

Chapter 141 - Divorced Heiress

-Mr. Alexander, it didn't have to come to that extreme. If I had known that you would react that way, I would have simply changed the color of the dress, even if it made me furious. But I prefer to avoid it.- Jimena said, sounding stunned by the recent events.

I had to pace back and forth to try to stabilize myself.

-Jimena, this has nothing to do with the design. You're doing a great job. Paul's problem is with me, and he's taking it out on our effort to push the collection forward.- I clarified to Jimena so she wouldn't feel guilty, although it was futile. The poor woman was on edge, clearly hurt.

-Take the rest of the day off, go rest, and don't give anyone any explanations.-

Her panicked look made it clear that she didn't dare to do that after the heated confrontation with Paul.

-You work for me, and in this company, or any other, you only receive my orders.-

With that, Jimena became more understanding and nodded before returning to the models and organizing her things.

I couldn't stay a minute longer in this place. I was too tense, and there was only one person on the planet who could change my mood just by seeing her.

I left Jimena's workshop heading to my office, and as I passed by Paul's office, I stopped when I overheard a conversation. Apparently, he was on a call, but it clearly had nothing to do with work.

-You're daydreaming.- He said. I didn't know exactly what he was talking about, but what was certain was that he was talking to a woman. Quickly, I pulled out my phone and activated the voice recorder.

-I have given you enough money to live a life of luxury. You won't receive a single cent more from me. I'm doing too much for you by lending you the services of my lawyers.-

Now I knew the case was serious with the mention of his lawyers. I supposed it had to do with the Richmans.

-I'm not in the mood to put up with you... Look, I don't care that you can't enjoy the money. You knew the risks you were taking, and yet you accepted. And don't you dare threaten me. Just as my lawyers are helping you, they can also bury you, and your parents will suffer the consequences of even mentioning the Dubois name. Do not call me again.-

I assumed the call ended when it fell silent, and I hurried to save the recording as I walked away from his office, continuing on my way to mine. Paul had not mentioned any names during the call, but the situation matched perfectly with Rachel's. She received money in exchange for destroying my marriage with Sarah, and when she was discovered, Paul felt cornered to the point that he paid his lawyers to take care of her case. To make matters worse, he had threatened to harm her parents if she dared to reveal everything she knew.

The recording could be very useful to sink Paul. This was a crucial moment, and now more than ever, I had to protect my family. I hastily gathered my things and called Cristina to accompany me to my apartment. I would need her help to pack the most necessary things, as from today onwards, I would stay in Villa Doinel to ensure their safety.

I stopped the car in front of Sarah's company and sat for a few minutes with my hands on the steering wheel, contemplating whether I should go inside or simply wait for her to come out. She had a board meeting today, and I didn't want to interrupt it. However, the desire to see her as soon as possible won, because ever since the day we made love, I hadn't had any time for her. I was desperate to have her in my arms, and now I had the whole day free to dedicate to her and Tristan.

When I asked for Sarah, they told me she was in the design workshop. I felt relieved to know that the meeting was already over, and the rest was just protocol. I took a deep breath and walked towards the indicated place. When I saw her from behind, looking so elegant and focused on the garment in her hands, all the bad thoughts vanished from my mind as if by magic. She was magical. I didn't wait for a second longer without feeling her warm skin in my hands, so I approached and surprised her with a waist embrace.

I avoided telling her what had happened at the company because I didn't want to worry her or stress her out even more than she had been in the past few days. However, I directly informed her that I would be staying in the villa and wouldn't accept a no as an answer.

Our conversation was interrupted by a phone call, and worry settled in my chest when she was left speechless, listening to what they were saying on the other side of the line. Then, a single word came out of her mouth, and I immediately knew it was related to the conversation I had "accidentally" overheard in Paul's office and that my suspicions were true. The call from Paul was with Rachel.

-You will confess.- Sarah said, and I expected her to say something more than that.

-Rachel, your parents are not in danger. I have made sure to protect them. No, do not speak with the Richman lawyers. My lawyers will take care of your case from today. I will find a way to have your sentence reduced or, in the best possible scenario, grant you freedom.-

I expected nothing less from Sarah. She was acting with intelligence and maturity. She was extending a hand to the person who wanted to harm her. However, Sarah would be the one to benefit the most from Rachel's confession, as she would have a witness who would sink the Dubois.

-I won't be able to travel, but I assure you that the lawyers will meet with you today and take care of everything. Don't be afraid, everything will turn out fine. I will stay updated on everything. Thank you, Rachel, you are making the right decision.- Sarah ended the call and looked at me astonished. I didn't know what to do about it. I couldn't show surprise when I knew more than she did, when I knew what motivated Rachel to confess.

-Rachel is going to testify.- Sarah said, almost in a whisper, and without expecting it, she threw herself into my arms while laughing with happiness. I couldn't do anything but hug her back and smile at how elated she was.

-I can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel.- She said as she pulled away from me. Suddenly, she surprised me by leaving a fleeting kiss on my lips before heading back to the workshop.

-I'm sorry, I have to go. If there are any updates, you can inform Vincent. And Vincent, I'll be waiting for you at home. We need to talk.-

I chuckled from my place, feeling a pleasant sensation in my chest as I watched Sarah so lively. I waited for her to say goodbye and hand Abby the keys to her car before she came back to me with a radiant smile on her face that made her even more beautiful.

-Did I mention how much I love seeing you smile?- I asked as I intertwined my fingers with hers, letting her lead me hurriedly through the unfamiliar hallways of the company. I had no idea where we were going, and I didn't care as long as it was her holding my hand. Her green eyes stopped on me for a few seconds, and I noticed her cheeks had turned pink.

-The good news is starting to come, and I'll help you make everything perfect.- I said.

She stopped when we arrived at the door of what looked like the boardroom and looked at me again with a sparkle in her eyes that hadn't appeared in a long time.

-Everything will turn out perfectly. Someone once told me that no hardship lasts a hundred years, and they're absolutely right.- She said.

A smile formed on my face as she repeated the words I had said to her a few days ago, and without waiting for a response from me, she opened the door we had stopped in front of and quickly searched for Tristan, who was sleeping on the couch under Jack's care. When she came out, I took our son from her so that she wouldn't strain herself carrying him to the car, and she stood in front of me, looking at me without wiping the smile from her face as the following words naturally escaped her mouth, as if she hadn't disagreed a moment ago with the idea of us temporarily living under the same roof, and it completely brightened my day.

-Today is a wonderful day for you to move in with us.-

Chapter 91 Family lunch.

Chapter 142 - Divorced Heiress

SARAH.

The first thing I did when we arrived at the Villa was leave Tristan with Alexander and lock myself in my father's office to call my lawyers and initiate the proceedings in Rachel's case.

I asked them to handle the case discreetly, no one could find out that Rachel was going to testify against the Dubois, not even the Richman lawyers could know. There were many lives in danger and I had to be very cautious with each step we took in this process.

I couldn't waste time, I was afraid that Rachel would change her mind about confessing or that Paul would find out and harm her to keep her quiet.

After more than half an hour on the call, I hung up the phone and sat down while processing everything that was happening. I had no idea why Rachel had changed her mind, and I wanted to believe that she was redeeming herself, that she wanted to repair the grave mistake she made.

But something told me that there was something else behind her decision. Either way, it was evidence against the Dubois family, enough to put them away for a long time. And during that time, I would gather even the tiniest pieces of evidence to ensure their sentence was increased.

My smile vanished when the smell of something burning filled my nostrils. I stood up, leaving my things on the desk, and hurried out of the office to find the source of the smell. It wasn't difficult to find, as smoke was coming out of the kitchen, spreading throughout the house.

Panic took hold of me, thinking it was a fire. But instead of calling the firefighters, I covered my nose and tried to make my way through the smoke, waving my free arm in the air to enter the kitchen.

I didn't see any fire, instead, I came across a scene that almost made me burst out laughing.

Alexander was opening the windows to let the smoke dissipate and moving a kitchen towel back and forth, while a cooking video played on the tablet on the table. I soon realized that the sink was overflowing, and the smoke was from the water spilling onto a completely burnt frying pan.

-Alexander, what are you doing?- I said, and he got startled before turning to look at me, embarrassed.

I couldn't help but laugh at the sight of him with his sleeves rolled up and Maga's apron on. He stopped waving the kitchen towel in the air and placed his hands on his hips, quickly assessing the mess he had caused, then looked back at me with an innocent smile.

-I wanted to prepare lunch for my wife and son, but I have confirmed that I am better at business than culinary arts.- He said before approaching the sink to shut off the water.

He walked towards me through the disappearing smoke. I couldn't stop laughing while also feeling touched because Alexander had never cooked in his life and he dared to try it for us.

-I'm sorry, my love, I wanted to surprise you. I followed everything step by step, but I must have done something wrong. At least the spaghetti is safe.- He said.

-And you did surprise me.- I said with amusement, looking at the burnt frying pan in the sink. Alexander huffed and bit his lower lip as if he was dissatisfied with himself.

-I want to try the saved spaghetti.- I said, walking into the kitchen where there was a pot with a very large amount of spaghetti, enough to feed twenty people.

Alexander came to my side and looked at me hesitantly when I took a small portion to taste it. To be honest, it didn't look good, it was overcooked.

Without second thoughts, I tried it under his expectant and nervous gaze. My taste buds immediately sensed the excess salt, and I chewed quickly to swallow it, avoiding making a disgusted face. However, the urge to cough completely overwhelmed me.

-Sarah, for heaven's sake, I shouldn't have let you taste it.- Alexander didn't know what to do, he looked around for something to make the cough disappear and lightly patted my back as if that was the solution. Soon, he rushed to pour a glass of water and helped me drink it. That was the solution.

-Forgive me, my love, my food almost killed you.- He said as the cough disappeared. -You know what? I'll order food, I don't want to poison anyone.-

I shook my head, finishing the last drop and when I was calmer and without the excess of salt in my mouth, I spoke.

-No need, stay and we'll prepare lunch together.- I suggested because I didn't want to take away the excitement of making such a nice gesture for us.

Alexander's eyes lit up, but he shook his head.

-No, not at all, I... I...- He left the word hanging when he realized my gaze, I was telling him with my eyes that there was no valid excuse to refuse, so he wiped his hands on the apron and said, - I'll clean up the mess I made and we can start.-

I couldn't deny that I enjoyed every second of cooking with Alexander, it was the first time we shared a moment like this despite the years we had been together, I liked this new version of Alexander, he was being more dedicated, more attentive, a better person, and above all, much more loving than he was in the past.

Maga arrived with Tristan freshly bathed, and our son wanted to join us. Alexander lifted him up so he could help pass me the ingredients I asked for, and between games, laughter, and Alexander's bad jokes, we finished preparing spaghetti with bolognese sauce and we ate as a family, as if we hadn't gone through so many obstacles, so much deceit, so many betrayals.

The only thing that prevented me from being completely happy was the Dubois family.

Chapter 91 Family lunch part 2

Chapter 143 - Divorced Heiress

Vincent arrived at the villa just as we finished eating, and from the seriousness on his face, it seemed that Abby's issue was still bothering him, but he was the only one responsible for things turning out this way, as he knew my friend was willing to start a serious relationship with him and make him feel loved, without any contracts involved.

-I'm here now, what do you need to talk to me about?- He asked coldly as he sat on the couch, rubbing his temples.

Alexander and I looked at each other at the same time, due to my cousin's bad mood, as he didn't usually use that tone of voice when talking to me, let alone look so irritated.

I didn't want to pay attention to him or get involved in his problems, so I went straight to the point, bringing up the topic that was most important at the moment.

-I didn't want to tell you at the company because there were too many people, but I want you to know that Rachel is going to confess.- I said. He stopped massaging his forehead and looked at me as if he couldn't believe what I had just said.

Yes, it seemed unreal that Rachel had made the decision to talk, but fortunately, she did.

-Are you serious? Is it certain that she will? Could it be a trap? Paul might have found out that you went to visit her to convince her and he might be setting a trap for us.-

Vincent's distrust made me doubt, and I remained silent thinking about the great possibility that it could be true, they could be playing with us, with the last hope we had. Before I could answer

with doubts, Alexander took out his phone from his pants pocket and placed it on the coffee table.

-Maybe this is the reason why she changed her mind.- Alexander said before a voice coming from his phone reached my ears, and immediately I recognized it, it was Paul.

-You're daydreaming. I've given you enough money to live a life of luxury, you won't receive a single cent more from me, I'm doing too much for you by lending you the services of my lawyers. I'm not in the mood to put up with you...

-Look, I don't care that you can't enjoy the money, you knew the risk you were taking and still accepted it. And don't you dare threaten me, just like my lawyers are helping you, they can sink you, and your parents will pay the consequences of even mentioning the Dubois name. Don't call me again.-

I looked at Alexander, surprised by that recording he made of Paul, which he had not mentioned until now.

An uncomfortable feeling settled in my chest just knowing that he had hidden it from me when I received Rachel's call, and I was only finding out about this now. Now I understood why he wasn't as surprised as I was.

-This is good evidence for Rachel's confession. Good work, Alexander. I will increase the security for the Duncans, no, I will take them out of the country. Rachel is putting herself at great risk.-

Vincent got up from the couch and went out to the garden while dialing someone on his phone. I took advantage of Vincent leaving us alone and turned to look expressionless at Alexander, who avoided looking at me while playing with Tristan, who was restless on his lap.

- Is there anything else that the great Alexander Lancaster has forgotten to tell me? - I asked with a fake smile, even though it wasn't a topic that harmed us but rather benefited us.

I couldn't help but feel dissatisfied. We were supposed to not hide anything from each other, and if we hadn't brought up the subject, he still wouldn't have mentioned it.

Alexander looked at me silently for a moment as if he were mentally debating, and I could see his Adam's apple moving up and down as he swallowed.

-Sarah, I didn't forget to tell you. I didn't tell you earlier because I was waiting for Vincent to inform both of you.-

His answer didn't entirely convince me, and his body language made me uneasy.

- I'm sorry, if I knew it would upset you, I would have told you from the moment I saw you.

- I'm not upset, I'm just worried. We already know how everything ended up because of hiding so much relevant information - I responded honestly. The lack of communication and trust was what ruined our marriage. I didn't want the same story to repeat itself.

- I know, but I haven't hidden this information from you. Don't look at me like that, you'll scare Tristan - He used our son as an excuse, and I rolled my eyes. I softened my gaze as he approached me while still playing with Tristan's hands.

-Okay, I'm sorry. It wasn't my intention to worry you. How about we forget this little inconvenience with a family dinner?-

I let out a slight laugh at his proposal and immediately shook my head.

-For the good of everyone, you won't enter the kitchen alone again- I warned him, reminding him that he almost caused a fire. He laughed playfully, infecting Tristan who laughed without knowing the reason.

-They're making fun of me, great - He pretended to be offended.

-I have good news for you. Your kitchen will be safe. I'll take you somewhere outside the city, where we can forget about our problems, even if it's just for a few hours, and in the process, you forgive me. Or do you prefer that I earn your forgiveness in another way? - He whispered the last part near my face, and I opened my eyes in surprise that he dared to say that in front of Tristan.

-I already have everything arranged. Rachel's parents are leaving the country today. They'll be well hidden and protected in London-

Vincent arrived, interrupting our conversation, and I mentally thanked him because I didn't know how to respond to Alexander, although I didn't dislike the idea.

-Thank you, Vincent. I truly hope everything goes well without any losses- I said, moving away a bit from Alexander and disguising the fact that his words gave me chills.

-Everything is going to be fine. We're one step ahead, and they don't know it. The situation is improving- Vincent responded with better spirits than he had when he arrived, but it all went downhill when Abby cheerfully entered through the door.

-Hi, everyone- Abby greeted with a bright smile that could infect anyone, except Vincent, who frowned before standing up abruptly and approaching her, pretending to be furious with her. He cleared his throat before speaking to her.

-Can we talk?- He asked with a tense jaw, and she looked at him with a raised eyebrow before nodding and heading out the door, expecting Vincent to follow her.

-Excuse me, I need to...-

-Go after her, we don't need explanations- Alexander encouraged him, and Vincent left after letting out a sigh.

- I'll have to give my cousin some advice-

I turned sharply to look at him as I laughed in his face.

-Just not about cooking, please.-

Chapter 92 Lovers.

Chapter 144 - Divorced Heiress

After more than two hours on the outskirts of the city, Alexander parked outside a restaurant that had a beautiful countryside look. Despite the dark sky, I could appreciate the green areas surrounding the wooden and glass structure from the car.

Alexander wasn't lying when he said we would be far away from everything and everyone. This place was perfect to escape from the reality that had our souls hanging by a thread. It was a beautiful and comfortable place to spend a peaceful and tranquil night with family, as always, I thought about my parents.

Tristan was restless throughout the journey in his special seat in the back, and he started celebrating out loud when he realized we had arrived. I almost joined in the celebration because I was anxious to get there, and Alexander wouldn't tell me how much longer or where it was.

-How did you find out about this place? It's beautiful and different.- I couldn't help but ask when he turned off the car engine with a satisfied smile.

He turned his face to look at me, and I could see a sparkle in his eyes, even though we were only lit by the dim light of the car.

-I was recommended this place, I know it's far, but every minute of the journey will be worth it.- Alexander replied before intertwining his fingers with mine and planting a tender kiss on my knuckles that made me shiver. But I remained expressionless, as I was still a little upset with him. I had a slight feeling that he was hiding something from me, or maybe I was just being overly suspicious.

-I will make up for the unpleasant time I put you through, darling.- He said.

-I hope so.- I said, pulling my hand away from his and forcing a smile before getting out of the car. The cool breeze of the surroundings hit my face, and I took a deep breath, feeling the negative energy leaving as I exhaled. It was definitely a very relaxing place.

I immediately opened the back door to find Tristan, who was desperate to get out and enjoy nature and, of course, enter the restaurant.

When I put Tristan on the ground, the first thing he did was run to Alexander, who was approaching us calmly. Tristan wrapped his little arms around Alexander's leg and looked up at him with a wide smile.

-Dad, I really like this place, can we stay until tomorrow?- He asked in a sweet voice, the one he used to convince anyone to indulge his whims.

Alexander gave a genuine smile that reached his eyes and bent down to Tristan's height. He ruffled his dark hair, and I watched intently, hoping he would give a good excuse to deny his request. We couldn't stay, we had many things to do. He had to go to Doinel to continue working on the collection, and I had to take care of L&J and stay updated on every step of Rachel's case.

-I don't think your mother will agree, but I'll make an effort to convince her.- Alexander said quietly, trying to keep it from Tristan, but he didn't succeed. I gave him a stern look, and he realized I heard everything.

-Aren't you hungry? Let's go inside.- He said to Tristan, trying to divert the attention, and he stood up to take his little hand.

-Let's go, Mom.- Tristan took my hand with his free hand as I approached them, and I couldn't help but give Alexander a warning look, to which he responded with a wink.

-Did you know there are horses in this place?- Alexander spoke to Tristan as we walked towards the restaurant entrance.

-Really? Where are they?- Tristan excitedly looked around the field illuminated by old spotlights that led to a path surrounded by trees.

-He's afraid of horses.- I informed Alexander in a whisper, and his mouth opened in shock and embarrassment upon learning that. There were many things he still didn't know about his son, but it was only a matter of time before he was informed about even the tiniest details.

He was making an effort to be a good father to Tristan. -Right now, the horses are sleeping. They've had a very productive day carrying around little kids who are as strong as you. Have you ever seen one up close?-

Alexander knew what he was secretly plotting. He wanted to help Tristan overcome his fear, and I feared he might think of taking him near a horse, as my son panicked just by seeing them from a distance, and it would be a very difficult task to calm him down.

- No. - Tristan responded, lowering his gaze as if he wasn't interested in the subject, but he knew that it embarrassed him to admit that he was afraid of something, he wouldn't admit it out loud.

- Alexander, no. - I said, so that he wouldn't keep insisting, and he nodded.

Upon arriving at the entrance, we were greeted by a waiter who led us to the second floor when Alexander gave his name, now I found out that he even had a reservation.

Inside, the place was better than it looked from the outside, although it looked ostentatious and huge, the atmosphere was cozy and the smell of wood filled my nostrils, the large glass windows allowed us to observe the distant city lights and a part of the countryside that surrounded the restaurant.

Beautiful.

Our table was right next to one of the windows overlooking the city, Tristan was more than excited admiring the lights that, to him, looked like stars, and Alexander couldn't hide his smile at seeing him enjoy the place he brought us to.

After placing our order, I joined Tristan, who was sitting next to me, to enjoy the view, and I wondered how I didn't know about the existence of this liberating place before, a place that transmitted peace and made you forget all worries, far from problems, far from so much evil, far from unscrupulous people.

Chapter 92 Lovers part 2

Chapter 145 - Divorced Heiress

-This has to be a joke, even in the soup.-

I heard Alexander's frustrated murmuring, and my sight automatically traveled to him with curiosity, I found him staring fixedly towards another side inside the restaurant, covering his lips with his clenched hand.

Curiosity to know what had made him react that way won me over, and I didn't hesitate a second to follow his gaze, which was fixed on the other side of the restaurant, and my body tensed as I discovered the reason for his words and his frustration.

Peace and tranquility were replaced by an overflowing feeling of hatred and anger. It was hard for me to believe what I was seeing, couldn't you escape reality successfully?

A few tables away, at a great distance from ours, was the cause of all my misfortunes, the man I considered a good friend and turned out to be the worst scum, the being I despised the most in the world.

Paul was sitting unconcerned with a glass of wine in his hand, but he was not alone, he was accompanied by a woman who vaguely seemed familiar to me, and as I searched my memory, I realized that both were shamelessly flirting while talking about who knew what.

Paul had a half-smile with an upright posture, presenting himself as an imposing man, and the woman was shamelessly caressing his shoulder with her fingers.

It was clear that they had no idea that we were in the same place, otherwise, he would have approached to disturb our family moment, although in a way, he had already achieved it.

- Pinch me, I can't believe what I'm seeing. - I murmured, leaving my arm on the table without averting my gaze from that table, and I glared at Alexander when I felt him actually pinch me.

-I wasn't serious.- I said, rubbing my arm with a furrowed brow, and Alexander looked at me with a slight embarrassed smile.

-I'm sorry, love, your arm was so close that I thought you really wanted it.- He responded in a low voice and then turned his gaze towards the scumbag, but he took the restaurant menu to cover his face indiscreetly, anyone could tell that he was hiding.

-What a great disguise, no one would recognize you in that way.- I said sarcastically and took the menu from his hands before they realized we were here. -All you're achieving is drawing attention, if we don't look at them too much, they won't realize our presence, their table is too far away.-

-But Sarah, can't you see that they're very intimate? That woman could be his lover or his accomplice.-

Hearing the word lover, I remembered where I had seen that woman before, and I quickly covered my face with the menu I took from Alexander to watch them without them catching me.

My eyes widened as I saw Paul leave a kiss on the back of her hand that lasted longer than I imagined.

-Alexander.- I whispered to him as if they could hear us from here, which was impossible, not only because of the distance, but because the place was filled with a soft piano melody. I turned my gaze to Alexander to tell him who that woman was, and I found him looking at me with narrowed eyes.

-Now who is getting attention? - He asked before I could tell him what I knew, and I smiled innocently as I left the letter on the table.

I approached him discreetly over the table, so I could whisper to him without needing to draw attention with a letter covering us indiscreetly.

-That woman is Lawyer Richman.- Alexander's eyes opened wide, just like mine did when I remembered, and he discreetly looked at them again. Instead, I turned my back to them and focused on Tristan, who was pointing at the dark sky adorned with glittering stars.

-They are lovers, he is kissing her.- Alexander informed me about the movements I couldn't witness discreetly, and I saw him taking a stealthy photo with his phone, and I wished the earth would swallow me when the flash went off.

- Oh no.-

-What have you done, Alexander Lancaster?! - I shouted in a whisper, and Alexander looked away from Paul's table and pretended to take photos of me with Tristan.

- Act as if you don't know we are in the same place. - He muttered between his teeth, not moving his lips as he smiled, pretending to enjoy the moment.

-What? Why? Has he noticed? - I asked alarmed, but I didn't take my eyes off the outside through the restaurant window. I didn't dare to look back, even though I was dying to know what was happening, sorry, what Alexander had caused.

-Worse than that, he's coming closer. - He murmured discreetly, before taking another photo, and I closed my eyes as if that was enough to disappear from the face of the earth.

-What? - I remained still in my place and wanted to strangle him for the imprudence he had just committed. The last thing we wanted was to draw attention, and it was the first thing Alexander did.

When I opened my eyes, I found Tristan's curious gaze, and in the next second, he looked at Alexander.

- Mom, why are you talking quietly? - Tristan asked in a low voice, ignoring what was happening around him.

Ignorance was a privilege that almost no one knew how to appreciate.

-It's because the horses are sleeping and they can hear us. - I made up the first thing that came to mind, and now that I thought about it, it was the cheapest and stupidest excuse I could have ever said. But the nerves overwhelmed me just by knowing that Paul would arrive at our table at any moment.

- Act naturally. -

I heard Alexander's last whisper, and the nerves increased when I felt an unpleasant chill run through me as I heard that disgusting and deep voice that made me want to vomit.

-What a surprise! The Lancaster Doinel family is gathered here today, pretending to be a happy family. -

I hugged Tristan from behind in a protective manner and turned to observe the smiling face of that shameless man.

-Congratulations! There will soon be a wedding for the second time. I have the privilege of knowing the first couple who marry, divorce, and get married again. What can you call it? Stumbling twice on the same stone?-

Chapter 93 Confrontation.

Chapter 146 - Divorced Heiress

In a matter of seconds, the atmosphere became completely uncomfortable with Paul's presence and I couldn't help but frown at the nonsense that came out of his mouth. It seemed pathetic of him to approach our table just to mock us by inventing that Alexander and I were getting married again.

It made my blood boil to see his smug smile as he alternated his gaze between my face and Alexander's. It was clear that all he wanted was to provoke us and ruin the time we spent as a family.

I gave Alexander a fleeting and piercing look because he wouldn't have even noticed our presence if he had taken the time and effort to turn off the flash on his phone. However, I noticed that Alexander's muscles were completely tense and his fists were clenched on the table as he defiantly stared at the cretin in front of us.

I decided to break the silence and put an end to this stupidity once and for all.

-Did you lose something? Or, are you following us, Paul?- I asked, although I knew that our encounter was nothing more than an unpleasant coincidence. Otherwise, he wouldn't dare to come with his lover and kiss her in public.

Paul laughed humorlessly and turned his disgusting gaze towards me. My icy stare was full of indifference, but inside, I was growing more and more disgusted with him.

-Follow you? Don't flatter yourselves, you're not that important. This is just a coincidence. I come to this place very often, it brings me so much peace, you can breathe the fresh air, don't you think?- Paul spoke as if he were the kindest person in the world.

I glanced quickly at the table where he had been sitting, sharing a romantic night with lawyer Richman, but to my surprise, there were no traces of that woman. It was as if she had never been here. His lover vanished.

-Peace, fresh air.- Alexander repeated his words as he nodded as if he agreed, but he wasn't entirely convinced.

-Darling, do you agree with what Mr. Dubois is saying?- He asked me sarcastically. I nodded my head in the same way that Alexander did, pretending to agree when in reality, it was the opposite.

-Yes, of course, that's what I was feeling until the atmosphere was contaminated by the presence of this pest. - I responded, looking at Paul, making it clear that he was the pest I was referring to.

- What a great sense of humor, Sari. That's not what you told me that night on the cruise with the marvelous view of New York City, after toasting with the finest bottle of champagne.-

Every muscle in my body tensed when Paul reminded me of that day, that night when I believed in him, that day when I was still blindfolded, believing that his feelings and words were real, but it was all a strategy to get my attention. That day when Paul kissed me.

Flashback.

Before I could say a word, he closed the gap between us as his lips firmly met mine.

My body froze as his soft lips, tasting of champagne, moved tentatively, urging me to follow his lead. My breath became unstable and I felt consumed by nerves.

He cradled my cheek in his hand and I let myself go with the moment, responding to Paul's unexpected kiss. I felt my heartbeats increase more and more, and when I felt his hand traveling from my waist to my back, I realized what we were doing.

He was kissing me.

End of Flashback.

Now that he reminded me of it, the urge to vomit appeared immediately. I must have been completely crazy to feel even the slightest thing for that wretched man with that kiss that now disgusted me, even though it happened a long time ago. I wanted to clean my mouth for allowing him to kiss me.

How disgusting.

-The cruise? What cruise are you talking about?- Alexander's voice snapped me out of my thoughts, but I didn't take my eyes off Paul. I looked at him defiantly, but also with indifference. He was very mistaken if he thought that was going to destabilize us.

- Your fiancée didn't tell you? - He asked, holding his mocking gaze. I arched an eyebrow when he referred to me again as Alexander's future wife.

-What a shame. I think there shouldn't be secrets between you, but don't worry, I'll do you the favor of telling you. Sarah and I had a date that escalated. What we did is not what mere friends do, and I remember it every night.-

His eyes shamelessly roamed over me, and I let out a humorless laugh at his attempt to give incomplete information that left much to the imagination. I wanted to insinuate that we slept together and provoke Alexander.

And he succeeded.

Alexander abruptly stood up from his seat, catching my attention, and I could see his flushed cheeks and angry gaze. Tristan became agitated beside me, seeing his father's reaction, and I immediately picked him up in my arms to stand up from my seat and stand between the two men who were staring each other down.

- Alex, honey, our child is here and getting scared. -

I forced a smile for Tristan, who didn't seem comfortable with the confrontation, and honestly, no one was.

- I'll handle this. - I whispered the last part just so Alexander could hear and hopefully calm the visible desire he had to punch Paul in the face, and it worked, although he continued to give him an intimidating look. Alexander lifted our son in his arms and I thanked him with a glance before turning towards Paul with a fake half-smile.

- Are you going to tell me you didn't enjoy it? I bet you want to do it again. - He asked, blatantly looking at me, and I approached him closely enough to grab him tightly by the tie and tighten it around his neck. His eyes widened in surprise at my action and he tried to break free from my grasp, but I held on with all my strength, feeling my contempt for Paul growing with every second I spent near him.

- Not even in your wildest dreams, Paul Dubois. Everyone can be stupid sometimes, but you abuse it. You don't have the guts to call what happened by its name. Are you so frustrated by not falling for your dirty game? I'd be sick to let you kiss me again, you disgust me, just seeing your face makes me sick... You know, I'd like to insult you right now, but looking at you closely, I'm sure I couldn't do it as well as nature did with you. -

I tightened his tie even more to the point where he couldn't breathe, and then I released him in the next second when I felt Alexander's hand on my waist.

Paul coughed once he was free from my grip and took a deep breath to recover. He adjusted his tie knot and looked at me without a hint of grace, but soon his gaze followed the path of my hands as I fixed the unruly strands of hair that fell over my forehead due to the physical effort I had just exerted, and he smiled as if he had realized something that I was unaware of.

- Mr. Lancaster, apparently your company is not as successful as you claim if you can't buy Sarah a ring she deserves. -

I furrowed my brow, completely confused by his words. He was bringing up that topic again for God knows where.

-Oh, no, I understand now. What you told me was a lie, you're not going to get married. -

/Chapter 93 Confrontation part 2

Chapter 147 - Divorced Heiress

I quickly realized what he was saying and why he mentioned more than once that I was engaged to Alexander. Alexander himself had made up that story and had hidden it from me all this time.

Paul mocked us with an amused laugh, and I felt Alexander tense up behind me.

I wasn't sure if he was going to respond to the bastard Paul, so I took a deep breath while taking Alexander's left hand and exposed it for everyone to see.

-You're wrong, Paul. Do you see this?- I pointed to the wedding ring that, surprisingly, Alexander still wore on his finger, despite being a divorced man, and Paul's laughter immediately ceased. I hoped that he would believe it was an engagement ring and shut him up once and for all. I couldn't stand him for another second.

-I proposed to Alexander. Indeed, we are getting married.- I lied without hesitation, and Paul believed it very easily.

Even though Alexander hadn't been honest with me from the beginning and I knew that he was the one hiding it from me, I wasn't going to give Paul any reason to continue mocking us. With that, I left him speechless, and Alexander seemed to relax considerably.

-What a shame, Sarah. I thought you were smart. I thought you wanted your parents' company, the company that several generations have worked for. You just wasted the only opportunity you had to get it back, and you know what the condition was.-

I rolled my eyes at the memory of his outrageous condition, marrying him, but I would have to be insane to accept it, no matter how much I wanted to recover my parents' company.

Deep down, I knew that I would find a solution at some point, especially with Rachel's confession and the help of my parents. Their days were numbered and everything would return to normal.

-Why don't you just leave? Get that idea out of your head before I beat it out of you. She will never marry such a despicable creature like you. It's just a matter of time before Sarah takes back what's rightfully hers. Now, if you'll excuse us, we'll continue enjoying our family night in a peaceful environment, with the excellent view and fresh air. - Alexander spoke completely seriously and took me by the waist, guiding me back to my seat.

I gave one last disdainful look to Paul and accepted Tristan when Alexander handed him back to me, sitting him next to me as we were initially.

Paul remained standing in his place, but we ignored him when Alexander took my hands in his and gave me a long kiss, before ruffling Tristan's hair, who remained confused and didn't say a word about what was happening.

Poor Tristan, I allowed him to witness such a scene and now I was internally scolding myself for letting Paul disturb our night.

Just when I thought Paul would stand there all night, I heard his heavy footsteps hastily moving away from our table.

I glanced at the place where he had been a few seconds ago, making sure he had really left, and when I realized he was nowhere to be found, I let go of Alexander's hands to give him a stern look.

-We're getting married and I was the last to know. - I said as if it were the most casual thing in the world, suppressing the urge to tell him he was a liar, that he wasn't keeping up with our agreement to tell each other everything to avoid misunderstandings or scenes like this.

-Sarah...-

-I would have found out when I was at the altar.- I interrupted him, speaking with obvious sarcasm, and Alexander looked embarrassed as he shook his head.

-What happened on that cruise with Paul?-

-I would have found out the moment I was asked if I accept marrying Alexander Lancaster.- I interrupted him again, and he ran his hands through his hair, completely unraveling it. He was getting desperate.

-Darling, if you let me explain...

-I would have found out when they say, 'You may now kiss the bride.'- I interrupted him for the third time, and this time he silenced me when he stood up from his seat, stretching enough to reach me, taking my cheeks with one hand, and pressing his lips against mine, initiating a kiss so intense and desperate that it made me tremble in my seat, almost making me forget my own name.

-Daddy, don't eat my mommy.- Tristan's concerned and tender voice made us break apart, and I couldn't help but laugh along with Alexander at the cleverness of our son's remark.

However, I moved away slightly from Alexander because I hadn't realized that we were giving such a scene to my little angel.

Alexander looked at him with an amused smile on his face, while his hand continued to hold my face lightly.

-I'm not eating her.- Alexander responded to him in an attempt to ease his worries, and he looked at me with a conspiratorial smile on his face, before whispering near my ear.

- At least not yet. -

I opened my eyes in surprise at what he had just said, and I let go of his grip so he could go back to his seat.

-Tristan, I was giving your mother a kiss, she asked for it.-

-Alexander!- I said his name alarmed by the information he was giving our son.

-I'm sorry, I'm sorry, but it's the truth. You said I could kiss the bride and that's what I did. -

I raised an eyebrow and swiftly changed the subject, leaving that topic unfinished for now, as I didn't want to give Tristan another spectacle.

-The lawyer Richman's wife disappeared.- I said, looking back at the table that was now empty.

If there was one thing that was certain, it was that Paul never stopped being a womanizer, he was just very cautious, and now he was involved with the lawyer's wife.

-Despite my little mishap with the flash and the almost insignificant confrontation that nearly ruined our night, we have a compromising photo that we can use against him, and I'm not talking about making it public. - He said, showing me the screen of his phone, revealing the image of Paul and the lawyer passionately kissing. It was clear that it was Paul and the lawyer, they were unmistakable.

-We'll show it to lawyer Richman. He's aware of all the Dubois' crimes, right? Well, with this, we can try to make him turn against Paul when he finds out he's his wife's lover. Shall we give it

a try? - He asked enthusiastically with his idea, and I nodded vigorously because that's exactly what I had thought.

-Let's try.-

/Chapter 94 Richman Plan.

Chapter 148 - Divorced Heiress

In Doinel Villa.

After informing Vincent and Abby about the meeting with Paul and the lawyer at the restaurant outside of town, and briefing them on what we planned to do with the photo, we came to the conclusion that it would be difficult to reach lawyer Richman, considering he was aware of all the crimes related to the Doinel and Lancaster last names.

Abby stood up from the chair she was sitting in at my father's office, and placed her hands on the desk with a bright smile on her face, the same smile she had whenever one of her crazy ideas came to mind.

-I don't know what you would do without me. I'm a Dubois, therefore he's my lawyer. I will contact him to ask for help with a lawsuit against the Doinels. Of course, don't think it will be a real lawsuit, it will be the perfect excuse to meet with him, a good trap.- Abby said, looking at me with concerned eyes.

Of course, that idea crossed my mind, but I didn't want Abby to get too involved in the matter. We would be risking the lawyer not agreeing to our plans and ending up telling everything to his family. Considering the Dubois family was scum, they wouldn't hesitate to harm their own daughter for being on my side.

-No, absolutely not, it's too risky and no. We'll find another solution, right? - I firmly refused and turned to the others, seeking their support to dismiss that idea, but Alexander and Vincent stayed silent as if they had no other options.

Abby's determined gaze was on me and she raised her eyebrows when she realized the others agreed with her.

-I know how risky this is, Sari, but I have to do it. No. I don't have to do it. I want to do it. After you, I am the most interested in having my family pay for all the bad things they've done, even if my life depends on it.- Abby said confidently, and I understood her. She wasn't like her family, her values and loyalty were the most important to her. She was always against bad actions and knew it would be a betrayal for her family to be on the wrong path, harming others.

-Let's do something, let it be decided by a vote.- She proposed, looking at the two men sitting on the couch, and then smiled at me from ear to ear. I took a breath and nodded, agreeing, although I already sensed that the others would support her decision.

-Raise your hand if you disagree with me meeting lawyer Richman.- She said without hesitation. I didn't think twice before raising my hand, being the only one against that risky idea.

-One. Now those who agree.- She continued. As I suspected, Alexander, Vincent, and Abby raised their hands, resulting in three votes against one.

-Three. So, I will contact the lawyer.- She said.

-Sarah, it's the best option, we must act quickly to bring them down, we have a very powerful piece of evidence, and I won't deny that it's risky, not only for Abby but for all of us.- Vincent stood up from his seat and approached, trying to convince me. But even if I didn't agree, there was nothing I could do. With a majority of votes, Abby would contact the lawyer.

-I know, I'm aware of that, but I don't want Abby to be on her family's black list.- I said, discouraged about my friend. She let out a humorless laugh before moving away when she felt Vincent was getting too close to her.

-My dear, just so you know, I've been on the black list since I left Doinel and moved out of the house. I have nothing to lose but much to gain. I will call my lawyer to help me with the report for physical assault by Sarah Doinel. Do you think he'll enjoy hearing that well-known last name? I think his eyes will pop out of their sockets.- Abby took her cell phone out of her pants pocket, and almost immediately received a call that made her smile, earning an uneasy and alarmed look from Vincent, whose expression turned to irritation when he managed to read the name on her phone's screen.

-I'll take this call and get in touch with the lawyer.- Abby said, moving to the other end of the office, where she could talk without interruptions, and answered the call without wiping the smile off her face.

-Bastian, what are you doing?-

I heard Vincent's irritated murmur as he followed her with his gaze, and I had to suppress the laughter caused by my cousin's jealousy.

That meant only one thing, things with Abby were still bad, and knowing her as I do, she will continue to make him suffer until he was sincere with her and declares his love.

-Vincent, putting this aside, I want to talk about L&J.- I spoke to get his attention and make him stop staring at Abby as if he wanted to devour her.

Alexander, who had been sitting on the couch the whole time, approached to sit in the chair in front of the desk nonchalantly, with his attention on his phone.

-Considering the magnitude of the projections for the first launch, we need two partners for the company. I'm going to meet with Julian, who is interested in partnering with L&J. Could you help me find the missing partner? Someone reliable, you know.- I asked, playing with the pen in my hand, and I could feel Alexander's gaze on me.

-Of course, I have the perfect candidate who would be more than happy to work with you. I'll call him right now.- He responded with his phone in his hand and discreetly looked at Abby before approaching her while making the call.

-You wouldn't have to look for another partner if you considered me.- Alexander caught my attention, and I fixed my gaze on him, who was still staring at his phone.

-Alexander, I've already told you why I can't accept partnering with Lancaster Collection. In the future, they will associate L&J's image with my ex-husband's company, and I don't want that.- I shook my head, leaving the pen on the desk when Alexander finally looked at me.

-Okay, I understand.- He said, not very convinced, while putting away his phone, and his hesitant gaze settled on the desk for a few seconds before looking back into my eyes.

-So, will you tell me what happened on that cruise?-

I let out a tired sigh when Alexander brought up that topic again. It was the third time he asked me, and I didn't want to answer because I hated remembering that Judas kiss, but more than anything, because at that moment, I believed I was starting to feel something minimal for that bastard.

I decided to tell Alexander everything because at some point, I was going to tell him, and I preferred clarifying everything from the beginning and not being so hypocritical to reproach him for hiding even the slightest information from me when I was doing the same, although what happened with Paul was before improving my relationship with Alexander.

-He invited me on a cruise in New York. We had a few glasses of champagne and then he kissed me, that's all, nothing happened like he insinuated.- I summarized the whole night in a few short words, and even though it was in the past, before Paul revealed his true colors.

The news seemed to bother Alexander.

Chapter 94 Richman Plan part 2

Chapter 149 - Divorced Heiress

-He kissed you.- He repeated those words that disgusted me, as if trying to process it. He squirmed uncomfortably in his chair as he loosened his tie. From his expression, it seemed like he wanted to say something, and after a few seconds of silence, he decided to let it out.

-And you... did you feel something with that kiss?- He asked uncertainly while rubbing his temples with his eyes closed.

I remained silent, avoiding his gaze, feeling ashamed with myself for remembering that I allowed myself to feel something for that despicable person, no matter how minimal it may have been.

I looked up at Alexander's face, who seemed to know the answer to his question but was waiting for me to say it myself.

-Well, yes, Alexander, in that moment, something awakened in me, I liked it, I won't deny it, but now just remembering it makes me nauseous, and you have no idea how much I regret responding to his kiss right now. How stupid I was.- I said the last part while hiding my embarrassed face in my hands, not daring to look Alexander in the eyes.

In the next second, I felt hands surrounding me, and the scent of his perfume filled my nostrils.

-It's okay, you're not stupid. It's not your fault. He had one purpose with you, and he didn't achieve it. You should be proud of yourself for not falling into his trap. It was just a kiss, nothing more. I won't touch upon that subject again if it makes you uncomfortable. I won't pressure you anymore.-

Alexander whispered softly in my ear, and I nodded my head, thinking about Alexander's drastic change, and I was not talking about his reaction or the conversation, I was talking about him as a person, as a partner.

The small details made me realize that I wasn't making a mistake by giving him a chance, he was earning it. Alexander removed my hands that were still covering my face and spun the chair until it was facing him. He leaned in enough to look into my eyes with a tender gaze.

-I... I don't know, I was confused, I thought...- I tried to find the right words to justify what I felt at that moment because I hated admitting it, I hated remembering it. I felt so ridiculous.

But Alexander hushed me by hissing in my face. So, I closed my eyes when he closed the space between our lips. His lips moved gently over mine, kissing me as if I were a fragile glass that could break at any moment. And that sensation, with our lips almost touching, made my skin tingle as a shiver ran through my whole body, making me forget the embarrassment I felt about myself. He pulled away from my lips just slightly to look into my eyes again, leaving me wanting to continue kissing him, but with more intensity.

-I will make you forget that unfortunate moment with every kiss I give you.- He whispered against my lips, and my eyes automatically went to his lips, which looked more tempting than

any other day. If he wanted to make me forget, he was doing a great job. I almost forgot that we weren't alone in my father's office, if it weren't for Abby's voice interrupting us.

-Aren't you ashamed to eat in front of poor people? - My friend asked playfully, and I immediately turned the chair to look at her.

-Not so poor. - I replied, indicating Vincent with my gaze, who was still on the phone in the spot Abby had left.

-Ha, don't make me laugh. By the time that happens, I will already have five children, two grandchildren, and be married for the seventh time. He can take all the time he wants, but I won't be waiting forever for him to make up his mind. I'm worth more than a signed contract. I feel like poor Anastasia, really, even Grey didn't dare so much. -

I laughed at the crazy comparison, although it wasn't far from reality.

-I already talked to the lawyer, let's wait for Vincent Grey and I'll spill everything. - Abby said.

My laughter increased, as did Alexander's, who was caressing my shoulders from behind after giving my cousin that last name.

-I'll go get your Grey. - Alexander said before walking away from us and reaching Vincent and interrupting his call, saying who knows what.

-Don't make fun of my misfortunes. You see me as normal, but inside, your cousin has disappointed me a lot. I think I better start accepting that he's not for me. I don't think the day will come when he admits he feels something for me. - Abby said after sitting down, feeling dejected.

I took her hands on the table to let her know that she had my full support.

-Give him some time. He has never had a relationship that wasn't based on contracts. It's clear that he's interested in you, everyone can see it but him. -

Abby nodded, looking at our hands, and shrugged as if it didn't matter.

-And what about Bastian? - I asked quietly so that the pair of men wouldn't hear me, even though they were currently talking in secret after Vincent finished the call.

-Don't tell me that if it's not with Vincent, it's with his brother. But whatever happens, you're staying in the family. -

-Oh no, you're wrong. Bastian just asked me for a favor, and Vincent got furious. - Abby glanced back and looked at me again before leaning closer over the desk as if she was going to tell me a secret.

-Bastian asked me to accompany him to his ex-girlfriend's engagement party, pretending to be his girlfriend. I think that favor also benefits me. I mean, it's okay to make Vincent a little jealous, even though he knows we're just pretending. The mere idea drives him crazy.- Abby confessed that and let out a quiet laugh, mocking Vincent's behavior since Bastian appeared.

I couldn't help but laugh with complicity, but I hurried to speak when I saw the pair of men approaching us. -I'll just tell you one thing, be careful not to confront my cousins, in case the fake girlfriend becomes the real girlfriend, and you end up in a more complicated situation between two brothers.-

I warned her in a whisper, and she shook her head, confident in herself.

-That's not going to happen, trust me, I know what I'm doing.- It was the last thing she managed to say, before Vincent sat down in the chair next to Abby, scaring her with his sudden presence and placing a hand on her chest where her heart should be.

-So, what did you agree with the honorable lawyer?- Vincent asked next to her with a serious tone.

Alexander stood behind me again and started massaging my shoulders with his hands, which I just realized were completely tense from all the problems I had on my plate.

Abby cleared her throat when she calmed down and finally spoke with everyone present.

-It wasn't difficult for the lawyer to accept my case, of course, being a Dubois and having the lawsuit against a Doinel, he would agree without complaining. That's why I've scheduled a meeting tomorrow to carry out the Richman plan, the meeting will be tomorrow at nine in the morning in the apartment assigned to my brother-in-law, the great Ales, by the Doinel company..-

My eyes widened in surprise for two reasons.

The first one, because I didn't imagine the meeting would be so soon, for a moment I thought the lawyer was going to consult with the Dubois family before making a decision, but apparently, he was willing to take any case that would discredit my name.

And the second, because Abby didn't bother to consult beforehand if we could use the apartment that Alexander was occupying, even if he was living in the villa.

-What?!- The three of us said simultaneously.

Chapter 95 By the good or by the bad.

Chapter 150 - Divorced Heiress

I couldn't help but look at the time on my wristwatch as if time would pass faster that way. We were at Alexander's apartment since very early, who had no problem letting Abby use it for the meeting with the lawyer, after all, he wasn't the owner of the apartment. The only one missing was Vincent and there were less than twenty minutes left until nine o'clock, I was already starting to despair at the thought that the lawyer would arrive before my cousin.

-Do you guys want coffee?- Alexander asked, getting up from the couch where he had been sitting in silence, following every one of my movements with his gaze.

-I do.- Abby responded, sitting without a care, her eyes fixed on her cellphone.

-Do you want a relaxing tea?- I asked, referring to that miraculous tea that made me relax from head to toe at his house in New York, thanks to the overdose Anna gave me.

Alexander chuckled slightly as if he was remembering that day and shook his head.

-Unfortunately, I didn't bring any of that tea, I'll bring you some coffee.- He said playfully before getting closer to me, planting a kiss on my forehead, and then disappearing into the kitchen.

I continued pacing back and forth in the living room of the apartment, feeling anxious. Nerves overwhelmed me, not to mention the fear that was starting to bubble up in my system, fear that this madness wouldn't go as planned and that it would backfire.

I jumped in my place when the doorbell echoed throughout the apartment and looked at the time again before my eyes met Abby's, silently asking if it was Vincent or if the lawyer had arrived early.

Abby quickly got up from the couch and rushed to open the door, while I hid behind the wall that separated the living room from the bedrooms.

-It's not the lawyer.- Abby informed from the apartment door and I saw Vincent, who was dressed completely in black, just like Alexander, Abby, and me.

-Welcome, Vincent Grey, for a moment we thought you wouldn't come. Oh, look, he also dressed in black, now we can find a name for our band. The Fantastic Four.- Abby joked, not letting Vincent step inside the apartment, as he blocked the entrance with his body.

-As always, with your sense of humor, Abby Steele. Excuse me.- Vincent said, surprising Abby with the last name that identified her and leaving her stunned as he continued to scrutinize her with his gaze, walking past her.

At least the spectacle of the odd pair made the nerves and fear diminish, leaving me with a sense of amusement.

-Sorry for the delay, princess, I had to settle a family matter.-

I gestured with my hand, downplaying it. I didn't have to give explanations, although I suspected it had something to do with Bastian.

-Is everything ready? It's almost time, the lawyer will arrive any moment.- I said, preparing a folder on the table that Abby would use to buy time and talk directly to Richman.

-Everything is ready.- Alexander appeared from the kitchen with a tray in his hand, holding four steaming cups of coffee.

-Hello, cousin, I brought you coffee.-

I covered my mouth with a hand to repress the laughter that hearing Alexander call my cousin "cousin" caused me, especially when I saw him wearing an apron just to prepare coffee.

-Dear cousin, someone finally cares about me.- Vincent said, feigning excitement and saying the last part loudly, obviously directed at Abby, who completely ignored him.

-I like your new look.- He subtly mocked Alexander's light blue apron, and I couldn't help but laugh.

-Thanks, fatherhood suits me, don't you think?- Alexander played along, distributing the cups of coffee to Abby and me, keeping the last one for himself.

-Enjoy.- He said before placing his lips on the white cup, and we all imitated his action.

As soon as the dark and hot liquid made its way into my mouth, the bitter taste mixed with a touch of salt made me spit it all back into the cup involuntarily. For a moment, I thought I was the only one who disliked Alexander's coffee, but everyone, including Alexander himself, immediately spit out the coffee.

-For heaven's sake, what did you put in the coffee, did you confuse salt with sugar?- Abby didn't stay quiet and spoke while she tried to clean the taste off her tongue with her fingers, as for me, I was coughing unable to bear the taste.

-Oh my God, this is undrinkable.- Vincent complained, leaving the cup of coffee on the coffee table, and Alexander seemed embarrassed even though he covered his mouth with the palm of his hand.

-Better get a glass of water.- Alexander said, picking up the cups he had handed out a moment ago, but when he was about to reach the kitchen door, the doorbell of the apartment rang, leaving all of us alarmed and frozen in our places.

-He arrived, he arrived, he arrived, run, go to your places, and Alexander, leave those cups in the kitchen or he will realize before time that I'm not alone.- Abby whispered so that the person

outside couldn't hear us, and practically, I ran alongside Vincent to the hallway that led to the rooms, leaving Abby alone in the living room while we waited for Alexander.

My heart started pounding hard in my chest and my pulse raced, feeling the nerves more alive than ever.

In a few seconds, Alexander in an apron arrived with us and positioned himself behind me, listening in complete silence to what was happening in the living room.

-Thank you so much for coming, lawyer, take a seat, can I offer you something to drink? Anything but coffee, I stopped drinking it after a bad experience.- Abby spoke loudly so that we could hear her, and I bit my lips, repressing the laughter that wanted to come out because Abby's bad experience was the coffee Alexander prepared.