**Chapter Three**

*Nearer to Disclosure*

“DIANA, YOU’RE BLEEDING!” Michael yelled as he put me down on my feet.

“I AM?! WHERE? HOW?”

I suddenly noticed a small trail of blood running down my right leg. Michael gently placed me on his bathroom floor and ran to the bedroom to page his staff members. Beverly knocked on the door before entering and saw Michael’s hand and immediately covered her mouth trying not to scream. Michael asked her to call 911 immediately and came back to me holding my hand and trying his best not to cry.

“Michael, what’s happening to me?”
“I don’t know, Diana. I hope we weren’t being too rough with each other.”
“But we were this way for five months in Europe and nothing happened to me then. What could it be?”
“Just relax. We’ll find out soon.”

He kept squeezing my hand and praying under his breath that everything would be fine. I felt another warm stream of blood flowing from my leg and saw it leak onto Michael’s floor. I closed my eyes and hoped that whatever was happening wasn’t serious enough to kill me. Beverly called the paramedics then left to wake up Jasmine and Marie. When they discovered Marie and Mac were nowhere to be found, Michael informed his guards at his front gate to find them since they were most likely still walking around his property somewhere.

Marie and Mac fell asleep in each other’s arms under Michael’s Giving Tree. The two of them talked about their childhoods, Mac’s film career, Marie’s family and her move to LA from New York. Time had suddenly slipped away from them as the two new friends drifted into a world of their own. A loud, piercing noise from an ambulance siren wailed in the distance jolting them both awake.

“What’s going on?” Marie asked as she rubbed her eyes and saw the medical vehicle speeding through the main entrance gate.

“Oh my god. Michael!” Mac said helping his friend up from the ground and running back towards the main house holding Marie’s hand.

Several male and female paramedics came to my rescue as they barged through the house and into Michael’s room. A woman introduced herself to me as Silvia and said she would be examining me from below and asked me not to make any sudden movements. Two other female paramedics came to her side ready to assist as Michael sat next to me on the floor holding my hand and praying under his breath.

“Is everything ok?” I asked trying not to sound paranoid.
“We’re not sure yet.” Silvia said. “I’m just doing a basic exam. I need you to breathe deeply for me.”

I did what she asked and felt a sharp pain in my stomach as Silvia pressed her hand against my lower area. Michael was kissing my forehead and trying his best to keep me relaxed while the paramedics continued with their examinations.

“We need to get her to the hospital.” Silvia said.
“WHAT? WHY?” Jasmine and Marie asked as they ran towards me on the floor and held my free hand.

“We don’t know exactly what the problem is yet. It could be a number of things. We need you three to clear the path for the stretcher.”

“I’m going with you.”
“I don’t think that’s a good idea, Mr. Jackson.” Silvia said. “You are—“
“FAMOUS, I KNOW!” Michael said raising his voice. “SHE’S MY FIANCÉ AND I WON’T LEAVE HER! THE PRESS CAN DO AND SAY WHATEVER THEY WANT!”

“Michael, don’t shout at her.” I whispered trying to calm my future husband.
“I’m riding with you in the ambulance. I don’t care what anyone says.”

“So are we!” The girls said.

Not wanting to cause an argument, Silvia agreed and instructed her medical staff to assist her as they lifted me up from the floor and carried me onto the metal pallet. I couldn’t help but feel completely embarrassed since I was completely nude underneath Michael’s robe. Knowing this, he subtly asked the girls to quickly pack some clothing for me and meet us outside. Mac also wanted to join us but Michael asked him to stay at Neverland and look after his staff and animals since he probably wouldn’t be back until the morning. Mac had fed and nurtured a few of Michael’s animals in the past during his previous stays at Neverland and felt confident that he could take care of his friend’s home while he tended to his fiancé.

After travelling for more than 30 minutes in the ambulance, I was rushed into the emergency room where the doctor on duty ran several different tests, x-rays and drew several vials of my blood. After ruling out every possible and severe worst case scenario, the doctor told me he had to wait for my results from the blood lab before giving me a complete diagnosis on my unexpected condition. The girls helped me get into my hospital gown and kept a close eye on the door making sure no one would unexpectedly walk in.

In a matter of minutes and to no surprise to any of us, the hospital facility was completely blocked and surrounded by reporters, cameramen and dozens of fans. Javon rushed to the hospital with Michael’s mask and black overcoat and Michael immediately put them on. Every doctor and nurse on duty stood in shock as they saw Michael exit the ambulance without any security guards by his side. After hearing about the dangers of not informing his own staff as well as the hospital itself, it wasn’t long before the news of my emergency broke out alerting the entire world of my sudden need for medical care – including Michael’s business partner.

“What the heck is going on?” Waleed asked as he burst through the emergency room doors and marched over to Michael. “Why didn’t anyone call and tell me about this? I had to find out from your DRIVER!”

“Waleed, I’m sorry.” Michael said sounding muffled from his mask. “I didn’t have time to think. I needed to get Diana here right away.”
“How is she?”
“She’s not in any extreme danger but we’re still waiting for the test results.”

Javon and a few of Michael’s guards were keeping a close eye on him making sure no paparazzi got anywhere near either of us. The girls sat next to my bedside and held each of my hands trying to comfort me as much as they could.

“Don’t worry Ana.” Marie said. “You’re going to be just fine.”
“Is it safe to ask what you two were doing when this happened?” Jasmine asked actually sounding serious.
“It just happened out of nowhere, really.” I explained. “Michael said he felt something different on me and the next thing I knew, he left to shower and when he came back to the room he lifted me up and noticed I was bleeding.”
“Let’s just wait for the results.” Marie said. “We need to stay positive and patient.”

“I wish Michael would do that.” I said as I glanced outside my room door. “He’s pacing around in that disguise surrounded by guards. I don’t even want to look outside the window.”

“It’s pretty bad.” Jasmine said as she walked over to it. “There are lots and lots of people out there thinking something happened to your fiancé.”
“He just NEVER gets a break and it’s all my fault.”
“Don’t say that!” Marie said. “The press has always hounded him since he was a child. It’s beyond his control and we all know that.”
“She’s right.” Jasmine said coming back over to me. “Let’s not worry about the crowds outside. You need to relax.”

“Ms. Dean?” A familiar voice said as he entered my room. “We meet again. How are you feeling?”
“Dr. Klein? I’m ok. It’s nice to see you again too.”
“How is she, doctor?” Marie asked.
“Well, I’ve got good news and bad news.”

“What’s the bad news?” I asked with fear dripping from each word as it left my mouth.

“First of all, have you been having regular cycles?”
“Yes. I haven’t skipped one since before leaving for Europe.”
“And they’ve all been normal?”
“Yes…except they have been lighter for the past few months.”

“That explains it.”
“Explains what?”

“Based on your x-ray and blood test results, going to Europe caused your body to go through a few different types of conditions.”
“Are any of them serious?” Jasmine asked.
“Not extremely. Did you go through any sort of trauma while you were away?”

Flashbacks of the night Michael took mood stabilizers in Germany ran through my head. I knew I had to be honest with Dr. Klein for the sake of my own health and well-being.

“Yes, doctor. There was an incident that happened in Germany which required me to be hospitalized.”

“I have that information here.” He said flipping through the pages in his chart. “Michael mentioned that to me in the hallway and I requested your medical records be faxed to me immediately from the hospital you and Mr. Jackson were admitted to. That incident was definitely a contributing factor in what happened to you this evening.”

“What happened, doctor? Please tell me.”

“It’s nothing to be greatly concerned about.” He said looking directly at me and the girls. “Would you like me to tell you in private?”
“No. Marie and Jasmine are family to me.”

Just then, Michael barged into the room scaring all of us to death.

“What’s wrong with her?” He asked with a harsh tone in his voice.
“She’s going to be alright.”

“Thank god.” He said as he removed his surgical mask from his face and kissed my forehead.

Dr. Klein closed the door and stood next to all of us. Marie kindly gave her seat to Michael and sat on the edge of the bed as we all listened closely.

“Ms. Dean, you suffered from minor shedding and an extreme hormonal imbalance.”

“AND THAT’S NOT SERIOUS?!” Michael asked standing from his chair completely paranoid.
“Baby, let him finish.”
“No, it isn’t.” Dr. Klein explained. “When the complex hormonal processes of the menstrual cycle are interrupted, resulting in estrogen and progesterone levels that are out of balance, excessive bleeding may occur. This bleeding is related to irregularities of your menstrual cycle without any disease.”
“But I never had any irregularities.”
“Based on what you told me, you did.”
“Meaning?”
“Your cycle became lighter which brings me to the good part of your diagnosis.”
“Which is?” Michael asked.
“You are with child, Ms. Dean.”

“WHAT?!” Everyone screamed in unison including me.

“How is that possible?” Marie asked.
“Um, I think we need to have a talk…” Jasmine said.

“NOT LIKE THAT!” Marie yelled.

“Are you sure, doctor?” Michael asked.

Without answering, Dr. Klein turned his chart over with my test results and showed us all the proof we needed to see to believe the shocking news.

“I had the lab run a pregnancy test and your results show very high levels of HCG which is in your placenta indicating that you have tested positive for pregnancy. Congratulations Ms. Dean. I will provide you with some prenatal vitamins and I strongly suggest you get plenty of rest and avoid being on your feet for long periods of time.”
“But doctor, I have to go back to work. I have a business to run.”
“You are NOT working!” Michael said. “We will not lose this one too, Diana.”
“But Michael, I—“
“Ms. Dean, you’ve received medical care overseas, miscarried five years ago and are now pregnant again. I strongly suggest you take this time to rest and not over exert yourself.”
“How far along am I?”
“I have an idea based on your results but will need to do an ultrasound to check for more accuracy.”
“Can we do that now?” Michael asked.
“Absolutely. I will set it up right away.”

As soon as Dr. Klein left the room, the girls started jumping for joy screaming in my ear about how happy they were for Michael and I.

“GIRLS! This is a hospital. Calm down.”
“Ana, aren’t you happy?”
“I am but this is so shocking. I had no clue I was pregnant. I didn’t skip once.”
“Actually, you did.” Jasmine explained. “You weren’t actually menstruating these past few months when it was lighter. You were actually spotting. That’s a common symptom in pregnancy.”
“But I didn’t get sick like before.”
“That’s because of the hormonal imbalance. Your body reacted differently this time. It all adds up and makes perfect sense, Diana. You’re pregnant.”

Michael giggled and kissed my cheek.

“I guess we didn’t need to start baking again after all.”
“Apparently not.”

“Thank you for carrying my child again, Diana.”

“You’re welcome. Thank you for helping me create it.”
“I love you.”
“I love you too.”
“KISS!” Jasmine yelled.
“Just for you, tea flower.”

Michael pressed his lips onto mine making the girls swoon. Dr. Klein returned and said the ultrasound room and equipment would be ready momentarily. Michael left the room to tell Waleed and the others the good news and said it was ok for them to go home. Jasmine called Neverland and told Kai the great news who then told Mac and asked to speak to me.

“Congratulations.”

“Thank you. I’m so sorry your visit turned out this way.”
“Don’t worry about it. I’m just glad you’re ok.”
“Thanks for understanding, uncle Mac.”
“I like the way that sounds.”
“I thought you would.”

Mac then asked to speak to Marie. As I handed her the phone, her cheeks became rosy and she immediately felt shy. Her special moment with him under Michael’s Giving Tree made her giggle and feel warm all over. Butterflies invaded her stomach as she said hello to her new friend. Jasmine and I couldn’t help but notice how girly Marie was being with Mac on the phone. Not trying to pry into their conversation, Jasmine walked towards the window and noticed hundreds of reporters and cameramen trying to take as many photos as possible.

“How are we going to get out of here?”
“The same way we did in Germany – rush through the front door.”
“I have a feeling you aren’t going home tonight. That means neither are we.”
“You all don’t have to stay with me. I’ll be fine now that we know what the problem is.”
“It’s not a problem, Diana.” Jasmine said coming over to my bedside. “A baby is a gift.”
“I know. I didn’t mean it that way.”

Marie said goodbye to Mac and handed the phone back to Jasmine. As she placed it in her purse, Marie was holding back laughter and twirling her hair in between her fingers.

“Someone is in love.” I said.
“I am NOT.”
“Oh, yes you are.” Jasmine said. “It’s written all over your face.”
“He’s a minor young enough to be my brother. We are just friends.”
“Age is just a number, Marie,”

“Sure, when you’re engaged to Michael Jackson!”
“That’s irrelevant, Marie.” Jasmine explained. “David and I are ten years apart.”
“You ARE?” I asked.

“Yes, but you can’t tell because our age gap has nothing to do with our relationship. Michael and Diana are six years apart. Can you tell between them?”
“That’s different. The GUY is older in both your scenarios.” Marie said. “Besides, I don’t want to get involved with someone that young. We are just FRIENDS.”

“Whatever you say…”

Dr. Klein asked a nurse to remove the IV from my arm and help me walk across the hall towards another room with an ultrasound machine. Michael and the girls followed as I made my way inside and rested against a much larger bed. Dr. Klein applied a cold, jelly like fluid on my stomach and lower abdomen before placing a large, rotating sensor device against my skin.

“There it is.” He said pointing to a round picture on the ultrasound screen. “That’s your baby.”

“WOW!” Marie said as she got a closer look at the image in front of her.

“I can’t believe what I’m seeing.” I said as Michael smiled and kissed my forehead. “That’s inside of me right now?”
“That’s right.” Dr. Klein said. “It seems to be progressing quite well. The positioning is perfect and the growth is normal at this point in time.”
“Diana didn’t gain very much weight, doctor.” Michael said “Is that a reason for concern?”
“Not at all.” He explained. “Ms. Dean has a very small frame for someone her age. It’s not a hazard because you are in excellent overall health. Some women do not begin to show until they are about halfway into their second trimester which is right around the corner in your case.”

“IT IS?”

“Based on the way this weed is sprouting—“
“Hey!” Michael said politely. “My child is not a weed.”
“Sorry, Mr. Jackson. It’s just a humorous term we use here.”
“Yeah, chill out dad!” Jasmine said.

“My assumption based on your test results was right. It looks like you are at approximately 16 weeks, Ms. Dean.”

“WHAT?”
“Calm down, Diana.” Michael said holding my hand.
“16 weeks?? And I didn’t even know I was pregnant?”

“There’s no reason to be alarmed.” Dr. Klein said as he continued moving the sensor in circular motions. “She seems to be perfectly healthy.”

“SHE?” Everyone asked at once.
“I’m sorry. I should have asked if you would like to know—“
“IT’S A GIRL?” Michael yelled.
“Yes, Mr. Jackson it is. I apologize if I ruined—“
“I’M HAVING A CUPCAKE!” Michael yelled as he scurried across the room and flung the door open alarming the entire hospital staff on our floor.

“MICHAEL! GET BACK HERE!” I yelled.

“He’s long gone!” Marie said as she walked towards the door and looked across the hall seeing Michael moonwalking up and down the hallway. Jasmine went to the door and couldn’t help but laugh as she and Marie watched the Pop star screaming and yelling looking and sounding like a complete fool.

“MY LITTLE CUPCAKE IS ON HER WAY! MY LITTLE DANCING CUPCAKE IS ON HER WAY!” He yelled as he grabbed several female nurses and twirled them around as if he were ballroom dancing with them all.

“Good Lord.” I said sighing deeply and rolling my eyes.

“He’s obviously very excited.” Dr. Klein said as he snickered under his breath.

“He’s wanted children for a long time. We’ve certainly had our share of tragedy in this department. After my miscarriage I went through a hysterical pregnancy.”

“I’m sorry.” Dr. Klein said as he finished the ultrasound and printed a few photos of my sonogram for us to take home. “Let’s hope the third time’s a charm.”
“I’m hopeful that it will be especially since I am so far along.”
“Please be sure to stay off your feet and take your prenatal vitamins regularly.”
“I will do my best. Can I go home today?”
“I’d like to keep you under observation for 24 hours. You can leave in the morning if your vitals are normal. Please get some rest. I’ll see to it that the crowd outside is under control while you and Mr. Jackson stay here.”
“Thank you, Dr. Klein.”

The nurses that were on duty brought blankets and pillows for Michael and the girls as they made themselves comfortable in my room. Marie and Jasmine slept on chairs and Michael curled up next to me in the bed wanting to feel his daughter moving inside me.

“I can’t believe you’re here, cupcake.” He said as he placed his head against my stomach. “I’m your daddy. You be a good girl for mommy for the next few months. I promise I will spoil you forever.”
“Michael, you were right.”

“I was?”
“Yes. You knew something was wrong and I brushed it off thinking it wasn’t a big deal. I’m sorry I didn’t take my symptoms more seriously.”
“Don’t apologize.” He said kissing my nose. “I’m just so glad you and her are both okay.”

“I can’t believe I am almost 5 months and never knew I was pregnant. The last two times this happened I knew right away at the beginning.”
“I think it’s a blessing we didn’t know before, Diana.” Michael explained. “If we had known something much worse could have happened in Europe and there wouldn’t have been anything we could do being so far away from home.”
“I think you’re right.”
“This was God’s plan, Diana. He waited for us to return before telling us we were going to have a baby.”
“Always so positive.”
“I love you, girl.”
“I love you too, husband.”

“What about the case and the wedding?” Marie asked.

“Oh gosh, I forgot about that.”
“We can’t move up the wedding NOW!” Jasmine said. “Marie and I already started making the arrangements.”
“Waleed and I will handle my case together with John. As for the wedding - I think it’s best that we wait until after the baby is born.” Michael explained. “I don’t want to take any unnecessary risks with my child. The wedding will be even more beautiful and will mean so much more to me if my little girl is actually there with all of us.”
“I agree.”

“Ok then it’s settled – no wedding until after cupcake’s arrival.” Jasmine said.
“THAT IS NOT HER NAME!”

“Yes, it is!” Michael said. “I love it so much.”
“It’s cute for a nick name at least.” Marie said trying to get us to compromise. “Let’s just call her that for now and think about a real name after she gets here.”
“Fine!”

“It’s time for bed, mommy to be.” Michael said pulling my blanket closer to my face and neck. “Thank you for being here with us to share this special day, girls.”
“We’re happy to be a part of it.” Marie said hugging her idol before returning to her chair. “Goodnight.”
“Congratulations, you two.” Jasmine said as she closed her eyes and went to sleep.

“Goodnight, cupcake.” Michael said placing his hand on my stomach. “I’ll be counting the days until I can see you.”

“Goodnight, baby.”

“Goodnight, my love.”

“Good morning all.” Dr. Klein said as he woke up the four of us. “I’m sorry to disturb you but it’s time for your vitamins and then we’ll check your vitals before you can leave.”
“You’ve been so helpful, Dr. Klein.” Michael said standing from the bed and shaking the man’s hand. “How can we ever repay you?”
“Tell you what – send me an invitation to the wedding and I’ll call it even.”
“It’s a deal.”

“Good morning.” A nurse said as she came into the room. “How is our expecting mother doing?”
“Very well, thanks.”

She handed me a small white cup with three large pills inside. Dr. Klein explained they were prenatal vitamins and I needed to take three of them twice a day to make sure the baby would stay healthy and out of danger while in the womb. Michael promised that I would take them and he’d personally see to it that I did every single day. I swallowed the vitamins and quickly drank large sips of water hoping to dilute their awful taste.

“Ugh, these are gross.”
“They’re for your daughter.” Dr. Klein said. “I’m sure you won’t mind taking them for her sake.”
“No, she won’t!” Michael said squeezing my hand. “She’s a strong woman. She can handle some vitamins every day for the next few months.”

“But they’re yucky!”
“Too bad!”
“I love that song!” Marie said singing the lyrics and dancing around the room.

“You all are a very interesting bunch.” Dr. Klein said. “I know your new arrival will receive huge amounts of love from each and every one of you.”

“Especially me!” Michael said smiling.
“It’s time to check your vitals, Ms. Dean.” The nurse said as she leaned in to check my pulse.

“Marie and I will get some coffee for everyone.” Jasmine said.

When the girls left, Dr. Klein said there was something else he had to tell me and Michael that he was uncomfortable mentioning in front of the girls.

“Now that we are alone, I must inform you that based on your previous medical history, this pregnancy is a high risk for you, Ms. Dean.”
“We understand, doctor.” Michael said squeezing my hand. “I’ll make sure she gets plenty of rest and doesn’t strain herself too much.”
“Good. Please be sure to call me if you experience any sharp pains or unusual symptoms that you are not aware of.”
“We will.”

After my vitals were checked and Dr. Klein ran a few final exams and tests which all came back normal, my discharge papers were ready. The girls came back with coffee and donuts and couldn’t stop tickling me and talking into my stomach. Michael immediately followed and all three of them had their heads stuck to my body as if they were super glued to me.

“YOU GUYS!”

“What?” Jasmine asked. “We’re talking to our little princess.”
“Can I at least get up so I can change and go home?”
“Diana, you’re staying with me at Neverland where I know you’ll be safe and not working.”
“No way! I have to go home!”

“No, you don’t!” Marie said. “Jas and I will look after TSG as much as we can and will only involve you when it comes to signing papers and other things that need your approval. We can also take care of your house and hire cleaners to maintain it.”
“Beverly can help with that too.” Michael added. “I’ll make sure my staff stays on top of it and I’ll have their salaries increased for the extra work that needs to be done.”

“I don’t want them to clean both our houses, Michael.”
“It’s not a problem. We’ll hire more help if we need to. Let me worry about that part.”

“That reminds me…” I said completely forgetting about my own paperwork. “We need to talk about the financial disclosures of the tour, Michael.”
“Oh that’s right.” He said also forgetting.

“What does that mean?” Marie asked.

“We need to pay everyone including you two and then Michael and Waleed get their cut at the end.”
“We can help you with that too, Ana.” Jasmine said. “Javon can take us to your house, Marie and I will pack up your things and bring them to Neverland.”
“You girls are doing way too much. How can I ever thank you?”
“Have Michael’s baby and marry him.” Marie said. “The debt will be paid.”
“I couldn’t have said it better myself.” Jasmine added.
“You girls are the best.” Michael said hugging them both. “I love you very much.”
“We love you more!” Marie said in her adorable childish voice.

Cameron was in his living room watching the news in his four bedroom mansion in Santa Monica. His eyes widened as he saw the breaking news of Diana Dean’s unexpected pregnancy making headlines. He realized his plan may not work as he expected it to but that certainly didn’t stop him from coming up with another quick solution. As several cameramen and reporters snapped photos of the beautiful CEO hovered by several bodyguards and her two best friends, he scoffed seeing Michael in disguise with his arms lovingly wrapped around his future bride.

“I can’t believe she chose him. I could do so much more for her.”

His cell phone suddenly rang and he reluctantly answered.

“Garivey.”
“Cam, did you hear?”
“Yeah. So?”
“What about your merging plans?”
“It’s going to happen. I just have to come up with a diversion.”
“Let me know if you need my help.”
“Actually, I do.”
“Name it, buddy.”

“Send me everything you can get on her fiancé.”
“Michael Jackson?”
“Is she engaged to someone else?”
“Cam, I can’t do that.”
“Why the hell not?”
“He’s a famous celeb. I can’t misuse my place in the legal system that way.”
“You will if you don’t want to lose your job.”
“Are you threatening me?”
“You know EXACTLY what I’m doing, Rick.”
“Cam, I can’t do that.”
“You can and you WILL. You have 72 hours.”

Cameron hung up and continued watching the news. With the right information, the handsome CEO could finally put the pieces of his new plan together and come up with a clever way to ensure his dream of having the two largest music production companies in the world come together as one would finally come true. Cameron Garivey was never a man to take no for an answer – something he had in common with his competitor’s soon to be husband.

“Welcome back.” Mac said as he opened the main door for all of us. “I’m glad you are ok, Diana.”
“Thank you.”
“Let’s get you settled.” Kai and Beverly said as they took all of the bags Marie and Jasmine were carrying.
“Did you go home first?” Mac asked.

“Yes. Michael wants me to stay here throughout my pregnancy so he can babysit me.”
“It’s not babysitting.” Michael said putting his arm on my shoulder. “I just want to protect my family.”

“Yeah, yeah.”
“Well, I’ll be staying for a few days too then!” Mac said sounding excited.

“Me too!” Marie yelled.

“Count me out.” Jasmine said. “I need to be Diana’s right hand for the next few months. David and the squirt will lose their minds if they were to find out I was staying here without them.”
“You and your family are welcome to stay here anytime as long as you want to, tea flower.”
“Thanks.”

Jasmine then looked at me as if she were trying to tell me something. The message in her eyes was very clear: TELL HIM YOUR SECRET. I shook my head yes reminding myself that he needed to know sooner rather than later.

“I’m off to take care of your business.” Jasmine said. “If you need me to bring you anything else, just call. I’ll check up on all of you later tonight.”
“You’re the best, Jas.” I said as she gave me a loving hug.
“We need to sit down and tell him soon.” She whispered in my ear.
“I know. We will. I promise.”

“Well, I’m staying with Ana!” Marie said. “I’ll be your little helper around the house.”
“Me too.” Mac said. “I’ll be the man of the house.”
“What does that make me?” Michael asked.
“The soon to be father.”
“I like the sound of that.”

Before Jasmine left, we all went into the living room and Kai took a large group photo of us on the couch. Of course, they stuck me and Michael in the middle with the others towering over us with big happy faces.

“CHEEEEESE!” Everyone said as Kai clicked Marie’s camera several times.

“Beautiful!” She said giving Marie her camera back.

“I’m out of here.” Jasmine said standing up from the couch. “I’ll leave my things here for Marie and will check on you all later. Stay off your feet, missy!”
“Yes, Jasmine.”

Michael called Javon from his intercom on the wall and told him Jasmine was ready to leave. Within a few minutes, he appeared at the front door with the SUV. Everyone hugged and said their goodbyes as she left and Javon kindly escorted her into the back of the vehicle. Michael waved goodbye as he watched his tea flower leave his property and made sure the guards securely closed the gate after the vehicle exited the grounds.

“Ms. Dean, your things have been put into Mr. Jackson’s room.” Beverly said. “It’s time for you to rest. Keep that little tushy on the couch. Doctor’s orders!”
“I have a tushy?” I asked trying to turn around.

“Yes, and it’s adorable.” Michael said squeezing it gently.

“MICHAEL!”

“OOOO Jasmine missed that!” Marie said.
“GOOD!” Michael and I both said at the same time. “She’s horny enough as it is.”
“REALLY?” Mac asked.
“DON’T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT!” Michael yelled. “She’s married and a mother.”
“Oh right. I forgot.”
“You can have me as a friend.” Marie said smiling at the young iconic actor.

“I’d like that.”

The two of them wanted to watch cartoons while Michael wanted to watch Peter Pan for the millionth time. Hearing Michael and Mac argue like children about what they were going to watch on TV made me realize I will be going through this every single day for the rest of my life after our daughter was born.

“THIS IS MY HOUSE!”

“I’M YOUR GUEST!”

“I’M OLDER THAN YOU!”

“I’M A BETTER ACTOR!”

“I’M A BETTER SINGER AND DANCER!”

“HEY!” I yelled as Marie continued laughing hysterically next to me. “WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU TWO?”
“HE STARTED IT!” Mac yelled.
“Oh, yeah that’s real mature.” Michael said shoving his friend.

“You are NO better than him! You two are so babyish.”
“And it’s totally hilarious!” Marie said trying to breathe.

“Mr. Jackson, you have a phone call.” Beverly said coming into the living room. “And lunch will be ready very soon.”

Michael thanked his lovely maid and left to answer his call in his study.

“So, tell me about yourself.” Mac said to Marie as the two of them got cozy with each other on Michael’s leather sofa across from me. “How did you all meet and get to know Michael?”
“He never told you?”
“He did but I’d like to hear your side of the story.”

Marie and Mac were in their own world having multiple conversations about the past and how the three of us became friends and moved to Los Angeles. My feet were starting to ache and my stomach was growling. It was then that I realized my sudden food cravings and body swelling would soon start to develop. I reached over a nearby end table to read Dr. Klein’s diet and exercise plan for me that Michael requested from him and couldn’t believe how many restrictions there were. The obvious ‘no drinking, smoking, drugs or heavy lifting’ rules were self-explanatory but a few others startled me. One of them was to avoid caffeine. If Michael were to find out, he’d deny me chocolate – my other guilty pleasure. I folded the piece of paper in half and placed it back on the table away from view. I stood up to get my laptop from upstairs and Marie insisted I stay on the couch.

“I’ll get whatever you need.”
“I am not totally helpless, Marie. I can get my own laptop.”
“Ana, you need to rest.”
“I can’t just sit here like a lump all day. I need to exercise too.”
“Fine, but I’m going with you.”

I rolled my eyes and left the room with her following me. Mac went to the kitchen to see when lunch would be ready. Kai’s breakfast plan had been interrupted due to my hospitalization but that didn’t stop her from creating an incredible lunch menu. The heavenly aromas permeating the entire house were making all of us drool and swoon. Marie kindly opened Michael’s bedroom door and noticed my laptop on his bed. She lifted it up while I reached for my purse on the dresser when Cameron’s floppy disk fell out and landed on the floor.

“What’s that?” Marie asked.
“Oh god. Cameron. I forgot about this.”
“Ana, you need to tell him you can’t do business with him especially now.”
“I know, Marie. I’ll handle it.”

Michael went to his study to answer his call. He wasn’t expecting to hear from anyone but was amazed at the large stack of phone messages his staff left for him on his desk. His entire family, Waleed, Elizabeth and one unknown number were on several sheets of pink paper requesting him to call each person back. The only one that caught Michael’s eye was the unknown one. Michael’s number was extremely private and only a few chosen people were lucky enough to have it. Who could this person be? What did they want with him?

He then pressed the intercom button but heard a dial tone meaning whoever called him had already hung up. Wanting answers, he dialed the unknown number and waited eagerly to find out who it was. After several rings, there was no answer. He then hung up and redialed – no answer again. A name was not provided on the paper. Michael paged Beverly and asked her to see him in his study right away. Within minutes, she knocked on the door and Michael unlocked it by pressing a button on the wall behind him.

“Yes, Mr. Jackson?”
“Who was this caller, Bev?”
“I don’t know, sir. They didn’t leave their name.”
“What did they want? How did they get my number?”
“I can’t say for sure. It was a gentleman who sounded young and said he needed to speak with you right away.”
“Did he tell you why?”
“No, sir. He just said tell him to call back at this number. He doesn’t need to know who I am for now.”
“When did he call?”
“Earlier today when you were at the hospital.”
“Please keep an eye on Diana for me and let her know I’m in my office. I’m going to be a while.”
“Yes, sir.”
“That will be all.”

Beverly left her boss’s study and Michael was more confused than ever. Who was this person? What did they want? Why wouldn’t they leave their name? He dialed the number again but no one answered for the third time. He then moved onto his other messages and called each person back confirming the news of Diana’s pregnancy and that she was just months away from giving birth. Elizabeth was ecstatic and insisted she be in Los Angeles for the delivery and Michael couldn’t have been happier. He insisted that she stay at Neverland with him and his fiancé and she graciously accepted his offer.

“Mr. Jackson?” Kai said knocking on his door.

“Come in, Kai.”
“Lunch is ready, sir. Your fiancé said to tell you that she won’t eat until you join her and the others at the table.”

Michael laughed.

“I’ll be there in a few minutes.”
“Very good, sir.”

She left and Michael was still curious about his one mysterious phone message. He placed his hand on his cordless handset to dial one more time when his phone suddenly rang.

“Hello?”
“She’s not the one for you.” The unknown person said in a disguised voice.

“WHO ARE YOU?” Michael yelled.

“She has a secret….one that you know nothing about.”
“Don’t ever call me again.”

Michael hung up and stood up from his chair. He regretted calling the unknown number and wished he never had. An unknown person now had the number to his direct line making him worried that the public and press would somehow get their hands on it. Wanting to change it right away and realizing he forgot to call Waleed, he sat down to call him when his phone suddenly rang again.

“Leave me alone.”
“Your fiancé is hiding something…”

“You don’t know me or her. If you call me again I’ll have you arrested. Do you understand?”

The unknown person chuckled.

“You are so naïve. No wonder the world thinks you’re a freak.”
“I don’t know who you are but STAY THE HELL AWAY FROM ME!”

“I want your fiancé…”
“You will NEVER have her. Don’t call me again.”

“Oh, but I will, after you leave her.”
“You are delusional. I will never do that.”

“You will after you find out what she’s been keeping from you for almost six years.”
“DON’T CALL ME AGAIN.”

Michael hung up again and almost threw his phone across the room. Not wanting to lose his temper, he immediately called Waleed and informed him about everything. Waleed then reminded Michael of his arbitration and not to let some ignorant stranger get the best of him. After their conversation ended, Michael took a few deep breaths and regained his composure. He knew his fiancé loved him and would never keep anything from him. Whoever was calling was obviously trying to stir up trouble out of jealousy or envy. He straightened himself out and left his study to join his fiancé and friends for lunch.

**HAVENHURST**

“WHAT THE HELL IS WRONG WITH THAT BOY?” Joseph yelled at his wife as she told him the news of Diana’s pregnancy.

“He’s in love, Joe.”
“HE IS NOT IN LOVE! That gold digging trash manipulated him into getting her pregnant. How do we even know that child is really his?”
“Oh, Joe stop that. Diana is not that kind of woman.”
“This cannot be happening. There is no way I will let Michael marry her and have a baby.”
“Diana makes him happy, Joe. Lisa Marie broke his heart and—“
“SHE DID NO SUCH THING!” Joseph yelled standing up from his lounge chair. “Michael was a fool to let her get away! This Diana witch haunted his thoughts and never let him have a peaceful marriage. I know she did something to break those two up and I’m going to find out how and why she did it!”
“She did no such thing, Joe.” Katherine said trying to calm her husband down. “Diana and Michael didn’t talk for five years and you know it. Lisa Marie and Michael were over before Diana came back into the picture.”

“I don’t care about the details, Katie.” Joseph said drinking a glass of brandy from his minibar. “I will not allow this. That bitch is going to give us a paternity test.”
“JOSEPH!”

“And if the baby IS Michael’s she is going to sign a prenuptial agreement.”
“ARE YOU CRAZY?”

“Get out, Katie.”
“JOSEPH—“

“GET OUT NOW!”

Katherine left her living room with tears in her eyes. She didn’t know what to do or say about her husband’s hatred towards her future daughter in law. Not knowing what to do or think, she arranged for her driver to take her to her son’s home to warn him of his father’s upcoming plan. Katherine adored her children but always had a special place in her heart for her seventh child. She adored Diana and knew she was the one for her son but feared she would not win her future father in law’s heart. Katherine knew she had to warn them as soon as possible. She snuck out of her home and left with her driver to see her son.

“So, are you guys doing anything for Halloween?” Mac asked.

“Not that we know of.” I said looking up from my laptop.

“I forgot all about it.” Marie said. “We need to dress up in costumes and give out candies!”
“I don’t think Michael would approve of that because of his upbringing.”

“I think it’s a great idea.” Michael said as he walked into the living room and joined me on the sofa.

Not wanting him to know about Cameron yet, I discreetly closed his financial charts and quickly opened my business email account in front of him.

“Are you sure?” I asked.
“Of course. I usually have children from local schools and orphanages come here for the whole day. We have magic shows, storytelling, costume contests, scary movies in the theatre a haunted house in one of the cottages and so many other fun things. The kids love it.

“That sounds like fun!” Marie said.

“Are you telling me you actually take part in Halloween?”
“Not really but I like to make it special for others.”
“Let’s have a party here then!” Mac suggested.

“Oh gosh I need to get a costume!” Marie said. “We only have 12 days to put everything together!”
“That’s more than enough time!” Mac said. “Mike and I used to have people over and entertain them in way less time than that. Are you sure it’s ok Mike?”
“I’m fine with it. What do you think?” He asked looking at me.

“I’m okay with it too.”
“Yaay!” Marie said. “Let’s go shopping now!”

“WHOA!” Mac said pulling Marie back onto the couch. “We need to eat first.”
“You can be my little pumpkin.” Michael said rubbing my stomach.
“OH MY GOD! DO I LOOK FAT AND ROUND?”
“NO!” Marie yelled. “It’ll be so cute to see you wearing an orange costume.”
“OH, HELL NO!”

“Please?” Michael whispered in my ear. “For our little cupcake…”

Michael and Marie had their puppy dog faces on and whimpered like babies.

“Okay, okay! I will dress up but I’m NOT wearing a pumpkin costume.”
“Will it be orange?” Michael asked.
“Maybe. I have to think about it.”
“Deal!” Marie said.
“I’m okay with that too.” Michael said kissing my forehead.

“This is so exciting.” Mac said. “It’ll be just like old times, Mike!”
“I know. I’m so happy to have my favorite people in the world here with me.”
“Don’t forget about Jasmine!”
“Of course. Her entire family can join us and I’ll finally get to meet her son.”

Javon returned to the main house and informed his boss that Jasmine had arrived home safely and gave Michael a small, folded piece of white paper that he said was taped outside the main gate. Kai informed everyone that lunch was ready in the dining room and Michael told everyone to go ahead and would meet them in a few minutes. Javon then left to do his daily patrols around the grounds and to check on his boss’s animals. Michael politely asked him to bring his favorite dining guest inside the main house and Javon happily obeyed his boss’s request. Once everyone left the main foyer, Michael opened the note Javon gave him turning his beautiful smile into a large and angry frown:

***“SHE HAS A SECRET. ASK JASMINE.”***