

Chapter 111 - Divorced Heiress

I didn't want to play along with Alexander, but I didn't deny it either. After staying silent for a few seconds, I preferred that Paul believe what the man next to me was saying, so that I could play with his mind, make him think that all his efforts were in vain.

- Paul, there's a problem with the sample models, you haven't hired any plus-size models. You're in charge of this and I need a solution before the designers start their work. - I went straight to the point, avoiding any conversation that didn't relate to the job.

Paul's lips slightly opened, as if he knew what I was talking about, and he sat at the desk to grab a folder with the company logo and several pages.

- Of course, the plus-size models. I have contacted them already, in fact, we're just waiting for your father's signature on the contracts and they will be here soon. I haven't forgotten about it. - He said, showing the folder in his hand and a slight smile appeared on his face.

- Then give me the contracts and I'll have my father sign them. - I replied, extending my hand to take the folder, but Paul immediately moved it away, with no intention of giving it to me.

- I'm sorry, Sari, I'm in charge of this and the delay has been my fault. I will personally make sure Leonardo signs these documents. I want to apologize to him and the whole team. - I glanced quickly at Alexander, and he was looking at Paul with distrust, which was normal after everything we knew about him and his family.

I looked at Paul again, searching for the slightest sign that something was wrong, in order to understand Alexander's great distrust, but he seemed very calm. I withdrew my hand and nodded.

- My father is in Patrick's workshop. The sooner he signs, the sooner we can start working on the project. Please, don't delay and don't let the collection get behind schedule. - I said before turning around and leaving Paul's office.

Immediately, I heard footsteps behind me and I knew it was Alexander following me, but soon, other footsteps joined us, and I didn't need to look back to know that Paul joined us.

- Wait, I'll go with you. We're going to the same place, right? - Before I could react, Paul walked beside me with the folder in his hand, and I simply nodded.

- You can go ahead, my wife and I will go somewhere else before returning to the workshop. - Alexander responded for me, and my body tensed when I felt his arm intentionally wrap around

my waist, as if we were really a couple. I gave him a dirty look for what he had just done, but he just smiled while holding me tightly against his body.

Discreetly, I pinched his waist to make him let go and stop behaving that way without my permission; however, Alexander didn't flinch, and I only managed to make him hold me even tighter by the waist.

- You know, Sari. It's a shame that you have fallen for the manipulation of a man who didn't think about you as his "woman" before being unfaithful to you. I thought you were smarter. - Paul shamelessly expressed himself before turning towards the entrance of the workshop, leaving me speechless.

Taking advantage of Paul's absence, I let go of Alexander's grip without any care, which was beginning to burn my skin, and I stopped at a considerable distance from the workshop where the whole team, models included, was present. I glared at the idiot who stopped in front of me.

- Don't touch me again without my consent and... - I left the word hanging in the air when Alexander interrupted me while taking a step towards me.

- And what? - He asked defiantly, and I opened my mouth to tell him that I was going to beat him up, but then I closed it because it wasn't worth it, whatever I was going to say. I didn't want to waste my time with him.

When I was about to turn around and leave him alone in the middle of the hallway, he took my hand and pulled me, guiding me to the office that had been assigned to him. Of course, I resisted being dragged by him to a place where I would be alone with him, because I couldn't stand listening to the nonsense he had to say without boiling my blood, but I stopped resisting when I realized that the workers were blatantly watching us.

Alexander closed the door once we were inside, and I didn't wait for him to let go before stomping on his foot with the tip of my heel.

- You're crazy, how dare you drag me with you like that? - I spat out obviously annoyed, and Alexander did nothing but complain about the pain in his foot.- Can you be kind to me even just for a second? - He asked in the midst of his pain, and I sighed with frustration. - Don't look at me as your enemy, we're on the same team, aren't we?-

- Do you have something to tell me? It wasn't necessary for you to bring me here. - I said, distancing myself from him, until I reached the window overlooking the street. I stared at the traffic, waiting for him to speak without bothering to look at him.

- Yes, I have something to say and I wasn't going to do it in the middle of the hallway in front of so many people. - He replied from his place, and I felt relieved because he understood that I didn't want to be close to him. - Didn't it seem suspicious to you, the supposed contracts that Leonardo has to sign? - He suddenly asked, and I turned to face him, not understanding what he was referring to.

- Suspicious? - I responded with another question, and he nodded his head. What could be suspicious about some contracts?

- Don't take it the wrong way, I know this is your father's company and therefore yours, but we know that Paul is not right in the head. He hires conventional models, but suddenly there are contracts that require Leonardo Doinel's signature missing. - I analyzed his words for a moment and understood his mistrustful look in Paul's office. He had managed to plant doubt in me, since Paul didn't even let me take care of that folder. - I've been working in the same industry for years, you know that, and I had never seen such a thing. I don't think it's because he's doing his job poorly, considering he has been in charge of one of the overseas companies for years. - What Alexander was saying made sense to me, and soon, the worry appeared uncontrollably.

But come on, we were talking about my father here, he had more years in the industry than Alexander Lancaster himself, and I knew he wouldn't sign anything he found questionable.

- Alexander, I understand your concern, and you managed to make me worry too, but we're talking about my father, he wouldn't let himself be deceived so easily. - I replied, trusting my father's business acumen. As much as we knew how cruel Paul was, he was not foolish enough to have us sign a document for any purpose that benefited him and his family. Paul knew very well that no one could deceive Leonardo Doinel. - Is that all you had to say?-

Alexander raised his eyebrows, and his eyes silently locked onto mine.

- Who in their right mind can trust Paul after everything he's done? - He asked incredulously, adding fuel to the fire. Of course I didn't trust Paul, but there were limits I couldn't cross, and maybe that was why he hadn't dared to make a move against us.

- At this point, I don't trust anyone. - I said bluntly, and one of his eyebrows arched before he walked slowly.

- Not even me? - Hearing his softly spoken question, I looked at him with amusement on my face as I walked towards him, closing the remaining space between us, enough to be face to face, to tell him to his face.

- Not even you. - I responded sincerely, and his indignant look amused me. - Anything else to add? I have work to do.-

- Yes, I have one more thing to say. - I impatiently glanced at my wristwatch and waited for him to continue talking so I could escape from that office that was beginning to suffocate me. - I understand that you don't trust me now, and I don't intend to argue about it. I know you hate me or think you hate me, but my actions will speak for themselves, don't you see? I regret what I did and what I didn't do, but what I regret the most is losing you as a woman, now I just want your forgiveness.-

Chapter 74 What have you signed part 2

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A chill ran down my spine as I heard every one of his words, or maybe because I was irritated by how close we were to each other, but I hid my emotions behind a furrowed brow.

- Alexander, that's enough, turn the page. You want my forgiveness? Fine, I forgive you, but stop talking about me or us every chance you get. The only thing that connects us is our son, you won't get anything more from me, our marriage ended years ago. Don't you see? I'm better off without you. - Without waiting for his response, I left his office without looking back, without looking at him. I took a breath of air when I closed the door, intending to calm my racing pulse that had spiked without me realizing when.

I took a deep breath as I returned to Patrick's workshop with the intention of finding Paul and asking him for the contracts my father was supposed to sign, but I was surprised to realize that he wasn't there.

I didn't want to interrupt anyone with the visit of the test models, the only person I called was Vincent, who was near the entrance with his arms crossed and a unfriendly expression, not taking his eyes off Abby who had joined the group and was chattering away while comparing herself to each of the models.

Vincent, upon seeing me, dropped his arms to his sides and let out a sigh of relief as if his savior had arrived.

-Your friend is getting crazier by the minute.- He said as he left the workshop to meet me.

-What's wrong? Are you okay?- He asked after looking at my face for a few seconds and I nodded in response.

-I'm fine. Have you seen Paul?- I asked him immediately without wasting time, and Vincent looked at me confused.

-He left a moment ago. He told us there was an error in the contracts and Leonardo's signature was missing, that's why the curvy models were missing, but everything has been resolved now.- He replied, the confusion on his face mixing with his serious expression.

-My father reviewed and signed, right?- I asked, still feeling a bit occupied in my heart, and Vincent nodded, even more confused.

-What's going on? Is there a problem?- I shook my head, unable to repeat Alexander's words of distrust in the documents, anyway, I was going to personally make sure everything was in order.

-When will the audit be ready?- I quickly changed the subject, although the main topic was still the Dubois.

Vincent remained silent for a few seconds, hesitating on whether to speak or not, with that I understood that he already had all the information and didn't tell me earlier.

-Vin, is there any irregularity?- I felt uneasy because his expression gave me the impression that there were no good news for us.

-I didn't want to bother you because you've been locked in your office these days and I understood that you didn't want anyone to disturb you...-

-Vincent...- I called his name with a warning, showing my displeasure at not being informed of this at the right time.

-There are irregularities that they have managed to mask, yes, and not only here, but also in the company led by Paul.- I was astonished to hear Vincent's response and my annoyance erupted immediately.

It was hard for me to believe that the Dubois family was committing such crimes and harming my family without any fear. This wasn't just the Doinel company, it was also the Dubois', and they were taking advantage of their power.

-The last thing I needed.- I muttered to myself before turning around and walking quickly to Paul's office.

-Sarah, no, what are you going to do?- Vincent asked from behind me, although he caught up to me in a few seconds, making me stop in my tracks.

-I'm going to Paul's office, isn't it obvious?- I said, clearly annoyed.

-Don't do that, you'll only warn him, we will make them pay for this but not like this, I will take care of the legal matters.- Vincent thought I was going to confront Paul about the audit information, but he was far from reality.

-What do you take me for? I won't warn him, in fact, I think it's better that they continue to sink themselves up to their necks so they pay a high price for the damage they are causing to my family.- I said expressionless and walked past, leaving a bewildered Vincent in the middle of the hallway.

I knocked on Paul's office door with my knuckles and opened it when I heard him say “come in”.

-Sari, you came without your bodyguard.- He said when he saw that it was me, and I closed the door behind me before sitting in front of him, in the seat he had offered me the first time.

—It's not my bodyguard.— I said without any hint of emotion in my voice, it was the best way for him not to realize what was going through my mind.

—I see.— He responded quietly with evident irony in his tone of voice, which I completely ignored. His eyes lifted to look at me and he gave a weak half-smile.

—You've changed so much since we came back, Sari, that man still matters to you and the worst part is that you're blinded by him. I don't see the Sarah who decided to move on with her life without the person who hurt her so much.— Paul spoke condescendingly, as if he had nothing to do with all of this.

—Paul, I'm not here to discuss my personal life.— I interrupted him quickly, before he continued to spew venom from his mouth.

—I want to see if the curvy models' contract is in order. I've been a little worried that you left it for the last minute.— Paul looked confused, but nodded before standing up from his seat and searching among the documents for the folder that was previously in sight.

I took a quick look at his desk and saw three identical folders, but I couldn't see their content unless I took them and checked, clearly I wasn't going to do that, I would only raise suspicion.

—Your father has already signed it and the models are about to arrive, everything is in order, it was a small oversight. You're not thinking I'm doing my job wrong, are you? Or is your ex-husband already putting ideas in your head?—

I shook my head as I took the folder that he previously refused to give me and glanced at it.

—I can think for myself.— I said nonchalantly, although I couldn't deny to myself that thanks to what Alexander told me, that's what I was doing, reading clause by clause of the contract and observing the required signatures.

Everything seemed to be in order, but a small detail caught my attention and made all my alarm bells ring.

In the trial models' contracts, the signature of the president of Doinel was required, and obviously, the acting president was Vincent, not my father. None of the contracts had my father's signature.

—Everything is in order, I resolved it quickly.— I closed the folder with the models' contracts and left it on his desk, while I looked at his face with a slight fake smile.

—You're right, everything is in order.— I deliberately lied so that he wouldn't know that I had realized his big lie, and he smiled pleased with my response.

Dad, what had you signed?

Coming from Paul, I didn't think it's something good.

Chapter 75 Unexpected gift.

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In the following days, I would meet with Vincent every day to study the state of the company and find evidence that would incriminate the Dubois and ensure they received the maximum penalty in jail for their multiple crimes. However, they had managed to hide many details and what we had was not compromising enough.

According to Vincent's lawyers, the maximum sentence he would receive would be four years, and honestly, that was not enough for me. Besides, there were no other evidence that implicated them, and it frustrated me. I wanted them out of my company and our lives, but what irritated me the most was that my father refused to talk about the document Paul had given him to sign.

He only said, -Trust me, I know what I'm signing.- How could I trust him when Paul showed me a paper without his signature, and it was probably a trap that he fell into?

I couldn't sit idly by and watch my family be destroyed. So, a lightbulb went off in my head, and I asked Jack to come to Vincent's office where we had been all afternoon, trying to find solutions for both the company and this circus set up by the Dubois.

-You called.- Jack appeared almost immediately, and I nodded my head as I closed the door behind him, making sure there was no one lurking around and listening to us.

-Have the lawyers given any response regarding Rachel?- I asked straightforwardly. She was the only piece we had within reach that was key to bringing them all down, but if she didn't talk, it was as good as nothing.

-The same response as every day. She refuses to talk, says she doesn't know Paul or any Dubois, but the lawyers know she's lying.- I clicked my tongue in frustration upon hearing Jack's response. I paced back and forth, thinking about what I could do about it while the private investigator found all the evidence we needed.

-Can't that woman have even a little bit of intelligence? With the information she has, she could negotiate her freedom, and she'd rather lose everything to protect people who don't care about her in the least. How did she become your friend?- Vincent complained from his seat, unknowingly providing me with great help.

-Jack, prepare the private plane for the day after my birthday.- I said without hesitation, checking my digital agenda. I had a couple of meetings scheduled for that day, but they weren't that important. I could postpone them until I returned to Paris.

-What? No, no, Jack, don't prepare anything until Sarah says what that twisted mind is thinking.- Vincent spoke worriedly as he stood up, not taking his eyes off me. I let out a tired sigh and approached the desk to face him.

-Tell me, how can I resolve things if we don't talk peacefully? Despite everything, Rachel was my friend before she decided to stoop so low. If she doesn't speak under the pressure of the lawyers, she will as a woman to another woman. I'll go back to New York just for that.- I informed Vincent of my plans, and from his expression, he didn't seem entirely convinced.

-You've gone crazy. No. Jack, don't prepare anything. It's a huge risk you would be taking, everyone will notice.- Vincent walked around the desk, his cheeks flushed, and reached me, still furrowing his brow. I put my hands on my hips in a defiant pose and looked at him challengingly.

-Vincent, please, don't undermine me. The decision has been made, I won't lose anything by trying. Will you let me do this my way?- I asked calmly, stroking his arm to relax him a bit, but his gaze fixated on my hand, with no sign of calmness, and I let go of him.

-Sarah, don't take it the wrong way. I understand that you want to do everything in your power for the sake of the family. It's just that all of this is very heated, and if something were to happen to you...- His green eyes looked sad as he spoke those words, and I couldn't help but smile half-heartedly, feeling touched.

-I know, I would be just as worried about you. To put your mind at ease, and since I know you can't come with me, I'll go with a couple of bodyguards. It will only be for a day.- I said, taking his hand to convey reassurance, and managed to make his furrowed brow disappear.

Vincent nodded his head after a moment of silence and hugged me while stroking my head.

-Keep me informed about everything and promise me you'll take care of yourself.- He whispered in my ear, and I nodded in response.

-Count on it.- Vincent let me go, and Jack cleared his throat, grabbing both of our attention.

-The reservation for the private plane is ready. Anything else?- Jack asked, looking at us, and I smiled gratefully.

-Just that, Jack. Thank you.- Jack nodded his head and left the office. I wasn't sure if this would work, but at least I will have tried.

The Doinel villa was being decorated by a well-known company, my mother was in charge of preparing my birthday and was putting in a great effort and work, although for a “gathering”. it was very exaggerated, this wouldn't be the small gathering that my father said.

I didn't say anything to not demotivate them, after all, the birthdays they had prepared for me had been very big and private, this would be my first birthday being known as the Doinel heiress, I supposed they wanted to make it more special than any other.

The dress I chose with my mother was beautiful and simple, wine-colored with only one sleeve, the fabric was of the best quality and the mermaid tail highlighted my figure.

Once I was ready, I looked for my son in his room and smiled when I saw him dressed in his little wine-colored suit with a tie, just like my dress.

-But, what a beautiful and elegant boy.- I said with a smile as I made my way into his room, as soon as he saw me, he ran into my arms and I stooped to pick him up.

-Daddy Ales helped me get dressed, do you like it?- My smile faded when I heard his name come out of his lips and I combed his black hair with my hands.

-Alex from Alexander?- I asked, disguising my curiosity.

It was no wonder that my parents invited him and even let him go to Tristan's room to help him, now that I paid more attention, I found my son alone, that was what I thought before I heard Alexander's voice.

-Is there another Alexander that Tristan calls Daddy Ales?- I turned on my high-heeled sandals to find an Alexander dressed just like Tristan and with that, it was more than clear that he had taken care of both of their outfits.

Now, I had to endure Alexander Lancaster's presence at the -birthday party.-

Thank you, father.

-You're early.- I said pretending to be aware that he was invited to my birthday, although at this moment I was scolding my father in my mind.

-I wanted to arrive early to wish you a happy thirtieth birthday.- He said with a sweet tone that made me look at him with doubt, few were the times I heard him in that way. He revealed a small gift bag and Tristan got excited in my arms when he saw it. -It's for you.-

A pang lodged in my chest, unable to avoid it, because suddenly I remembered that I never missed a birthday gift from him, until we got divorced, one could say that it was the only date I received a gift from Alexander, and now he was doing it again.

I had no intention of accepting his gift, but Tristan moved excitedly in my arms, looking at the gift bag and then at me, as if waiting for me to take it at any moment.

-Mom, it's a gift, open it.- Tristan kept moving and I looked at Alexander showing my discontent, but he didn't flinch, he just wanted me to receive that gift.

Without further ado, I took the gift bag in my hands, pleasing my son.

-Thank you. You shouldn't have bothered.- I said without intending to open it.

I glanced briefly at the bag and smiled half-heartedly.

-It wasn't a bother, open it.- Alexander requested with a slight smile that made him look embarrassed but confident.

-I'll do it later.- I responded in the hope that he wouldn't insist on it, but it wasn't him who insisted, it was Tristan.

-Please, Mom, open it, I want to see your gift.- I gave Alexander a disapproving look, suspecting that he had something to do with my son's sudden interest in seeing the gift.

-Our son is asking for it, are you going to disappoint him?- Alexander intervened, and I gave him an angry look, he just raised his hands in innocence and I agreed.

After all, it was just a gift that would end up being forgotten because apparently, it was some kind of jewelry. Alexander took Tristan in his arms when he realized my decision, so he could open the gift more comfortably.

I looked away from Alexander and focused on opening the red bag, only to find what I had imagined, but instead of one, there were two jewelry boxes.

-Thank you, it's beautiful.- I said as I saw the content and Alexander gave me a look to open the pair of boxes.

I let out an inaudible sigh and opened the smaller box, which seemed to contain a ring or earrings.

When I opened the box, my eyes widened unable to hide my surprise and my breath quickened immediately.

It was the ring he proposed to me with years ago, the one I left behind in his house along with all my belongings.

I looked at it astounded, not knowing what to say, I didn't understand what he intended by returning a ring that didn't belong to me.

-Open the other one.- His words made me shudder, at this point, I feared what I would find in that big box.

My hands trembled slightly as I held the box, I had a strange feeling in my chest that I didn't know how to describe, it didn't make me feel good, but it didn't make me feel bad either.

I opened the box and my body stood still when I found what I least expected.

A white gold chain with a pendant that reminded me of the last time I had it in my hands.

My wedding ring.

Chapter 76 Happy birthday.

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I closed the box with the necklace, as I didn't want to see that ring for another second, which had a great significance for me in the past.

I looked expressionless at Alexander, trying to guess what was going through his mind at this precise moment. His face didn't lose a sweet smile that made my nerves stand on end. I didn't understand what he intended by returning something that no longer belonged to me. All he had achieved was stirring up memories that were painful at the time and that I had managed to overcome with time. However, I couldn't deny to myself that he had touched a sensitive chord within me, as I couldn't stop thinking that he had kept the pair of rings with him until now.

I opened my mouth to tell him that I didn't want the engagement ring back, let alone the wedding ring, but my mother's voice filled the room, conveniently interrupting this tense moment for me.

-Sarah, there you are...- She fell silent upon seeing Alexander standing in front of me with Tristan in his arms, and quickly corrected herself. Meanwhile, I took the opportunity to put the box back in the gift bag. -I mean, here you are. Sorry if I interrupted you.- She said, her gaze repeatedly shifting between Alexander and me, unable to hide her curiosity. -The guests have arrived and they're asking for the birthday girl. You should come down to greet them. The celebration will start in a few minutes.-

I nervously ran my fingers through my forehead and made my best effort to keep my mother from seeing the gift Alexander had just given me. In fact, I didn't want anyone to see it, because I had no intention of keeping it.

-Yes, you're right. I'll go with Tristan right away.- I said, approaching Alexander so he could put my son down. But his gaze didn't leave my face, even with my mother just a few meters away.

However, apparently, he didn't understand that I wanted my son with me. -Um... Alexander, can you put Tristan down? I want to go with him.- I calmly requested, although inexplicably, inside I was a chaos because of him.

When Alexander finally understood, he put Tristan down as I asked, and I immediately took his little hand to follow my mother to the exit.

-By the way, the three of you look very handsome. The color scheme is nicely coordinated, I like it.- My mother said. I looked up at the ceiling, asking the sky not to test my patience after what my mother had just said. It didn't take long for me to realize that the coincidence in the colors of the three outfits was just a plot from my mother. She insisted on being present during the selection of my dress.

Taking advantage of my mother not looking, I left the gift bag on Tristan's nightstand. If I didn't want anyone to see Alexander's gift, it would be a bad idea to carry it with me all night.

-At least he didn't throw it at my face.- Alexander spoke to himself quietly behind me, but I heard him and couldn't help but silently laugh, unseen by anyone.

Finally, I was able to breathe normally once I was away from Alexander and whatever his intention was with me, but it didn't last long, as I heard his steps behind me. And when I realized it, he was silently walking on the other side of Tristan, with his hands in his trouser pockets.

If there was someone who knew how to test my patience, it was Alexander Lancaster. Tristan was excited because he loved parties and celebrations. He jumped with each step and before going down the stairs, he held onto his father's hand. I looked away uncomfortably, unable to prevent Tristan from having that contact with Alexander. After all, he was his father. I had prevented them from knowing about each other in the past, but this time, I wouldn't let myself be carried away by my impulses or interfere in the father and son relationship they were rebuilding.

Arriving at the garden, decorated for my birthday, I found more people than I imagined. I thought only the people who surround me every day would be present, but no, my cousins, Bastian and Hugo, as well as my uncles, had returned from their trip abroad to give me a big surprise.

And speaking of surprises, the Dubois family was also present as if they hadn't committed so many atrocities. I was impressed by the cynicism of Paul and his parents, but it was obvious that they had to pretend to achieve their goal. I greeted all the guests with a kiss and a hug, when I arrived at the Dubois', I pretended in the same way as they did and greeted them as if I was unaware of their plans. Who would have imagined that they were wolves disguised as sheep.

I wasn't surprised that Jack took care of receiving the gifts they had for me and left them on a table for when I decided to open them, although after that first birthday gift, I didn't feel like checking, at least not for today.

Upon reaching Bastian and Hugo, I greeted them with a huge smile on my face and praised them for how good they looked tonight, both had made changes to their appearance, but for the better.

My mother wanted to start with a toast, but my father interrupted her when he asked me to accompany him to his office for a few minutes.

I left Tristan with my mother, although he soon escaped from her arms to run off with Alexander, who was distractedly talking to his assistant while still looking for my gaze, but I did a good job of avoiding him since we arrived at the garden.

My father closed the door to his office and looked at me with a nostalgic smile on his face before enveloping me in his arms.

-Happy birthday again.- He said over my head and I couldn't help but smile, feeling relieved in his arms. -It's your first birthday after many years hiding behind a false identity for your safety, without knowing that the danger was closer than I thought. You have no idea how much I regret putting you in this situation, I feel like because of me you have suffered many disappointments, you haven't been physically hurt, but the damage they have caused you is worse than that.- My father's voice sounded shaky, I couldn't see him, but I knew he was about to shed some tears because of his mixed feelings.

I clung to his waist, closing my eyes tightly, preventing the tears that stung in my eyes from escaping.

I understood his anguish and his feeling of guilt, but he was not to blame for anything. Nobody was to blame for Mrs. Dubois being obsessed and committing criminal acts because of unrequited love. We were not guilty of being victims of people who were mentally ill. My father simply rejected her because his heart belonged to another woman, he just wanted to be happy with the woman he loved, like everyone else in this world.

-Father, it's not your fault, only the Dubois are to blame, who would have imagined that they would be behind all this? Besides, I'm fine, I have parents that I adore and a son who means everything to me. They will pay soon for everything they have done.- I responded with a lump in my throat, trying to take the blame off my father, but it didn't work completely.

My father laughed dryly and broke our embrace, but without letting go of my arms. I felt a pain in my chest as I saw his saddened face and his tear-filled eyes.

I hated seeing my parents like that.

Chapter 76 Happy birthday part 2

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-Daughter, I know how much you adore your family, and I know you're fine after all, but answer me something, are you happy? - His question echoed in my head and the word became stuck in my throat when I wanted to say yes.

I repeated the word happiness in my head over and over again, asking myself if I truly was, I thought about how happy I feel with my son and smiled before nodding in response.

-I am very happy with my son, with you, my family.- I responded without hesitation and my father looked at me as if that wasn't the answer he expected.

-I'm not talking about how happy you are with your family.- He looked at me confused and soon continued speaking. -I'm talking about your heart, the person who upsets your nerves, who makes your heart beat strongly, even if it's out of anger, who unsettles you with unexpected actions or even the smallest things.- My father spoke openly and with his description, I could only think of one person, but it wasn't similar to what he was saying. If this person made me feel that way, it was because I couldn't stand him and because his actions or words were unexpected and made me angry.

A clear example was the gift he gave me.

-Dad, if there's something I've learned over time, it's that happiness doesn't depend on one person, on a partner like you're trying to make me see. I don't need a man in my life, with my son, it's more than enough to be happy. I'm a divorced woman, remember? - I responded with confidence, but from his face, he wasn't completely sure of what I was saying.

-I remember very well, and I understand what you're saying, but there's something that leaves me doubtful, and it's that ever since you came back home, I haven't seen you smile like in the photos you had with Alexander since you met him. You've changed, you've become a cold woman and you've locked your heart away.- My father said, and I let out a tired sigh upon hearing that name that exasperated me and completely let go of my father when I realized what he was trying to do.

- Alexander is a closed chapter in my life. Before you hated him, why are you now trying to help him? If he has asked you to talk to me to try to convince me to marry him again, then you are wasting your time. - I said, somewhat agitated, walking towards the desk and turning my back, and my father chuckled softly as he approached me.

- I wouldn't convince you of something you don't want. I hated him because you came back shattered because of him, but what he did was to protect you, it's not so different from what I did to you in the past, I left you almost adrift, without my last name, I made you choose between your family and your happiness, he was your happiness despite everything. - I turned to look at him in disbelief and his hand took mine. - Sari, I'm not justifying him at all, but I understand what he felt when the person he loved the most was in danger, in that situation you don't think with a clear head, you would do anything to keep the person you love safe, you find the first

solution, even if it's the worst decision of your life, and you decide to risk everything to keep yourselves safe.-

I looked away from my father with a bitter smile on my face, reluctant to share his opinion on the matter, but a part of me made me see everything from another perspective.

My father wanted to protect me when they tried to kidnap me and he hid me by taking away his last name. Alexander wanted to protect me from the death threat and he decided to give in to Rachel and her blackmail.

The smile vanished from my face when I realized that in my mind I was trying to justify Alexander.

- What are you trying to get at with all this? Do you want me to forget what I saw in Alexander's office and pretend like nothing happened? Do you want me to go back to him? - I asked irritated with myself for almost giving in to my father's persuasion.

- No, I know you and I know you're very proud, you can love someone in your heart, but if they hurt you, you would never go back and risk getting hurt again. - I looked with feigned amusement at my father for what he just said.

Love in my heart?

I didn't love Alexander.

- I don't love him and it's called dignity. - I replied without enthusiasm, tired of this subject.

Did he bring me here for that?

- I would say it's fear. But, anyway, -you don't love him-. Even though he's madly in love with you, he's not the only man in this world capable of making you happy. - I let out a dry laugh when my father made quotation marks with his fingers and I heard the words “madly in love with you”.

What had that man put in my father's head?

- Alright, I've got it. Everything in due time, I don't want to make a mistake again. - I said firmly, intending to reach the end of this subject that would only give me a headache.

My father understood and smiled at me, although he didn't seem very satisfied.

- Daughter, I just want you to be happy, I want to see you smile again, no matter how many times you try, no matter how many mistakes you make, mistakes are meant to be made, no one is perfect in this world, but only we ourselves decide to take the risk of being happy as many times as necessary. - I nodded my head, understanding his message perfectly, he only wanted the best

for me and would always be there to mend my wings. - Leaving this topic aside, I want to give you my birthday gift.-

My father let go of me and walked to his desk to search through some folders for a sealed white envelope, he handed it to me and I read what was written on the note without seeing its contents.

“Happy 30th Birthday to the Doinel heiress. With love, your father.”

I smiled when I saw the short message, my father was a man of few words when it came to notes, and this time was no exception.

- Thank you very much, the note alone is enough. - I said before hugging him tightly around the neck, and a smile returned to my face, after the bad taste that our conversation left me.

- If it's enough, then there's no need to open it now, you can open it when you feel like things aren't going the way you want, I had it prepared for you for a while and this is the perfect moment to give it to you. - I nodded my head, agreeing with him.

After all, I had decided not to open any gifts after seeing Alexander's.

And again Alexander.

I must stop associating him with everything that happens around me, this was not being healthy for me. Happy birthday.

Chapter 77 Stalker.

Chapter 116 - Divorced Heiress

My mother proposed a toast as soon as she saw us returning to the garden. My mother's words moved me and I almost shed tears in front of all the guests.

- Sarah is the light of my life, she is my dream come true. From the moment I held her in my arms, I knew she would be a strong and capable woman, and she has been proving it with her efforts to be a good daughter, a good mother, and a great businesswoman, although very stubborn and proud, that cannot be denied. It is her essence and I couldn't be prouder to be her mother, her friend, and her unwavering support. I am grateful to have you back and shout it to the world, Sarah Doinel is my daughter. Cheers! - I smiled from ear to ear at my mother's words, and quickly we clinked our champagne glasses together.

When my glass arrived next to Alexander's, I looked at him while remembering my conversation with my father. Each of his words echoed in my head and I couldn't hold his gaze as my pulse raced uncontrollably.

I quickly moved away to continue toasting with the others, and when I reached Jack, he congratulated me on my birthday and asked for a few minutes to talk.

- There's a small last-minute problem with the private jet reservation. I'm sorry, I know it's your birthday and I shouldn't bother you with work matters, but you had planned to travel tomorrow and I needed to let you know as soon as possible to find a solution. - Jack informed me with a worried expression, knowing that I didn't want anyone else to find out about this. The only other person who knew was Vincent, and at the moment he was with his brothers and Abby, who were talking animatedly with Bastian.

I looked around, making sure no one was nearby to hear our conversation.

- Jack, what happened with the reservation? Didn't you already take care of it? - I asked discreetly while casually taking a sip from my glass, my eyes almost automatically turning to that man with honey-colored eyes who was glancing at me while still paying attention to Tristan.

- Of course, I did. It's just that your parents had a reservation to fly to London and they moved it up to tomorrow. And since you told me this had to be low-key, I didn't want to argue about it. - I looked confusedly at Jack when he told me this information, and then I looked back at Alexander.

- My parents are traveling tomorrow and they didn't tell me? - I asked to myself, although it didn't surprise me at all. They were probably waiting to celebrate my birthday and have a short vacation for themselves. - Whatever. Thank you for letting me know in time, Jack. In that case, buy a first-class plane ticket, the first one that departs tomorrow morning. - I lowered my voice when I realized that Alexander's assistant was passing by us.

- Count on it, I'll take care of it right away. - He said, about to leave, but he stopped to look at me from head to toe and then looked towards the dark-haired man next to my son. - You all look very good, I mean, you, Mr. Lancaster, and Tristan. If I didn't know the situation between you, I would think you're a happy family. At least, that's the impression I got. Excuse me. - With that, he left me speechless and I watched him walk away without giving me a chance to respond.

A happy family? We were light years away from that.

I stood there for a few more seconds, unable to stop repeating that phrase in my head. And suddenly I realized that I couldn't take my eyes off the father of my child. I drank the rest of my glass in one gulp and hurriedly walked towards the guests, looking anywhere but at him. I didn't want to believe that my father's words had softened me, but what I did believe was that this conversation had changed something in me and in the way I saw things.

But that didn't mean I was going to make a mistake that I would probably regret. Impossible.

Vincent had stayed at the villa the night before and took the opportunity to help me pack my things, although it wasn't a big deal. I would just go, talk to Rachel, and come back.

Tristan was fast asleep in his room, but that didn't stop me from bidding him farewell without being able to wake him up. I was going to miss him, but he would be in the best hands, with Vincent.

Before leaving his room, Alexander's gift caught my attention, and after pondering it for a couple of times, I took the bag and packed it in my suitcase. I would take advantage of this trip to leave the pair of rings where they should be. My cousin drove me to the airport and hadn't stopped making fun of me since we left the villa, as I had decided to cover up as much as possible, with sunglasses and a hat, afraid that someone would recognize me and realize that I was about to take a flight to New York.

-Let me know when you arrive, I'll be informing you of everything from here and don't worry, if anyone asks about you, I'll say that you turned thirty completely drunk and can't even get out of bed.- Vincent said with a playful smile on his face, and I couldn't help but burst into laughter at his remarks.

-Of all the excuses that could work, you had to come up with that one. Okay, just don't defame me too much.- I said when my laughter subsided, and he nodded as if he was going to follow the order to the letter. -And another favor, let me know about my parents' trip and if they ask about me, come up with something better.-

-As you wish, Ms. Doinel. Take care of yourself.- He said, and I nodded my head and gave him a quick hug before boarding the plane.

When I reached my reserved seat, I let out a long sigh with my eyes closed. I really hoped this trip would work out. I needed Rachel to confess. She would be a key witness to expose the Dubois and give them enough years in prison to never see them again in my life.

-Are you running away?- I squeezed my eyes shut upon hearing that voice. I didn't know what was going through my head that I had to imagine Alexander speaking in the adjacent seat. Get out of my head.

-I don't remember you having a deep sleep. The glasses look good on you.- He said, and I immediately opened my eyes, taking off my glasses upon hearing him again and looked towards the source of that voice, finding that man.

-Oh my god, it can't be true. I wasn't hallucinating.- I murmured to myself and immediately looked at him with a furrowed brow, feeling annoyed at my bad luck in life. -What are you doing here?- I asked angrily, and Alexander tapped the armrest with his long fingers.

-Taking a flight, just like you.- He replied calmly, and I gave him a glare because I knew perfectly well that wasn't the answer I was expecting. -You don't think I'll let you visit Rachel alone.- He added, and my eyes almost popped out of my head when he said that. I didn't know

how he found out that I was going for Rachel. Only three people knew, and I was a hundred percent sure Vincent wasn't the one who told him.

Jack...

-So Jack told you, how did you convince him?- I asked directly and without beating around the bush. His smile told me that I hit the nail on the head. -Between assistants, they understand each other. I give all credit to Cristina.- I laughed without humor, remembering that the night before his assistant walked by us just as I was talking about my flight with Jack. But how was it possible that Jack spilled everything?

Well, I wasn't that mad at Jack, but I was mad at the man next to me. Who did he think he was to gather information and follow me?

-So, you're stalking me.- I said. It was more of a statement than a question, and Alexander shook his head.

-I wouldn't call it stalking. I see it differently. If you jump off a bridge, I'll be there to catch you.- His metaphor left me speechless, and I didn't want to keep talking to this man. It made no sense to start an argument. If he wanted to come with me, then I would let him.

From this moment on, I wouldn't let him disturb me anymore. At some point, he would be tired of whatever he was doing.

Thankfully, Alexander understood that I wouldn't say another word and wouldn't even engage in conversation with him. There was nothing to talk about. If he wanted to play the role of bodyguard, then so be it.

Upon arriving in New York, I tried to go on my own, but Alexander was quick to grab my small suitcase. I looked at him expressionlessly and raised my hands in resignation before walking towards the exit to find a taxi. This trip would be stressful and complicated enough to add an endless argument with the stalker.

-The chauffeur for Alexis is waiting for us. He will take us to jail and bring our suitcases home.- He said, and upon hearing the last word, I stopped in my tracks, causing him to stop as well and look at me with confusion. -What's wrong? Did you forget something?- He asked as if nothing was wrong, and I took a breath to avoid losing the patience that I was struggling to maintain.

— The suitcase stays with me. —I informed decisively, he had no right to make decisions for me, this trip was supposed to be done alone.

— Whatever you say then. —I nodded my head, calming down again, although I couldn't deny that I found it very strange that Alexander accepted without protesting.

If only he did the same with everything else.

The whole way to the jail, we remained in complete silence, which I appreciated. With my sunglasses on, I could go unnoticed anywhere, if it wasn't for the fact that Alexander didn't bring any accessory to disguise himself. I could only hope that no one recognized me and associated me with the stalker by my side.

We almost weren't allowed to visit Rachel because it wasn't visiting day, but after Alexander and I had an extensive conversation with the security guard, they let us continue with the condition that it would only be for ten minutes.

That was enough to talk to her woman to woman and try to convince her to confess.

When I was about to reach the door where Rachel should be waiting, Alexander stopped me, grabbing my arm. I looked at him in the same way I had been doing since we arrived, with no expression on my face, waiting for him to tell me why we stopped a few meters away from meeting Rachel.

— Sarah, I understand that you've come for an important matter that not only puts your safety at risk, but also that of your entire family. —He began saying, his eyes fixed on mine. I nodded my head, letting him know that he was right, and I waited for him to continue. —But, I've been thinking about it the whole way and I think it would be good if we clarified what happened years ago. I want to ask you to confirm with Rachel herself that on that day, just like the six months before, she and I didn't do anything. And yes, you caught us in a compromising situation, but at that moment, I was asking for a sign to know if I was doing the right thing to keep your life safe, and then you arrived and I lost you.-

I raised one of my eyebrows when I heard his absurd request and gently freed my arm from his hand that suddenly burned on my skin.

—Alexander, it doesn't matter anymore, what's done is done, nothing can change what happened. I won't do it.

Chapter 78 Confession.

Chapter 117 - Divorced Heiress

It was really surprising for me to see Rachel's physical change in such a short time, she wasn't the same woman with well-groomed hair and makeup on her face, I admit that I felt sorry for her, but what happened to her was solely her fault and she must take responsibility for her actions.

When she saw us approaching her table, she couldn't hide her surprise, and understandably so, since she didn't know anything at all, and to make matters worse, today was not a visiting day.

I sat in the chair in front of her, and Alexander stood beside me with his arms crossed over his chest. Of course, before boarding the plane, I imagined this scene happening when I was alone, but there was no turning back now, after all, Alexander was right in saying that we had to come together, work together to make everything easier and faster.

-What? What are you doing here?- She immediately asked, and I could tell she was trying to hide her nervousness. I smirked half-heartedly before looking at her as if she had asked a silly question.

-Well, I think it's obvious that we've come to talk to you as civilized and mature individuals.- I replied calmly, although inside I was experiencing a mix of emotions that left me uneasy. Rachel's nerves increased, and this time she couldn't hide it, as she rubbed her hands together and her leg moved restlessly under the table.

-I refuse to talk to you, I don't know why you've come, you've wasted your time. Guard!- She was about to get up from the table while looking for the security guard who was a few meters away, but I stopped her by grabbing her wrist adorned with uncomfortable handcuffs.

-Rachel, please, I need to talk to you.- I said calmly as I looked into her eyes, which suddenly became watery. After a moment of hesitation, she nodded her head and settled back into her chair. I let go of her when she grimaced in pain and continued without waiting for her to say a single word. -Rachel, I'll get straight to the point. I know you're not the only one to blame for what happened, I know you were paid to do everything you did. I know you, and I know you're not a bad person. You're not the type of person who would risk the lives of others just to get what you want. And you're here paying for this alone, covering for someone who doesn't even care about you or how you're doing in this prison...-

-Stop.- She interrupted what I had to say, and her gaze momentarily shifted to the man by my side before giving me her full attention again. -Why is he here?- She asked, as if his presence disgusted her, and I looked at the man she was referring to, I opened my mouth to respond, but Alexander spoke up.

-I'm also involved, but if my presence is difficult for you to bear, then I'll wait outside for you to talk better.- I raised my eyebrows upon hearing him, and quickly nodded my head, that was my intention from the beginning. Rachel wouldn't feel comfortable speaking if Alexander was present, I knew this because the last time I spoke with Rachel, she was more determined to talk than she is now. -I'll wait outside, Sarah.-

Alexander left the visiting room, and I finally breathed a sigh of relief.

-The last time I came, you were about to tell me who was behind all of this, but now I don't care to know.- I said as if I had no idea about the slightest thing, I didn't want to risk mentioning Paul because I feared that she would inform him.

-Rachel, if our friendship was ever important to you, I ask that you speak up, and by that, I don't mean speaking to me, but confessing everything.- I took a deep breath, feeling like I wasn't

achieving anything with those words. -My life and the life of my family are in danger because of this person. I don't know if you know, but I have a son, a wonderful boy who I love with all my heart, and if anything were to happen to him...- I didn't dare say it out loud without feeling on the verge of breaking down inside. Tears stung my eyes just imagining Tristan in a situation that was beyond my control.

-So, it's true, you've had Alexander's son.- She said, and I quickly nodded my head in response to Rachel's question, and I quickly wiped away the tears that I prevented from escaping, I had to stay strong.

-Yes, and it's because of him that I'm doing this, that I want to get to the real culprits who are still out there trying to harm us, but I have nothing. Your confession is the only option I have left.- I said, feeling calmer, and I took her hands again, this time, she seemed uncomfortable with my touch. -If you confess, if you cooperate with the law, you could negotiate your freedom. I can help you, hire the best lawyers, but you have to do the same for me. You don't deserve to be in this place despite everything. You haven't paid the hitman, you haven't planned all of this. You're not a criminal, and you still have the chance to make things right, to clear your name.-

A single tear escaped Rachel's eye when she heard my words, and she fell silent for a long time. I had assumed she would accept my request, but that idea vanished when she shook her head.

-I would love to, but I can't do it, Sarah, it's not that simple.- Her trembling voice and her eyes filled with pain made me understand that, even if she wanted to do it, she couldn't, she seemed terrified.

-Like you, my family is in danger, if I speak up, they will kill my parents and me too. They have threatened me, they have me by the throat, waiting for the slightest wrong move to pull the trigger.- She confessed with a broken voice and a firm decision, my chest hurt realizing that I was not the only victim of that wicked family.

-I deeply regret all of this, but it's beyond my control, I... I'm sorry, Sarah. I'm so sorry, I've been foolish, I've blinded myself and hurt you, the only person who was there for me when I needed it the most. Forgive me.-

Rachel broke down in tears as she held onto my hands, and it was inevitable that my heart would ache seeing her like that, so defenseless and unsure of what to do, she was another victim.

-I understand the situation, Rachel.- I said in an attempt to calm her, but it was almost impossible. -I won't insist anymore, it's your decision to remain silent, but I want you to know that if you ever change your mind, I'll support you to make things right. I still hope that you'll make the best decision.- With that, Rachel's crying increased, but she smiled sadly. -How can you be so kind to me after everything I've done?- She asked in between tears, and I tightened my grip on her hands.

-Because something tells me that the old Rachel is still inside you.- I replied honestly, seeing remorse and guilt reflected in her eyes. I waited in silence for her tears to subside, and when they

did, Alexander's words before entering my mind. Suddenly, curiosity overwhelmed me completely, and I hesitated to ask her that question. I know I said before that the topic didn't matter, but the doubt was eating me alive. I straightened my back without letting go of her, preparing myself to ask her about it.

-Rachel, putting all of this aside, I want to ask you something, and I hope you'll be honest with me, no matter the answer.- I cleared my throat after changing the subject, and she wiped her wet cheeks.

-I'll answer depending on the question.- She responded more calmly, although tears still escaped from her eyes. I cleared my throat as if there was something stuck and finally let it all out to sit more comfortably and look her straight in the eyes.

-That day I found you both in Alexander's office, you and him...- I didn't know how to formulate the question, and the words remained in the air without being able to finish the sentence. -Sorry, I shouldn't have asked, almost four years have passed, it doesn't matter.-

Rachel immediately understood what the question was about and remained silent as she looked at me fixedly, with a hidden surprise in her eyes.

Despite the seriousness of the situation, Alexander didn't give in, it wasn't until I found out that you were traveling to Orlando that I took advantage of the opportunity to go to Alexander's office and threaten him, telling him that someone could shoot at any moment. Nothing happened between him and me, neither before nor after, nothing happened that day, and I highly doubt anything would have happened if you hadn't arrived because Alexander didn't function even if he made an effort.- Rachel's response left me petrified in my place, I almost forgot to breathe, I didn't know what to think, or what to say, my mind went blank.

I couldn't believe that Alexander had told me the truth, even though I caught them in a compromising situation, they didn't have sex. Rachel didn't excite him in the slightest.

I took a deep breath to snap back to reality and stop thinking about it because I didn't know what to do with that information now. When I came to myself, I remembered that photo Rachel had sent me, where the two of them were on what used to be our bed, and I couldn't help but ask, with obvious curiosity and confusion, -What about the photo you sent me? Are you going to tell me it was staged?- I asked as if I weren't stunned at this moment, and Rachel let out an empty laugh.

-It was the only day I slept with him, but not in the way you're thinking.- She paused to release a long sigh and look at me ashamedly. -I drugged his drink and set up the scene to make it look like something happened between us, it was part of the plan, let's say it was the final blow. At first, he believed it because he didn't remember anything, but Alexander is not stupid, he knows nothing happened, he just fell asleep.- Imagining Alexander in that situation sent shivers down my spine, Rachel was reckless to drug him, risking him having a bad reaction, something could have happened to him. Fortunately, nothing happened.

Nothing happened.

Unconsciously, I let out a sigh of relief so strong that it even hurt me. Suddenly, I felt as if my soul was returning to my body or that I had taken a huge weight off my shoulders.

-The visit is over.- The guard interrupted us at the most interesting part of the conversation, and I couldn't help but snort at his impeccable timing.

-I'll be waiting in case you decide to talk, just make sure it's not too late. Goodbye, Rachel.- I said as I got up from my seat, while the guard took Rachel by the arm to guide her back to the jail cell.

-I hope someday you can forgive me, Sarah.-

Even though they had both disappeared from my sight, I stood there for a few seconds, closing my eyes tightly, thinking that Rachel's confession could change many things, and I wasn't sure if it was for the better or for the worse.

I felt confused and tired, very tired.

I quickly left the visitation room and Alexander was already waiting for me in the hallway. He looked at me with raised eyebrows, expecting me to give him details about the visit with Rachel, but this was not the time or place to talk. Right now, all I wanted to do was take a long nap, or if possible, sleep for three consecutive days.

-How did it go? Did you manage to convince her to speak?- Alexander asked in the middle of the hallway, and I didn't know how to look at him at this moment. The truth was, I didn't want him to find out right now that I had asked Rachel that question and the answer she had given me.

-No.- I responded without giving any details. After a few seconds of silence, with my gaze fixed on the ground, I lifted my eyes until they met his and continued with a calm voice, -Is the offer to go to your place still on? I've changed my mind.-

Chapter 79 The tea.

Chapter 118 - Divorced Heiress

I couldn't stop thinking about the conversation with Rachel, I didn't know how to feel, I was so engrossed in my thoughts that I didn't realize when we arrived at Alexander's house until the car stopped.

I took a quick glance at the house that was once mine, it looked the same as the last time I saw it, when I spoke with Alexis. I didn't know at what point the nerves started bubbling up in my system and I asked myself a thousand times what I was thinking when I told Alexander that I would come to his house, what was I going to do here? I lost my mind during that visit.

-Do you want to come in or are you going to stay in the car all day?- Alexander asked, sitting next to me and noticing that I hadn't moved at all.

It was difficult for me to look him in the face, this whole situation had me confused and deep in thought, but I responded to him before opening the car door.

-I'm coming.- I got out of the car and automatically took a breath of air, intending to clear my thoughts, but it didn't help much.

Alexander came to my side and invited me to follow him. With nerves on edge and trembling hands, I followed his steps towards the entrance of the house, while in my mind I questioned myself over and over again about the idea of coming here without thinking about it at least twice, I didn't even know why I decided to come to his house, when I could go directly to my father's mansion, which was available to me at any time.

I was grateful that Alexander hadn't spoken the whole way, only giving directions to the driver, and it wasn't because I was annoyed by his voice or because I was still mad at him for following me, but because I didn't know what I was feeling inside me anymore, because suddenly the anger, the resentment, and the hatred diminished drastically, leaving a relief in my chest that I couldn't describe.

The front door of the house opened even before we finished getting there and Anna's surprised and smiling face, the housemaid, appeared in my field of vision.

-Mrs. Lancaster, I can't believe it, you've come home.- Anna spoke without hiding her excitement upon seeing me, and I couldn't help but feel a little uneasy about the way she addressed me.

I didn't think she was still working in this house, and although it might seem hard to believe, she was the one I missed the most when I left.

-Hello, Anna. I'm just passing through, and please, don't forget that I'm not Mrs. Lancaster. Sarah is fine, we're not strangers.- I replied with a slight smile on my face, feeling Alexander's gaze on me.

-I'm sorry, Mrs... I mean, Sarah, I'm so glad to see you here again, I'm glad to see you again, you've changed a lot, you look even more beautiful than you've always been, and I've heard that you're Leonardo Doinel's daughter, who would have imagined...-

-Anna, can we come in?- Alexander interrupted after a long time listening to every word from Anna who was really excited, and I had to make a great effort not to laugh at the situation. -You can continue chatting when Sarah is more comfortable, she's tired from the trip.-

-Yes, yes, forgive me, please come in. Sorry, Mr. Lancaster.- Anna stepped aside from the entrance to let us in, and I thanked her with a smile before following her to the living room, which looked the same as the last time. -Take a seat, Ms. Sarah. Would you like something to drink or eat? Just tell me, and I'll bring it right away.- I sat on the sofa as if it were the first time I had stepped into this place and nodded my head at Anna.

-A tea is fine, I need to relax.- I answered, crossing my legs and trying to calm the nerves that still left me restless.

-Of course, I'll bring you a tea right away.- Anna was about to hurriedly go to the kitchen when Alexander stopped her.

-Anna, make it two cups, each with a spoonful of the tea I have to relax, it would do us good at this moment, and ask the driver to bring the suitcases.- Alexander ordered as he took off his black jacket, then sat on the individual sofa, checking his phone in his hand.

-Two cups, one spoonful, the suitcases, got it. I'll be right back, Ms. Sarah.- The woman disappeared into the kitchen this time successfully, and I was left alone with Alexander, both immersed in a silence that neither of us was willing to break.

Once again, I thought about my hasty decision to come here, when I felt uncomfortable glancing at Alexander, I just couldn't help but think that he didn't do anything with Rachel, not only because he initially refused despite the threats, but also because it didn't work with another woman. Despite the way I found them and everything that happened between us before, during, and after our marriage, it made me think that I was very hard on him all this time that he has tried to get closer to me for forgiveness, I treated him badly over and over again and he was still there without giving up even though he told me that I deserved to be happy with someone else, I let myself be carried away by my anger, by the pain that I thought I had overcome.

I had been somewhat unfair to him.

Chapter 79 The tea part 2

Chapter 119 - Divorced Heiress

The driver entered the house with the two suitcases, leaving them at the foot of the stairs, then my thoughts vanished and I realized something.

-Alexander, there was no need for them to bring my suitcase, anyway, I will go to my father's mansion after having tea.- I said, breaking the deathly silence that surrounded us, and he looked away from his cellphone screen to look at me with a furrowed brow.

-I don't think it's a good idea, that mansion is too big for you alone and it's risky, we don't know if someone found out that we've come or that we visited Rachel, you can stay here and tomorrow we'll return to Paris. But it's your decision, if you want to go to the mansion, I'll take you there myself.- Now that he mentioned it, he was right, I couldn't come with the escorts that I promised Vincent, and I didn't have time to hire a pair in New York, if I had come alone with my perfect disguise, I would have gone unnoticed, but Alexander came without the slightest disguise and his presence wasn't easy to ignore, I say this because he was a well-known businessman and a public figure.

However, staying in this house wouldn't help at all with my nerves and thoughts.

And speaking of Vincent, I hadn't told him anything about me, it was difficult with everything that happened today.

-I'll decide later.- I replied, unsure whether to leave or stay, and took the opportunity to search for my phone and call Vincent, but he didn't answer any of my three calls. Alexander opened his mouth to speak but closed it when Anna approached us with only one steaming cup of tea.

-Here's your tea, I'm sure it will help with tiredness, it works very well for Mr. Alexander, it's very good.- Anna said, placing the teacup on the coffee table, and looked at me nostalgically.

-Thank you, Anna. Did you bring only one cup of tea?- I asked, realizing that she hadn't brought tea for Alexander, and he looked amused by her forgetfulness. Anna looked at him wide-eyed and touched her head in concern.

-Mr. Alexander, I'm sorry, I forgot. Sarah's visit has me so excited that I confused two teacups and one teaspoon of tea with one teacup and two teaspoons of tea.- She nervously replied and turned to me completely embarrassed, intending to take my tea.

-Sorry, I'll change it.- She said.

-Relax, I'll drink it like this, it's fine.- I told her to calm her down a bit, and she shook her head.

-No, Ms. Sarah, two teaspoons of tea is too much for you, let me change it and forgive me.- She insisted, but I refused, there was no need for her to go through that trouble.

-This is fine, nothing will happen, it's just tea.- I said, holding the teacup in my hands and taking a sip to show her that it was okay. -It's very good, thank you.-

-Sarah, it's not a good idea for you to drink it, one teaspoon of tea is more than enough, Anna will change it for you.- Alexander intervened, and I shook my head before taking another sip.

-No idea seems good to you. Don't worry, I'll be fine.- Anna and Alexander looked at each other with some concern, but I didn't pay attention to them and continued drinking the tea, which was delicious. They both fell silent, observing me, and I winked at Anna to reassure her.

-Prepare the guest room, I don't want to keep contradicting her, she's very stubborn and you know how this will end.- Alexander whispered to Anna, but I heard him and acted like I didn't, while I smiled foolishly at the teacup. Anna immediately left, apologizing and clutching her head with both hands, leaving us alone once again. So much drama over a simple cup of tea. When I finished my cup of tea under Alexander's watchful gaze, I began to feel all my muscles relax, as if I were floating on a cloud. I had set aside all my worries, and in that moment, it seemed like I didn't have a single problem. I just wanted to dance and laugh at everything.

-Oh my God, Alexander, how is it possible that I am in the house that once was ours? Isn't it funny?- I said with indescribable excitement in my chest. -You and I, sitting in this place, enjoying a cup of tea. We're such good friends and the best parents, aren't we?- Alexander touched his forehead and shook his head without saying a word. -But say something, you haven't said a single word and it's frustrating. Come on, speak.-

-I'll take you to the bedroom, you've relaxed enough.- He said, ignoring everything I had just said. I burst into laughter as if he had told me the best joke in the world. -Yes, let's go to the bedroom. I've missed it. I hope you've changed the bed.- I added eagerly, jumping up and hurrying towards the stairs to grab my suitcase. -What are you waiting for? Don't just sit there.-

Alexander stood up with a worried look on his face and let out a sigh before reaching my side. -You shouldn't have had that tea.- He said, starting to climb the stairs behind me. I turned to look at him with amusement. -I don't have to obey you. Besides, it was delicious. You have to tell me the name because I feel amazing.- I confessed, ecstatic. I turned again to continue climbing the stairs but accidentally bumped into a step and dropped my suitcase. I rubbed the sore spot but almost ended up rolling down the stairs if it hadn't been for Alexander catching me. Without saying a word, he lifted me in his arms and effortlessly carried me up the stairs. I couldn't say anything because I was laughing at myself and how clumsy I had been.

I stopped laughing when he started walking in the opposite direction of the main bedroom. I squirmed in his arms, trying to make him put me down, but he only held me tighter. -No, what are you doing? The bedroom is that way.- I complained, trying to grab hold of the walls. Alexander stopped and looked at me, immobilized. I looked at his honey-colored eyes, which seemed even brighter with the sunlight shining through the windows. Those eyes could melt anyone. -You have really beautiful eyes.- I said sincerely. Alexander chuckled silently and looked away.

He didn't respond to my compliment and turned back down the hallway until we reached the main bedroom. I couldn't stop silently staring at him until he placed me on the floor of what used to be our bedroom. -Sleep here, I'll be in the guest room.- He said, removing the blankets for me to lie down, but that was the last thing I wanted to do. -You didn't work with Rachel.- I suddenly blurted out with a smile on my face, and Alexander stopped what he was doing to look at me in surprise. -She's not your type, or do you have problems?- I asked directly. He laughed and

approached me, our breaths mixing as he did. I stayed still, looking at his amused yet serious face, and suddenly felt my legs start to tremble. I didn't know if it was because of the intense relaxation from the famous tea that made it difficult for me to stand for long.

-Both things. I don't like Rachel, and I have a problem ever since I met you. Her name is Sarah Doinel, do you know her? She's a beautiful, intelligent, capable woman, attractive in every way. But above all, she's very proud. That's my problem because I can't do anything if it's not with her.- Alexander spoke inches away from my lips, never breaking eye contact. His words made the heat rise to my cheeks. In fact, I felt my body heat up with his closeness, his breath, his scent, his voice, his gaze.

For a fleeting moment, my gaze fell on his lips. That was the cure for the heat that coursed through me from head to toe. Without hesitation, I closed the gap between his lips and mine. I kissed him with the passion that had been dormant for years. I wrapped my arms around his neck, and his hands held me firmly by the waist as we both responded to a kiss that didn't extinguish the fire within me, but rather ignited it. Alexander bit my lower lip and I let out a moan against his lips. With that, I couldn't resist any longer and clumsily took off his shirt which was starting to get in the way between us. Then, I got rid of my jacket before Alexander grabbed me by the thighs, lifting me up enough to wrap my legs around his waist, never separating our lips for a second. Alexander ran his tongue across my lips, asking for permission to enter, and I let him, allowing our tongues to meet and unleash a sweet war that I had missed so much, and that caused a pleasurable sensation throughout my body.

When my hand ran down his back, Alexander stopped and broke our kiss, which was at its best moment. I looked into his eyes, breathing heavily, and he left a fleeting kiss on my lips before speaking.

-I want to keep going, but you're not in your right mind, I don't want you to regret it.- He whispered against my lips, and I looked at him with a displeased expression for what he was doing. -I want you to be clear-headed when this is over. I'll let you sleep.-

He got up from the bed, leaving me empty and with a burning body, but I didn't want him to go, at least not like this.

I took his hand before he walked away and with a shaky voice and a sincere look, I told him,

-Sleep with me tonight.-

Chapter 80 Vote of confidence.

Chapter 120 - Divorced Heiress

The sun rays that filtered through the window hit directly on my face, causing me to wake up from the most comfortable and relaxing sleep I had ever had in my life. I had slept like a baby, I didn't even want to open my eyes. If it hadn't been because someone left the curtains open, I would stay in bed all day.

I shifted in bed, searching for comfort, and it wasn't difficult to find it when my arm wrapped around a pillow that, although very hard, smelled wonderful. I took a deep breath and searched my memory for that familiar scent, but I was still half asleep and it was impossible for me to guess it.

-Good morning, Sarah.- I heard that whisper very close to my face, and even though I was more asleep than awake, I knew who was speaking. Or maybe that was it, since I wasn't fully conscious, I started hallucinating about that man.

I slowly opened my eyes, finding a pair of honey-colored eyes that were observing me closely, examining my face as if he wanted to engrave it in his memory. The corners of my lips curved into a smile involuntarily, as my mind continued playing tricks on me, but this time it was as if I was back in those times when I felt so fulfilled, without worries, waking up next to the man who made me his wife.

I watched him without erasing my smile for a long time, and he also smiled without removing his eyes from mine. That's when I realized that this wasn't my imagination, or a dream, or my mind playing a trick on me.

I had just woken up in the same bed as Alexander Lancaster, and what I was embracing wasn't a pillow, it was his body that was very close to mine, filling me with warmth. And I immediately remembered that the wonderful scent I couldn't recall a moment ago was his.

I wiped the smile off my lips and sat up, remembering how I had ended up in that bed, in that room, and waking up with my ex-husband. The images immediately rushed into my head, making my cheeks blush with embarrassment.

Yesterday, I had completely lost control of myself and did things that I would never do in my right mind. I remembered every word I said to Alexander, and the feelings that surfaced within me before and after passionately kissing him. And if I woke up in the same bed as him, it was because I had asked him when he stopped before going further than a simple kiss.

No, no, no. No.

That tea, that cup of tea made me lose my mind, made me look like a complete idiot, as if I had been drunk. And honestly, I would have preferred to be drunk, then I would forget what happened yesterday, or rather, what I did. Now I didn't know where to hide my face out of embarrassment.

I cleared my throat while rubbing my temples, not knowing what to say or how to escape from here. But that would be very cowardly of me, there was no other way than to face the consequences of my actions.

-Um, Alexander, I... I'm sorry for putting you in this situation. I shouldn't be here.- I started apologizing sincerely since I didn't know where to begin. Alexander didn't move from his place, he remained lying on the bed with one arm supporting his weight to look at me better, and in his eyes, I could see a hint of amusement.

-Anna brought breakfast. Let's eat first, then we talk, does that sound good?- I fell silent when Alexander ignored what I had just said and changed the topic abruptly. I didn't object because I was very hungry.

Yesterday's tea, besides relaxing me more than necessary, had also dispelled any negative feelings and thoughts. I no longer felt angry at Alexander, it was as if he had taken all the bad with him, leaving me relieved and serene. Although perhaps the conversation with Rachel had a lot to do with it.

At the moment, shame was overwhelming me.

What kind of miraculous tea did I drink?

After a long silence, I nodded in response, and Alexander smiled satisfied before getting up from bed and bringing the breakfast tray that Anna had left I don't know when. I just hope that the food didn't have the same effect as the tea.

Alexander placed the tray on my lap and sat next to me with his own tray. I bit my lower lip while thinking about the strange situation; I was in Alexander's house, in his room, in his bed, having breakfast together like we used to.

-Thank you.- I said, dispelling those thoughts that made me feel like a fool, and he smiled in response before tasting his food. Breakfast passed in complete silence, which I appreciated, as I took the opportunity to clarify my thoughts and make the embarrassment of what I did yesterday completely disappear.

However, bite after bite, I couldn't help but remember the moment I threw myself into Alexander's arms to passionately kiss him, openly showing him that I was willing to go further. Fortunately, he was very respectful and stopped me, otherwise I would be regretting it at this moment.

When I took the last sip of my orange juice, Alexander took the trouble of removing the trays and after leaving them on the table, he returned to the bed and sat down beside me, staring at the ceiling. I didn't know what was going through his head at this moment, and the nerves starting to bubble in my system prevented me from starting a conversation with him. I didn't even know what to talk about, although there were many pending topics.

-You talked to Rachel.- He said next to me. It sounded more like a statement than a question, and of all the topics, he started with the one I didn't want to touch at this moment, but we owed each other a conversation and it was better sooner rather than later.

With my gaze fixed on the ceiling, just like Alexander, I replied, -I spoke to her.- Although inside I was a bundle of nerves, I felt comfortable speaking civilly for the first time with Alexander without an insult towards him passing through my mind.

-And, what do you think about it?- He asked beside me, crossing his arms over his chest, and a sigh escaped from my lips.

I thought many things about it, but the words that were most difficult for me and that Alexander deserved to hear came out of my lips. -I've been hard on you all this time, I've let myself be carried away by anger because every time I saw you, I saw that man I found with my friend, and even though now I find out that nothing happened, it is inevitable to think about it.- I paused as I remembered the conversation with my father. Both made wrong decisions under the pressure of knowing that danger was near, both had the sole intention of protecting me, putting their peace and happiness at risk.

I was about to continue saying what I thought, but Alexander interrupted me, looking away from the ceiling and adjusting to look at me from the side. -Sarah Doinel is accepting that she was tough on me. That tea has done you good, do you want more?- He said in a playful tone, and I couldn't help but laugh without looking at him, as I didn't want him to notice the embarrassment still reflected in my eyes when I remembered my actions from yesterday. When my laughter ceased, I looked at Alexander, who now had a serious expression.

-No, thank you. I don't want to lose my sanity again. Yesterday I wasn't thinking clearly. I apologize for what I did, I feel embarrassed.- I said, as I settled on the bed just like he did a moment ago, so that we were facing each other.

-You weren't thinking clearly? I would say you've never been more sane. Do you know why? Because you broke down that stone wall that you built over the years, because your heart is starting to thaw, because it's the first time you say and do what you feel without the anger you've accumulated stopping you, because you put your pride aside. Can't you see it? We're talking without you starting to scold me. Do you really not want any more tea?- A smile appeared on his lips after his question, and I couldn't help but admire his curved lips and how well he looked when he smiled.

An impulse took hold of me, and this time I was fully aware when I closed the distance between us, pressing our lips together and taking him by surprise. Alexander didn't react until I moved my lips over his in a deep but gentle kiss that made me tremble. His hand traveled to my cheek, and I ran my tongue over his lower lip, asking permission for our tongues to touch. I was very aware of what I was doing now, and it was what I wanted since the moment I opened my eyes, but I didn't want to admit it.