**CHAPTER TEN**

*Acting Tenacious on the Train*

“Joseph is at my gate?”

“JOSEPH?” Aurora yelled in shocked. “Your father?”
“No, Mary’s husband.”
“Michael, this isn’t funny!”

“*Sir, should we let him in*?”

“Yes, go ahead.”
“Michael! What is he going to think when he sees me here?”
“He’s not going to.” The Pop star replied as he placed his security monitor on his bookshelf. “Come with me!”

Michael grabbed his friend’s hand and led her up the grand staircase towards his master bedroom. He opened the door and shocked the intern as she gazed at the King of Pop’s bedroom and the size of his massive wooden sleigh bed.

“Stay here.” He said placing Aurora on his bed. “I’ll come back and get you when he’s gone.”
“Michael, I’m afraid.”
“Don’t be.” He replied kissing her soft skinned forehead. “I’ll just hear what he has to say then get rid of him as quickly as I can.”

Michael then ran out of his room closing the door behind him. As he marched back downstairs he came face to face with his father who was standing in the living room with his arms crossed.

“What can I do for your Joseph?”
“You can tell me what it is you are doing loitering around with another woman!”

Michael rolled his eyes as he stood across the room from the man who helped pave the way for his career. Joseph continued rambling and all Michael did was hear his drivel from one ear and took it out the other.

“Are you listening to me, boy?”

“Yes, Joseph.”
“You will work out your problems with Lisa Marie and stop acting like a child.”
“I can do whatever I want.” Michael explained as he stood as far away from his father as possible. “I’m not a child anymore. You’re in my house talking to me as if you can still give me orders.”

“That’s because I CAN!”

“It doesn’t mean I’ll listen to you.”

“Michael, you need to grow up.”
“No, Joseph.” Michael said with anger dripping from his voice. “You need to let me live my own life.”
“Boy, you are NOT getting a divorce.”
“What are you going to do?” Michael asked. “Force two people who don’t love each other to stay together? This isn’t YOUR marriage, Joseph. It’s mine.”

“She DOES love you.” Joseph explained. “It’s YOU who screwed up like always.”

“I don’t have time to listen to this.” Michael said trying not to sound rude. “Sandra!”

“Yes, Mr. Jackson?” The maid said entering the living room.

“Please see that my father is escorted out properly.”

“Michael, you will work things out with Lisa no matter what!”
“Have a nice day, Joseph.” Michael replied as he turned his back and went upstairs to see his hiding guest.

“I had a fabulous time.” David said as his partner pulled into his driveway. “Thanks for everything, Dennis.”

“Anytime.” He replied while parking his car. “I guess I’ll see you at work?”

“For sure. Thanks for teaching me how to bowl.”
“It’s no problem. I told you it was easy.”
“I’m glad I got the hang of it so quickly. You’re a good teacher.”
“Thanks. I try.”

The two kissed passionately before saying goodbye. Dennis watched David as he walked across his stone lined pathway and unlocked his front door. Dennis slowly backed out of his partner’s driveway and headed straight to the gym. Making love four times in one day didn’t seem like enough to calm his nerves and raging hormones. He needed to hit the treadmill or lift some weights.

David went inside and up to his room. He quickly showered, changed into a comfortable pair of sweatpants and lay on his water bed thinking about how lucky he is to have found someone as special and wonderful as Dennis. Both men couldn’t believe how fortunate they were to have found each other but also knew that the public would not be very supportive of their relationship.

The two MTV men were very confident and knew that as long as they were happy, it didn’t matter what the world would think. Dennis and David had a connection no one else would really understand and that was perfectly acceptable to both of them. Their only concern was for each other and not for negative, ignorant opinions of society.

“Aurora?” Michael said coming into his room.

“Over here.”

Michael laughed as he made his way towards his gigantic walk in closet and saw his beautiful lady friend trying on his jackets, gloves and fedoras.

“What are you doing?” He asked kissing her right shoulder.

“I was curious so I came in here wanting to see your things. I hope it’s alright.”
“Of course it is. See anything you like?”
“Many things. You sure love sparkles, Mr. Jackson.”
“It’s what I’m known for, Miss Clark.”
“I concur.”

Michael grabbed one of his fedoras from a nearby shelf and placed it on his head sliding it down across his face.

“Lovely.” Aurora replied. “Did everything go ok with your father?”
“Yes. I got rid of him.”
“I hope things went okay.”
“They did. I really don’t want to talk about him.”
“I understand. I’m sorry for bringing it up. How does this look on me?”

Aurora removed one of Michael’s signature red shirts from a hanger and tried it on. Seeing the intern wear his clothing made the Pop star giggle childishly. In that moment, he adored the grey eyed goddess for being such a creative and care free spirit.

“You look so cute.”

“I can smell your cologne on here.”

“You really like it?”
“I do.”

The Pop star then bit his bottom lip gently and slowly moved towards the intern who slowly backed her way into the corner of the closet wall.

“I have it on now too.” Michael whispered as he came closer towards her.

“It’s a very alluring scent.”
“I’m glad you like it so much.”
“Michael…”
“Am I getting too personal?” He asked as her back hit the wall.

“Yes. But—“
“SHHHH!” Michael said placing his index finger on Aurora’s pink stained lips. “No one is around to interrupt us this time.”

“Maybe we should take this somewhere else?”
“For now we’ll make a vow to just keep it in closet.” Michael replied making Aurora laugh and blush.

“I must admit I love that song.”
“It’s an interesting one for sure.”

“Do you always behave so modestly?”
“Do you always ask so many questions?”

The two laughed in unison as they held each other.

“I love having you here with me, Aurora.”
“You’ve said than multiple times, Michael.”
“I just don’t want you to ever forget.”
“Believe me, I won’t. I love being here with you too.”

As the two pulled away from their embrace, Aurora’s eyes made contact with Michael’s causing sparks to burst between them. The intern moved her head slightly forward. The Pop star’s breathing became staggered but he closed his eyes in anticipation of what was about to happen. Aurora approached Michael’s cherry red lips but was interrupted by the sound of Michael’s maid knocking on his bedroom door.

“What are you doing?” Priscilla asked her daughter as she burst through her front door and entered her living room.

“MOTHER!”

“Why haven’t you two settled this whole ugly mess yet?”
“What are you doing here?” Lisa Marie asked as she gathered the scattered papers on her coffee table.

“I came here to get answers! Why haven’t you ended your joke of a marriage yet?”
“I’m working on it.”
“Well, you’re not moving fast enough!”
“Mother, why are you even here?”
“Did you not hear me?”

Lisa Marie scoffed and rolled her eyes. Priscilla Presley was always a dominating woman who loved to give her ex-husband’s only child orders on how to live her life. Of course, Lisa Marie couldn’t care less about what her mother thought of her especially since she was known to be profoundly selfish – which was also one of the main reasons why her marriage to the Rock and Roll King failed.

“Don’t tell me you’re having second thoughts, Lisa!”
“No, mother. I’m not.”
“Then why are you stalling?”
“Why do you care?”
“You are MY daughter!” Priscilla yelled. “I’m tired of you getting involved with men who are clearly no good for you and then whining to me about it.”

“Like mother like daughter.”
“Excuse me?”
“You know what I’m talking about.”
“I didn’t come here for your ridiculous attitude or to baby you. I’m here to tell you to grow the hell up and deal with your problems like an adult.”

“Are you finished?”
“Send him the damn papers before I do, Lisa Marie.”
“You wouldn’t dare.”
“Don’t test me.”

Priscilla walked out of her daughter’s rented home slamming the door behind her. Lisa Marie sulked on her couch as she debated with herself on what step to take next. While her thoughts were consuming her, she heard a knock at her door. Knowing she was in an area where no reporters or paparazzi could possibly find her, she stood from her couch and ran towards the front door wondering who could be visiting her and why. She gasped as her eyes widened at the sight that was before her.

“Mr. Sneddon? How did you find me? Why are you here?”
“Your mother and time, Ms. Presley.” The DA replied as he pushed past his possible client and entered her rented home. “We have to move on your case NOW.”

“Why?”
“Your future depends on it.”

Lisa invited the DA into her living room and asked her housekeeper Maria to make some coffee for her guest. The two sat on the couch and Tom went over the fine details of Lisa Marie and Michael’s pending divorce case and explained the pros and cons of her having the upper hand and the Pop star being fully liable to reimburse her for her losses.

“I’m still on the fence about this, Tom.”

“Why is that?”
“I don’t want to humiliate Michael any more than he already has been.”
“So you’d rather have him humiliate you instead?”
“Michael would never do that.”
“HE IS doing that!” Tom yelled. “He’s spending time with another woman while still being legally married to you!”

Lisa Marie sighed. She knew Tom was making sense but something inside of her was saying hiring Tom would not be in her best interests. Knowing she still needed more time, Lisa requested the District Attorney to not pressure her into rushing into things and give her more time to think things through. Of course, Tom had his own hidden agenda towards the case and was quickly running out of time and ideas to sway Lisa Marie into joining forces with him.

“Time is money, Lisa Marie.” Tom snarled. “If you want to do this, you need to make it happen NOW!”

“I realize that.” She replied as Maria came in with a large coffee tray. “I just need to talk to Michael first.”
“NO!” Tom yelled as he stood up from the couch. “That is not a good idea.”
“Why are you so jumpy about this whole thing?”

Tom calmed his nerves and sat back down. He sipped his warm beverage that Maria handed him before leaving the room and quickly thought about ways to explain his eccentric behavior without giving too much away. Lisa Marie raised her brow in suspicion realizing that Tom Sneddon definitely had something to hide.

“Ms. Presley, you deserve everything you are entitled to.” Tom explained. “Michael Jackson ignored his duty and responsibility as a husband towards you and now it is time for you to take action and grab what’s rightfully yours.”

“I need more time.” Lisa said standing her ground. “No one is going to make this decision for me. I will talk to Michael first and see what my options are afterwards.”

“Talking won’t solve anything.” Tom said as he angrily slammed his coffee cup back on the silver lined tray for Maria to pick up. “If talking could have saved your marriage it would have by now.”

“I’ll let you know my final decision in a few days, Mr. Sneddon.”

“Ms. Presley!”
“You may leave now.”

The DA gathered his briefcase and keys and left the house. Lisa watched him peel out of her driveway from her living room bay window and was convinced that the Santa Barbara District Attorney was trying to lure her into doing something for some reason other than her own benefit. Maria returned to pick up the coffee tray and asked her boss if she needed anything else. Lisa Marie simply nodded her head and the young Spanish housekeeper went away to tend to her duties.

“*Why are you being so persuasive, Tom*?” Lisa Marie asked herself as she sat down on her couch again. “*What’s in this for you*?”

Jill called Tom a dozen times wanting an update as to what was happening with the high profile celebrity case he was working on. After leaving more than five voicemail messages, the MTV committee member slammed her phone down in anger and tried to contain herself.

“Are you alright, Ms. Clark?” Barbara asked coming into the grand dining room.

“I’m fine. What did you need?”
“Dinner is ready, ma’am.”
“I’m expecting someone.” Jill said. “Please set the table for two.”
“Is Ms. Clark back in town?”
“No. Someone else.”

Not wanting to pry, Barbara left the room to follow her employer’s instructions. Jill went into the living room and turned on her laptop. She browsed through some old files and pictures she had stored on a CD and started reminiscing about her life several years ago when she and Aurora’s father were together. The Clark mansion’s doorbell suddenly rang jolting the grey eyed beauty’s mother back to reality. Barbara answered the door and announced to her boss that her guest had arrived.

“It’s about time.” Jill said as she turned her laptop off. “Did you see her?”
“She wants more time.”

“I’m sorry to interrupt you, Mr. Jackson.” Sandra said as she opened the door and saw her boss and new friend sitting together on his bed. “You have a phone call.”
“I’ll take it in the study.” Michael replied as Sandra nodded and left the room.

“You are just too popular, Mr. Jackson.” Aurora joked.

“I can never have a day to myself.” The Pop star said as he pecked his friend on her forehead. “Why don’t I meet you outside by the train? We can go for a ride then come back to the house and have dinner?”
“Sounds wonderful.”

“I’ll be there soon ok?”
“Sure.”

Michael and Aurora left the bedroom and headed down the grand staircase. The beautiful intern opened the front door and stopped to smell the dazzling array of flowers and ran her hands through each of the petals being careful not to break them. Sandra noticed the grey eyed beauty was admiring the scenery and smiled. Could she possibly be the one to take her boss out of his lonely, reclusive state? Would she be willing to stand by him as a true friend and help him come out of his shell?

Aurora skipped like a little girl and twirled herself around in circles feeling incredibly happy and blissful. She was in a wonderful, enchanted home with her wonderful new friend and didn’t want her mini vacation to end. For a moment, the intern forgot that she had a life of her own in New York and hoped that she and Michael would always stay close friends with the possibility of developing into something more.

Aurora strutted towards the train station and waited for her new friend like he asked her to. She sat on a wooden bench next to a statue of Peter Pan and admired the red, blue and gold mode of transportation that was sitting on its track waiting to be ridden. An antique clock hung above the carport area where the train was parked and beside it were two lamp posts that resembled the city of London – the city where J.M. Barrie’s classic book took place.

The grey eyed beauty noticed a large oak tree across from the carport and walked towards it. She broke off a small piece of bark from its trunk and carved the words “*Aurora and Michael*” in cursive letters into it. As a finishing touch, she drew a large heart over the names and giggled innocently not realizing the man she was waiting for was standing right behind her watching her every move.

“That’s sweet.” Michael said making Aurora jump two feet.

“I had no idea you were behind me. I’m sorry for vandalizing your tree.”

Michael giggled as he took Aurora’s hand into his.

“A tree can only be vandalized if it’s damaged.” Michael explained. “You actually improved it. And for that, I thank you Miss Clark.”
“You’re welcome, Mr. Jackson.”

Michael took the piece of bark from his friend’s hand and placed it in his pants pocket. Aurora wondered why he didn’t throw it away or drop it on the ground but assumed that because it was a piece of earth, he did not wish for it to be treated poorly. The Pop star then led his intern friend by her hand and helped her board his train. When the two were seated, the train slowly started to move its wheels and Michael gave a hand signal alarming the controller that they were ok and to take the long, scenic route around his property.

“This is beautiful.” Aurora said as she turned her head to see the stunning greenery and crystal blue lakes surrounding Michael’s home.

“It really is.” Michael replied looking directly at his friend’s angelic face.

“Your home is beyond words, Michael.”
“So are you, Aurora.”

The grey eyed beauty smiled and blushed to herself. Michael took her hand and folded it inside of his. Wanting to feel his warmth, Aurora shifted in her seat and snuggled close to her new friend hoping he wouldn’t mind the gesture. Michael lovingly wrapped his arm around the intern and kissed the top of her head. Aurora placed her free hand on top of the Pop star’s waist grabbing onto him for support. Michael felt like he was flying. He was at his beautiful home with a beautiful woman on a beautiful day. For the first time in months, he finally felt happy and at ease. Nothing could kill his good mood now.

“What the hell do you mean she wants more time?” Jill asked Tom as they sat at the Clark mansion grand dining table waiting for Barbara to serve them.

“She’s having second thoughts.”
“She CAN’T be having second thoughts! I want to see that freak ruined and behind bars!”
“So do I.” Tom explained. “But I can’t exactly forge the papers on her behalf. She has to do it on her own, Jillian.”
“THEN GET HER TO DO IT!”

“Calm down! I’m doing all that I can.” Tom said as Barbara placed a plate of salad in front of him. “She’s a grown woman who doesn’t know what she wants or how to get it.”
“Well, I most certainly have no problem telling her.”
“You stay out of this!” Tom threatened. “The last thing you need is for your daughter to be exposed and become the subject of unnecessary media attention.”

“I want my child away from that weirdo, Tom.” Jill said as she placed her white cloth napkin in her lap. “I don’t care what it takes. I don’t care what it costs. Get that untalented molester AWAY FROM MY CHILD!”

“I’m working on it, Jillian.”

“Work harder.” Jill replied. “I mean it, Tom. I will not hesitate to go to Los Angeles and take this matter into my own hands if that’s what it takes for me to get Aurora back.”

“I came here straight from the airport, Jillian.” Tom explained. “Lisa Marie doesn’t even know I left California. My flight was six hours long. I’m exhausted, jet legged and quite frankly sick of your constant, obnoxious nagging!”
“You are in MY house!” Jill yelled as she stood up from the patio table. “How dare you speak to me that way?”

“You and I both know how who this house really belongs to, Jillian.” Tom spat back. “Don’t even try to use your wealth against me. We both know what you did and didn’t have when Aurora was a child.”

“Shut your fat ugly mouth, Tom Sneddon!” Jill threatened angrily. “NO ONE is to know the truth about what happened then.”

“Keep that in mind the next time you try telling me how to do my job.” Tom replied as he happily munched on his Barbara’s crisp green salad.

Aurora kept bouncing up and down as the train strolled bumpily throughout the magical estate known as Neverland. Michael giggled as he too felt his friend’s sudden movements and tried to restrain her by keeping her as close to him as possible. Aurora loved being with Michael and what better way than to be alone on a train with him in the late afternoon with nothing but the cold California breeze and warm rays of sunshine to keep them company.

“I don’t ever want to get off this train!” Aurora said as she noticed the locomotive heading back towards the main carport. “Can we please stay on for one more round?”
“Of course.” Michael replied. “We can stay on as long as you want.”
“YAAY!”

“You’re such a kid, Aurora.”

“I’M a kid?” She replied. “Who created this childishly wonderful place?”

Michael smiled and bit his bottom lip.

“Okay, you got me there.” He said holding his friend closely.

“Neverland brings out the child in everyone.” Aurora said as she and Michael passed the main carport. “Your intention to do that is clearly depicted in every corner, Mr. Jackson.”

“Thank you, Miss Clark. You are a very perceptive woman.”
“I concur.”

The two continued their bumpy yet romantic ride while holding hands and staying close to each other. Aurora lifted her hand that was linked with her friends and kissed his fingertips making him blush like a fresh peach. She then lifted her head and kissed the small of his neck directly under his ear making him flinch against her. Michael wrapped his arm around the beautiful intern making sure she wouldn’t fall out of the train compartment.

The train suddenly took a sharp turn causing Michael to lean over and Aurora to slide down onto her back. She took both of her arms and pulled him down towards her. The Pop star’s heart raced as he was being brought closer to his lady friend’s face. The grey eyed beauty gently brushed Michael’s right cheek and observed him carefully as his breathing became ragged and his eyes closed. Aurora took his face into her hands and pressed his velvety lips against hers with their arms and legs wrapped securely around each other. As their kiss deepened, the train moved swiftly aiding the two ‘friends’ as they continued exploring each other affectionately.