan to give up? Without saying a word, I released his arm, which suddenly burned me, and reached my seat at the table. Unfortunately, I ended up in the middle of the two men.

When Alexander sat down, he whispered discreetly, -I'm just stating the truth, ex-wife.-

I cleared my throat, pretending I hadn't heard. I was playing with what little patience I had left, but I couldn't do or say anything in public. It would only make us the talk of the town once again.

The only thing I did was let out a silent sigh and show my best smile to the public and journalists.

-We begin the press conference.- I announced.

Chapter 65 Shut me up.

Chapter 98 - Divorced Heiress

The press conference started off well, we explained the vision and strategies of the collaboration project, as well as the release dates for each season's collection. The journalists started asking questions and we provided direct and satisfactory answers, especially Julian, who seemed to be in his element and handled the interview with ease.

As I glanced at the audience, I saw my parents, Vincent, Jack, and the Dubois family. It made me a little uncomfortable, remembering my conversation with Vincent about my best friend's family. However, I continued answering the journalists' questions.

Suddenly, the direction of the questions changed drastically, deviating from the main topic and making me even more uncomfortable.

-Mr. Lancaster, your family has been sued by your ex-wife for defamation, can this affect the collaboration in any way? What is your opinion on this? - One of the journalists asked. My body tensed and my neck automatically straightened upon hearing the question.

This question was directed towards Alexander, so I couldn't intervene without being rude. Alexander seemed calm as he heard the question and briefly glanced at me before turning his attention back to the journalist and answering serenely. It was as if she had asked any other question, not such an uncomfortable and out-of-place one.

-Thank you for your question. Family matters have nothing to do with our work. I am sure this will not affect the collaboration in any way. If you ask for my opinion, I will simply say that every action has its consequences, and I will always stand on the side of what is right. In this case, those who have been sued have gotten what they deserve, and I hope they have learned their lesson.- Alexander responded, serious and composed, as if it were just one of the questions about the collaboration.

I have to admit, his answer surprised me. After all, we were talking about his mother and his spoilt sister, disregarding the seriousness of Rachel's case. With this, he made it clear that he agreed with my decision to sue them, regardless of their familial ties.

Some journalists started whispering to each other after receiving Alexander's clear and concise response, without any hesitation. Although I was confused by the situation, I remained serious, waiting for the next questions regarding the collaboration. However, the inappropriate questions continued.

-Mr. Lancaster, it seems like you have a good relationship with your ex-wife, but hasn't this situation affected your company's actions?- Once again, I felt compelled to remain silent and wait for Alexander to respond.

I intertwined my fingers on the table, trying to contain this strange feeling in my chest that made me feel like a villain trying to discredit the Lancaster company. All I could do was wait for the man by my side to answer.

-The lawsuit has had a certain negative impact on the company, but it is nothing that cannot be resolved. Lancaster Collection remains one of the most solid fashion companies.- He said. Upon hearing that, I felt a twinge of guilt in my chest, realizing that I was responsible for that negative impact on his company, of which I had just become aware.

After all, I put myself in his shoes. Being one of the heads of an important company, it would be frustrating to suffer losses due to a celebrity scandal.

-This question is for Ms. Doinel. After more than three years since the scandal of your divorce with Mr. Lancaster, you find yourselves working together again, not to mention that you have been introduced as Leonardo Doinel's daughter, whom nobody knew about. Do you think that your shared past could affect the collaboration project in the future?- A journalist asked, and my head started to ache. This was spiraling out of control, and I couldn't think of a way to end it without sounding impolite.

Alexander leaned in close to me, close enough to whisper without anyone else hearing. —You are not obligated to answer this question if it is too uncomfortable for you.—

I shifted in my seat and Alexander regained his composure. Although it was a very uncomfortable question, I could answer it just like I had answered the previous ones. I lowered my hands to my thighs before speaking.

—As Mr. Lancaster already mentioned, our personal lives will not have any influence on the collaboration project. We are purely a professional team, and our primary focus is to successfully launch the collaborative collections.— I replied firmly, hoping they wouldn't ask more questions related to our divorce.

They were disregarding Julian, who was also a key player in the press conference. Did they want to create headlines with our names again?

After finishing my response, I felt Alexander's warm hand grip mine under the table, making me even more uncomfortable, if that were possible. I discreetly broke free with obvious annoyance and placed my hands back on the table, intertwining my fingers, trying to distance myself from any contact with that man.

Just when I thought the uncomfortable questions wouldn't come up again, the journalist who started with the uncomfortable questions asked on behalf of both of us.

—Taking into account that you are both divorced, have you considered getting married again in the future?— Her question hit me like a bucket of cold water, and my eyes widened before giving a direct response.

—No.—

—Yes.— Alexander responded at the same time. I didn't even look at him, but I could feel his gaze on me.

—If there are no more questions related to the collaboration, we can conclude the press conference. If you want to know about my personal life, we can save it for a private interview.— I hurriedly added before they could ask another senseless question. Obviously, I wouldn't give any of them the opportunity to interview me about my life, especially if they were going to ask about my failed marriage.

Apparently, the journalists had run out of questions, so I ended the press conference. After saying goodbye and thanking the journalists, I stood up from my chair. To my surprise, Julian chivalrously moved it aside to make it easier for me to stand up. I gave him a grateful smile, and when I least expected it, he offered his arm for me to hold, just as Alexander had done before accompanying me to the table.

—Thank you very much, Julian.— I hooked my arm with his, and when I raised my gaze, I met Alexander's furrowed brow, staring at Julian as if he wanted him to disappear. I ignored him completely and walked past him alongside Julian until I reached my parents and Vincent, who were waiting with smiles, ready to leave the room and go to the Villa to celebrate the success of the press conference. Although their faces showed concern about the uncomfortable questions.

Before I could greet them, the Dubois arrived. Abby was the first to approach and hugged me, which managed to break Julian's hold. On the other hand, Paul waited for Abby to let go before enveloping me in his arms as if we hadn't seen each other in years.

—You handled it very well.— Paul said before letting go. I looked at him expressionlessly, and just as I was about to respond unenthusiastically, my father spoke, and Vincent came to my side, placing his hand protectively on my waist as if he didn't want me near Paul and his bad intentions.

—Daughter, you were brilliant, everyone was. It's time to return to the Villa. I have prepared the best bottle of Champagne to toast the beginning of this project.— My father took my mother by

the waist and walked towards the exit, expecting everyone to follow suit and go their separate ways.

Before walking alongside Vincent, Alexander joined me when most of them had already left with my parents.

—Mr. Lefevbre, would you mind if I go to the Villa with Sarah?— I looked at Alexander, who still had a slight furrowed brow, seemingly annoyed with the world. Vincent looked at me questioningly, waiting for me to make the decision of whether to accept such a thing or go back with him, however, I gave Vincent a warm smile and let go of his arm.

Whatever Alexander had in mind, I wasn't going to like it, considering that in the past few days he had been behaving in a way that puzzled me, I was going to take the opportunity to bring him back down to earth once and for all.

Chapter 65 Shut me up part 2

Chapter 99 - Divorced Heiress

-Vin, you can go with Jack, I'll be there soon.- I said, looking at him with distrust, but he ended up nodding before giving me a kiss on the cheek, and I knew it was an excuse to whisper in my ear.

-I agree because I know you can take care of yourself, but if you need me, it won't be difficult to call my number.- He winked at me as he pulled away, and I nodded in response. -See you in a while, princess, we have some unfinished business, don't forget.- He said before walking away where everyone had gone, and I knew he was referring to the visit from the private investigator.

Without giving me time to react, Alexander placed his warm hand on my waist as Vincent had done before, and I took a step back before removing his hand from my body and simply taking his arm as the only contact I could stand from him.

-Mr. Lancaster, I haven't given you that much trust.- I said without looking at him before walking towards the exit. I heard a slight laugh from him and held back rolling my eyes at this moment when the journalists were capturing every move with photographs.

-I apologize, Ms. Doinel, it wasn't my intention to abuse your trust.- His playful and dramatic tone made me laugh so much that I had to suppress it.

When we reached his Range Rover, he helped me get in by taking my hand. I let out the breath I had been unconsciously holding seconds before he got in beside me.

The driver started the car, and I stayed silent throughout the journey as I looked through the polarized window, hoping that Alexander would say something out of the ordinary to put him in his place immediately. Although we were immersed in a grave silence, the atmosphere was less tense, at least for me.

Just when I thought he wouldn't say a single word, I heard his voice ruining the harmonious moment.

-Sarah, you must stay away from Paul.- He said coldly, and I silently looked at him for a few seconds.

I didn't understand why he mentioned Paul, because even though he continued to try to get close to me, ever since I overheard that conversation, I had kept myself away and alert. Him saying it in that way made me discard the idea that this was a scene of jealousy. After pondering it for a moment, I realized that Alexander knew more than I did about Paul.

But who was he to tell me how to handle the matter?

-Are you telling me what I should do?- I asked playfully, and Alexander slightly shook his head.

-I have never told you what you should do, you are free to do anything, I have my reasons for telling you that he is not the person you think... Sarah, can you stop being so distant?- I swallowed the laughter that wanted to escape while I looked away to the window, the moment he changed the subject dramatically, looking frustrated by the way I was speaking to him.

-So, Paul is not the person I believe he is, what do you mean by that?- I looked at him with a serious expression when I addressed him formally again and raised an eyebrow before correcting myself. -Sorry, what do you mean?-

-For now, I can't give you more details, but you'll be the first to know when everything is in order.- With that, he confirmed that he knew something I didn't or maybe he knew the same thing I did and was using his contacts to get to the truth of it all.

-Of course, Mr. Lancaster must have everything under control.- My sarcastic tone came out without me being able to prevent it, and his honey-colored eyes locked onto mine for longer than they should have. Suddenly, I felt the atmosphere becoming suffocating. I couldn't see his intention to speak, in fact, it seemed like he wouldn't stop observing me until his eyes got tired. I cleared my throat and shifted in my seat.

-Why are you doing this?- Silence reigned for a moment, a gleam appeared in his eyes that puzzled me, and I regretted asking that question.

Alexander settled into his seat and spoke softly, close to my face, as if he didn't want the driver to hear.

-I want to protect you and our son as I should have done from the beginning. I made mistakes in the past that I deeply regret. I won't make the same mistakes again, and I only hope that one day you can forgive me for what I did and didn't do. We both made mistakes; I secretly forgave you for hiding our son from me for so many years. I could have gotten angry and fought for custody of Tristan, but I didn't because we both have a right to him. I know you love him as much as I have come to love him since the moment I met him. I won't make another mistake that hurts the people I love the most because I learned the hard way that you don't hurt those you love. I owe you everything, Sarah. I don't care what I have to do to make sure you're okay, to keep you safe.-

My pulse accelerated as he spoke more, and I was annoyed with myself for almost being moved by a bunch of words that were nothing more than that, words.

He was very mistaken if he thought that words would thaw my heart, especially if he talked about Tristan.

-Shut up.- I said quietly in the same way he did.

I held his gaze to let him know that not a single word that came out of his mouth pleased me, to let him know that he hadn't managed to move even the slightest fiber of my being.

-Silence me.- He responded without breaking our eye contact, and of all the ways that crossed my mind to silence him, none came even remotely close to what he did.

His hand landed on my chin, while at the same time he closed the few inches that separated his lips from mine.

He fell silent with a kiss.

Chapter 66 The liar of the year.

Chapter 100 - Divorced Heiress

The way home suddenly seemed long to me, I had never wanted to arrive quickly like I did in this moment, I just wanted to get out of the car and keep my distance from that man.

Was this happening again?

Wasn't the slap I gave him last time strong enough?

Wasn't it clear to him that I didn't want him to kiss me again?

Why was he doing this?

My eyes stayed wide open for a long time, closely observing Alexander's relaxed face, I could see his long, thick eyelashes resting on his cheeks, while his mouth moved slightly without receiving any response from me, because my lips were so stiff that they wouldn't move even if I wanted them to.

Every muscle in my body was so tense and I found it impossible to breathe, my chest hurt just from trying.

My hand, which instinctively landed on his chest to push him away from me, was caught by his warm, trembling hand, leaving me with one free hand ready to push him away, but halfway through, I changed the direction of my hand; I passed it over his shoulder while closing my eyes to move my lips on his with coldness and unwillingness.

His warm breath hit my face, I had completely forgotten the taste of his lips and the intense way he kissed. Although I managed to remember each and every one of his kisses in a matter of seconds, this one was not like the ones he used to give me. Alexander kissed me as if he were nervous or shy, as if he were scared, but at the same time, he kissed my lips with certainty, appearing calm and composed.

When Alexander felt my grip tighten on his shoulder, I knew that I had achieved what I had in mind, as he put his hand on my waist with the intention of deepening the kiss, as if he was sure that I had given in so easily. However, before he could try to take the kiss further, I caught his bottom lip between my teeth and he let out a slight grunt of satisfaction.

-Mmm.- He said. For him, this was a sign that I was letting myself go in the moment, but that was far from the truth. When he least expected it, I pulled on his lip while biting it as hard as possible, until I tasted a metallic flavor at the same time as he complained in pain, then I let go. Alexander immediately let go of me, looked at me with surprise in his eyes, crystallized by the pain, and I could see his injured lip, slightly bleeding from the mark of my teeth. -Sarah, but what...-

-What?- I interrupted, not allowing him to say another word, and wiped any trace of blood from my lips with my fingers.

Alexander continued to silently complain, as if he didn't want the driver to know what had just happened in the back seat, although I think we had given him the best show of his life.

At least I managed to get Alexander to give me back my personal space.

-Are you threatening me?- He asked in a low voice, his fingers still on his lip, maintaining his expression of pain.

I gave a faint smile.

-I am warning you.- I responded indifferently. -I can allow you to be close to catch up on lost time with Tristan and to carry out the project, but that doesn't mean there is any possibility

between us. Don't try to sway me with a speech or stolen kisses, you won't get anything from me. You are free to rebuild your life with whoever you want, and I have the right to do the same. Ours ended years ago, even before signing the divorce.- My voice was cold and my gaze devoid of any emotion, this was more than enough for him to understand that my heart was closed to him, I couldn't be clearer.

-You're being very cruel.- He said, and I lowered my face to laugh without humor. Cruel wouldn't be the right word, but rather realistic and determined. If I gave in, I would be giving him permission to do as he pleased with me again, to hurt me in the least expected moments, and honestly, I wouldn't allow that to happen again, not with him nor with anyone else.

-Rebuild my life with someone else? Since the divorce, I haven't been with anyone, I haven't looked at any other woman. At first, I didn't understand it, but now I know it's because you are the woman I want by my side. Yes, I failed you in the worst way and I have no justification, I deserve your contempt, your indifference, your rejection, I know it hurts you, but I can make you heal.-

Perhaps I didn't bite him hard enough for him to understand better, it was irritating me that he insisted on turning a deaf ear to what I just told him.

What part of our relationship ending didn't he understand?

Should I explain it to him using apples?

-Tripping is fine, but tripping twice with the same stone is ridiculous and masochistic.- I said, adjusting myself in my seat and looking out the window again only to realize that we were already entering Villa Doinel.

This was a miracle.