CHAPTER FIVE

*Preparing for Departure*

Michael lovingly held his new friend as she grasped his muscular build against hers. Not wanting the moment to end, he kissed Aurora’s cheek and gently placed his hand on the back of her head running it through her beautiful, wavy hair. The two of them were at the world famous Central Park. Michael arranged an intimate picnic setting for the two of them with candles, wine and fruit. A large blanket with a picture of Michael standing on his toes was laid out for them and their entire area was secluded from the rest of the park making it easy for them to stay out of the public eye.

“This is so sweet!” Aurora said letting go of Michael and looking at the beautiful ambience around her.

He leaned down gently removing Aurora’s shoes before taking off his own and led her onto the blanket with him. He placed her back gently against his chest as he pulled her slightly towards him. Aurora could not stop shaking as she thanked her new Pop star friend for going through so much trouble. Michael kissed her nose saying it was his pleasure and thanked her for joining him.

“You really ARE full of magic.” The beautiful intern said as she felt Michael’s hand on top of hers.

“I just wanted to show you how special you are to me.”  
“You are a very sweet man, Mr. Jackson.”  
“I concur, Miss Clark.”

The two of them laughed and shared stories about their past, present and future. Aurora shared her dreams with the legendary entertainer and he talked to the lovely lady in red about his upcoming tour and a few projects he had been secretly developing unknown to his fans and the media. Aurora could not believe the mindset of the man known as the King of Pop. She was enthralled by his creativity and loved hearing about his thoughts and views on so many different subjects. Michael truly believed in healing the world and making it a better place for everyone. It was a shame that people never understood him for who he was – especially those like Jill Clark.

“You are amazing.” Aurora said drinking white wine from a crystal tumbler glass.

Michael noticed her ladylike sips and giggled at her royalty style etiquette.

“Do you always eat and drink that way?” He asked the beautiful brunette glimmering under the moonlit sky.

“Yes. It’s called manners.”  
“Always so formal.”

“Does that bother you?”  
“No. It’s actually rather intriguing.”  
“How so?”  
“It tells me I need to try harder to soften you.”  
“I do believe that is one task you cannot dance or sing your way out of, Mr. Jackson.”  
“I accept the challenge, Miss Clark.”

Aurora grabbed a few red grapes from Michael’s honey stained picnic basket and threw them at her friend giggling as each one hit him in different areas on his face.

“HEY! What was that for?”

“For being so darn cute.”

“It’s not polite to throw food, Aurora.”  
“Says the man who had a food fight on the set of his Black of White video.”  
“That was different!” Michael yelled throwing a fresh slice of kiwi fruit at his friend.

“How so?!” Aurora replied throwing a small chunk of watermelon at him.

“That was pie. NOT fruit!” He said throwing more grapes.

The two of them lovingly kept throwing fruit at each other until there was nothing left in the basket. Each piece landed in different areas on Michael’s iconic blanket. While they both gathered all of the delectable treats, the two of them placed each one on their small serving plates thankful that they were still edible and didn’t spoil. Awestruck by his sharp and highly impressive features, Aurora couldn’t help but admire the extremely well groomed man in front of her. Eager to feed her sudden curiosity, the grey eyed beauty came up with a light bulb idea.

Michael had just placed the last of the scattered grapes onto the plate and inside the basket. As his hands moved away from it, Aurora quickly grabbed his fingers and folded them into hers. Michael blushed and looked down feeling incredibly shy. He wanted to hold her in that moment but Aurora had something else in mind.

“Were you serious about accepting the challenge?”  
“What do you think?”  
“Are you willing to show me?”  
“Your wish is my command, Miss Clark” Michael said smiling as he lowered his voice to a deeper and sensual tone.

Aurora took the largest, juiciest looking strawberry out of the picnic basket and licked it seductively. She winked at the Pop star and waved her hand signaling him to take it from her as she swirled her tongue around the fruit in circular motions. Michael gasped and looked down turning all shades of pink and red. Aurora removed the strawberry from her mouth and sat closer to Michael. Not an inch of space was between them as Michael took the piece of fruit out of her hand and placed it halfway into her mouth. He ran his large, masculine thumb down her cheek and kissed it before biting into the ripe, crisp berry placed in between the rim of his sprouting lover’s lips. As Michael bit into the sweet yet savory product, its juice squirted and landed directly on Aurora’s collarbone. She squirmed as she felt the sudden splash of fluid land onto her skin.

Michael laughed as he looked at the small puddle of liquid and seeds slowly dripping against her caramel colored body. He tried his hardest not to laugh while chewing and quickly grabbed Aurora’s hands placing them firmly in his lap to stop her from wiping the watery nectar from her neck. Aurora chewed the rest of what was in her mouth and they both shared a passionate kiss placing their hands around each other’s back and slowly falling onto the blanket beneath them.

“I really need to wipe this off.” Aurora whispered against the Pop star’s lips. “It’s starting to travel downwards.”  
“That’s what I want.” Michael said pressing his forehead against hers on top of the soft, featherlike blanket.

Aurora loved being with her new friend. She wished the night didn’t have to end as she tried grabbing a napkin from inside the picnic basket. Michael snatched her arms again and placed them at the top of her head. He then kissed her nose, cheeks and lips before whispering two simple words in her ear making her feel euphoric and sedated.

“Let me…”

The beautiful intern closed her eyes as she felt Michael’s soft, velvety lips lightly pressed against her neck. His tongue slithered across her smooth skin making her entire body twitch underneath his. He licked the fruity substance from her collarbone taking her into a state of oblivion. Aurora could feel the sensation of her satin dress slip and slide against Michael’s clothing as he gently rubbed his legs against hers. She wrapped her arms around his firm back and held him close as he continued licking and kissing her. The grey eyed beauty shrilled as the Pop star worked his way down from her collar to her chest. Not wanting to overstep his boundaries, Michael looked up at his lady friend and asked if she was still comfortable and alright.

“That was amazing.” Aurora said trying to catch her breath. “Thank you.”  
“I concur.” Michael replied winking his right eye at the junior Clark. “Have I won your challenge, Miss Clark?”

“Not yet.” She said pulling him back onto her.

The two of them kissed and held each other close as they sat underneath the stars talking, eating, cuddling and drinking wine. Aurora had never enjoyed herself with anyone as much as she did with Michael. Nothing mattered to either of them except their wonderful company and flourishing admiration for each other. They tickled each other like children, kissed like adults and held hands like an old couple that had been married for years. Michael prayed that Aurora felt the same way he did. She was his future. She was his dream. She was his love.

Dennis hid behind a tree in the distance and watched the entire private event unfold before his eyes. He followed his secret crush’s limousine and couldn’t help but cry as he watched her and her new love interest having a blissful, romantic time together. He knew his opinion about the beautiful intern was right – Aurora WAS only interested in the rich and famous. She would never give someone like Dennis a chance and in that moment, he accepted his defeat against the King of Pop.

Knowing their secret relationship could ruin Michael’s career, Dennis was tempted to photograph the couple and sell copies to every tabloid magazine he knew. Being the honorable person he was, Dennis didn’t want to hurt Aurora or embarrass her by ruining her reputation. He kept her best interests at heart and although torn by seeing her crush with another man, refused to drag her good name through her mud and possibly affecting his own career. He quietly left the scene after watching the two feeding and tickling each other again.

Dennis ran to his car and started the ignition. He didn’t feel like being alone but had nowhere to go. He had no parents, no family and no one at home waiting for him. It was true. Dennis really WAS too late. He waited too long to express his feelings to the lovely and intelligent intern and she ended up in the arms of another man. Someone who could have any woman he wanted. Dennis hated Michael in that moment. Feeling rejected and angry, he decided to cry on the one and only person’s shoulder he had – his friend David’s.

After several failed attempts to speak to her daughter, Jill left the MTV Awards after party and headed straight home. After being dropped off at the Clark mansion, she drove to her daughter’s neighborhood and parked her car a few houses away waiting and wanting to know what time she would get home. Aurora’s car was parked in her driveway resulting in her mother coming to the conclusion that she had been picked up by someone. Jill assumed that Aurora not driving was Michael’s ploy to make it seem like Aurora was home just in case her mother was to check on her – a trap Jill Clark successfully fell into. She knew Michael was a smart man but underestimated how keen the Pop star was on paying close attention to detail. Jill tilted her head back against her driver’s seat and sighed deeply. She expected to wait a long time. Her blood was boiling. Her fingers itched. She needed to get her daughter back and needed to do it FAST.

Michael and Aurora ended up falling asleep in each other’s arms. As the sounds of car horns and police sirens flared in the distance, the brunette beauty opened her eyes and saw Michael resting peacefully against her. She gently pulled his curly hair away from his face and kissed his nose hoping she wouldn’t disturb him. As she tried to remove herself from his warm embrace, Michael mumbled under his breath and squeezed her hand not wanting her to move away from him. Aurora kissed his eyes as he opened them seeing her perfect smile and dark hair in his vision. He had never woken up to a more beautiful sight and prayed in that moment that he wasn’t dreaming.

“It must be really late.” Aurora said as she sat up and checked her phone.

She gasped when she realized it was past 2am and missed several calls from her mother. She didn’t want to take up all of Michael’s time and feared someone would see them alone together. Michael assured his new friend that she was not imposing but Aurora couldn’t help but worry about someone catching the pair together or even worse, telling her mother that she was with him.

“You are very brave, Mr. Jackson.”

“I am?”  
“Yes. You take so many risks and don’t ever worry about their consequences.”  
“If I were to think that way I wouldn’t be who I am, Aurora.”  
“I know. I love that about you. A very courageous soul indeed.”

Michael smiled and blushed as he and Aurora gathered their wine bottles, glasses and plates. She placed them into the basket and handed them to the Pop star as she neatly folded the blanket and carried it under her arm. Michael told her she could keep it as a memory of their first date together making the little girl inside of her jump and holler. The two shared one last kiss under the moon and stars before holding hands and heading towards the limo.

“I had such a wonderful time.” Aurora said as the two of them handed their things to the chauffeur and sat in the back seat. “Thank you again.”  
“My pleasure, Miss Clark.”

“Are you leaving tomorrow?”  
“Yes. I wish I could take you with me.”  
“Me too. I’ll visit you.”  
“You have to.”  
“I don’t take orders, Mr. Jackson.”

Michael laughed and tickled his friend making her screech against his ear. He refused to stop until Aurora promised him she would certainly visit him at Neverland one day. After finally giving up the urge to fight him off, the young Clark finally agreed to her friend’s request and hugged him tightly. Aurora loved being in Michael’s arms. She felt safe and completely away from harm. Feeling her hands gripping tightly against him, Michael smiled and kissed the beautiful intern’s cheek. He loved holding her just as much as she loved being held.

“You are such a cuddle bug.” Aurora said running her hand through Michael’s soft, curly hair.

“I like that name.”  
“You’re MY cuddle bug now, Mr. Jackson.”  
“That is the cutest name I’ve ever heard.”

“I’m glad that it belongs to you now.”  
“I love it. You are so sweet, Aurora.”  
“I concur.”

“Will you STOP that?” Michael asked tickling Aurora’s back.

“AH!” She screamed as he held her firmly. “NO! And you can’t make me!”  
“Oh no?” He asked moving his hands towards her stomach.

“Michael, NO!”

He tickled her again driving her insane. She loved every second of it and hated that the world could not see or know about their relationship. Aurora hoped that maybe one day she and Michael could be more than friends but for now, she loved being his ‘friend with benefits.’

“OK! STOP!” She screamed. “I won’t say that anymore.”  
“I really don’t mind when you do.”  
“You little devil! You just wanted to tickle me again.”  
“You’re a very smart woman, Miss Clark.”

She laughed as Michael put his arm around her. She placed her head on his shoulder and closed her eyes as he turned his head and kissed her soft, ladylike nose. She placed her arms around his waist and the two of them stayed that way for more than half the drive. Aurora’s feelings for the King of Pop were growing faster than she could handle. She wanted to get to know more about him but couldn’t help but be drawn towards him. The feel of his pillow like skin and fair complexion drove her crazy. She knew about Michael’s struggle with his appearance and wanted him to know that she loved the way he looked. Of course, she knew he wouldn’t believe her and promised herself she would do her best to make him feel more confident about himself.

Aurora kissed Michael’s neck making him squirm in his seat. He quickly put his hand on her cheek and breathed deeply. As his body temperature increased, the lady in red kissed the Pop star’s cheek and bit the bottom of his left ear lobe making him giggle adorably. Wanting to go further, she turned his face towards hers and kissed him ravaging his well-defined, perfectly shaped lips. Loving this side of his friend, Michael relaxed against her and held her as she fell back onto the seat and pulled him down with her.

Their hands began travelling and Aurora’s dress was slowly starting to come up to her knees. Not wanting to force himself on her, Michael suddenly broke their kiss and placed his hands in front of him.

“I don’t think we should do this.” He whispered as he brushed his fingers down Aurora’s soft cheek. “I don’t want to rush into anything and leave you with regrets.”  
“Michael…”  
“As beautiful and irresistible as you are to me, I think we need to slow down. I want this to last, Aurora. I don’t just want it to be perfect in the beginning—“  
“Michael…”  
“I’m starting to get really attached to you and the last thing I want is for you to—“  
“MICHAEL!”

Aurora put her hand on Michael’s mouth and he kissed it. She smiled and explained to him that he was not forcing her into anything and loved being affectionate with him. Still feeling hesitant, Michael decided not to move any further and let nature take its course with his new relationship. Respecting his decision, Aurora also agreed not to move too quickly and let things flow naturally. Of course, their feelings towards each other were much stronger than their logic and both of them knew it would be extremely difficult to keep resisting each other. Between the two of them, Aurora had the upper hand due to the fact that Michael was married. Although a legal separation was enough grounds to be with someone else, the grey eyed beauty knew her friend still needed time to recover and the last thing she wanted to do was pounce on his vulnerability.

Dennis arrived at his new friend’s house and knocked loudly on the door. Wondering who was disturbing him at three in the morning, David ran to his front door and looked through the peephole seeing his secret crush looking like he had just been ran over by a bus. He opened the door and let Dennis in as he thanked him and sat on his chaise lounge. Still half awake and trying to fully open his eyes, David asked his friend what happened to him and Dennis couldn’t help but pour his aching heart out to his only friend.

In a matter of minutes, Dennis told David about seeing Aurora in the park with another man. He didn’t mention who the other man was but told him it was someone he’d never expect her to be with. David tried comforting his friend by telling him that things may not be as they seem at first but Dennis knew what he saw and lost his crush forever. David tried his best to be strong for himself but couldn’t handle the way his own secret crush was feeling. He told Dennis he could stay the night and Dennis happily agreed.

David showed his friend to his guest room and said he’d be across the hall if he needed anything. Dennis hugged his new friend and thanked him again for being there for him when no one else was. David simply patted him on his back and said goodnight as he left the room closing the door on his way out. It was then that Dennis realized something wasn’t right about his new friend. He stood in the bedroom staring at the closed door wondering why David was being so nice but couldn’t look him in the eye. He also questioned his more than friendly behavior towards him and why David never talked about women. After putting all of the pieces of the puzzle together, Dennis finally got the picture – David was secretly gay and possibly in love with him.

4AM

Jill fell asleep in her car waiting for her daughter to return home. After hearing a vehicle drive by, she opened her eyes and noticed a black stretch limousine parking into Aurora’s driveway. She glanced at her watch and was enraged at how late her only child came home. She watched closely and waited for her to exit the vehicle seeing if anyone else would come out and go inside the house with her.

“I had a wonderful time. Thank you.” Aurora said kissing Michael’s cheek.

“You’re welcome. Sweet dreams.”  
“They will be if you are in them.”  
“Another challenge gladly accepted, Miss Clark.”

Aurora giggled and kissed Michael’s lips before the driver opened his door to let the lady in red out of the vehicle. Michael politely asked him to stay in his seat and would tap on the window when he was ready for him to let Aurora out for his own safety. Michael feared someone may have seen them leaving the park together and followed their limo hiding nearby hoping to get pictures of him outside Aurora’s residential neighborhood in the middle of the night.

“I wish you weren’t leaving tomorrow.”  
“Me too. I’ll call you in the morning.”  
“Promise?”  
“Of course.”  
“I expect to hear from you promptly when you wake up and once you reach the gates of your home.”

Michael laughed as he heard his lady friend’s demanding request.

“You find me amusing, do you?” She asked raising her brow at the Gloved One.

“I’m always giving orders to people. It’s funny being on the receiving end for the first time.”  
“Mr. Jackson enjoys being dominant, does he?”  
“Of course. I love being in control.”  
“Point well noted. I wish you a safe flight home.”  
“There you go being formal again.” He said kissing her forehead.   
“I’m a lady, Mr. Jackson. I carry myself well.”  
“I concur.” He said holding her against him.

Michael tapped the divider window letting the driver know he could let Aurora out. He then quickly moved to the opposite end of the vehicle farthest away from the door and out of sight. He put on his fedora and sunglasses and kissed Aurora’s hand before wishing her a good night. The chauffeur opened the door and let the lady in red out and kindly escorted her to her front door. Aurora giggled as she turned and saw the King of Pop wave his single gloved hand from the limousine sunroof as it slowly made its way out of her driveway.

She took off her shoes and went upstairs to have a hot bath. As she removed her satin gown from her body, Aurora gasped and noticed a large brown colored mark on her collarbone. She shook her head and laughed as the little girl inside of her cheered and snickered. No man had ever given her a hickey before. The beautiful brunette felt shy as she ran her hand over the discolored patch of skin. Michael had left his mark on her. A mark that symbolized their budding relationship. A mark she knew she had to hide from the world as well as her own mother.

Jill noticed Aurora going inside her home alone and followed the limousine that left her driveway. She saw Michael’s gloved hand from the window confirming her daughter was in fact, with him. As late as it was, she knew he would probably leave town in the morning and miss her chance to confront him and did not want him around her daughter any longer. She tried being as discreet as possible but Michael’s driver knew within seconds he was being followed. He took as many detours and back alleys as he could to try and dodge the head committee member but she was no dummy – Jill knew all of the streets in her city like the back of her hand and outsmarted the Pop star’s driver at every turn he made.

Michael, not knowing who was following him slouched down in his seat as his driver began to speed. Michael thought it was the paparazzi and thought they would eventually give up once they could no longer keep up with his driver but Jill showed no signs of slowing down. She had to stay behind and talk to the man she thought was destroying her daughter’s life and she had do it then – even if it killed her.

Aurora woke up to the sounds of birds chirping outside her bedroom window the next morning. She sat up in her oversized platform bed and stretched her arms out before wanting to freshen up and take a warm bubble bath. As she went into her bathroom to fill her tub, she turned on the TV in her room hoping to catch the highlights of the award show. To her surprise, she came across a newsflash on the screen saying Michael was already at the airport on his way back to Los Angeles. The beautiful intern stood in her bedroom in front of her TV wondering why her new friend hadn’t called her to say goodbye.

She quickly ran to her cell phone to see if she had any missed calls – none. She then checked her landline thinking she may have slept through the ringtone or it could have been unplugged from the wall – it was fine. She then turned off the water in her tub and sat on the bathroom floor with her head in her hands wondering why the Pop star would just leave without calling. He promised her he would, so why didn’t he?

Jill followed Michael’s limousine to his hotel earlier that morning. When his security attempted to block her vehicle from entering his hotel parking lot, Jill made a U turn and parked inside the main entrance pretending that she was visiting someone she knew who was staying there. She went to the front desk and introduced herself as the head committee member of MTV. After a few phone calls and a brief meeting with the hotel manager, Jill was given a pass to enter and access the presidential suite elevator.

She waited until the large herd of fans and reporters swarmed the hotel lobby. She knew the King of Pop would never enter a hotel through its front entrance and waited before sneaking into the elevator with Michael’s entourage. Once she made it to the top floor, she showed her pass to Michael’s massive security guards and informed them she needed to speak to him immediately. While waiting in the hall outside his room, she stared at the large crowds of fans outside the building as they chanted his name. She shook her head in disgust wondering why what was so great about the greatest entertainer in the world and why he suddenly had an interest in her only child.

Jill Clark was never a huge fan of Michael Jackson. She knew he was iconic, broke several records and a fantastic humanitarian but the only thing that stood out in her mind was his trial. In her eyes, all of Michael’s efforts to be a good person and help the world were nothing but cover ups to try and repair his damaged reputation in the media. No matter what he did, he would never be good enough for her and definitely never good enough for her daughter.

“You can see him now.” One of the guards said as he escorted Jill into his suite.

He walked her towards the living room area and asked her to sit but Jill refused saying she would only be there for a few minutes. Once the guard left, Jill stood in the living room waiting for the Pop star to see her. A few minutes later, he politely greeted the head committee member and he too asked her to sit but again she refused. Michael could tell by Jill’s expression and harsh tone that she was not amused by something. Her being there at 5 in the morning was also a very clear indication.

“This won’t take long, Mr. Jackson.” Jill said eyeing the single gloved man in front of her. “I appreciate you seeing me at such a late hour. I will get straight to the point.”  
“What can I help you with, Ms. Clark?”  
“Stay away from Aurora.”

Michael gasped. His eyes widened and he immediately rose from the white leather couch he was sitting on.

“May I ask why?”   
“No, you may not.”  
“Ms. Clark, your daughter is—“  
“EXACTLY, Mr. Jackson.” Jill said interrupting Michael’s words. “MY daughter is not the one for you.”  
“Ms. Clark, your daughter and I are just friends.”  
“Do you treat all of your friends to a picnic in the park late at night, Mr. Jackson?”

Michael was shocked. He couldn’t believe that a mother of a 32 year old daughter would follow her around watching her every move as if she were still in high school.

“Ms. Clark, Aurora is very special to me. I just wanted to show her—“  
“You wanted to court her into liking you so that you could cast your spell like you did with your wife.”  
“Pardon?” Michael was confused. He wasn’t trying to court the beautiful intern at all.

“You heard me. You might be able to fool the world with that innocent looking face but you cannot fool me. You grew up in front of me Mr. Jackson. It’s very obvious that your mother’s Witness upbringing certainly had no influence on you.”

Michael was angry. How dare this woman comment on his mother’s religious beliefs and the way she instilled it in her children. Michael was always a sweet and gentle person. He dripped of nothing but kindness and was had never felt so insulted in his entire life.

“Ms. Clark, I think you have crossed the line. My upbringing was very strict and spiritual. My mother made sure all of her children were raised with kindness, compassion and fairness towards all.”  
“Did she also teach you to break up married couple’s homes and prance on young, impressionable women?”

“Ms. Clark the things you read about me in magazines or see on TV is almost never the truth. I would never do any such thing to any woman.”

Jill rolled her eyes. She wasn’t buying into any of Michael’s words. She knew he was raised to be clever and say anything he could to try and convince people he was never at fault. Child stars were always trained very well for the public eye and this was something Jill Clark was definitely aware of.

“Mr. Jackson, I did not come here to discuss your religious beliefs or your upbringing. I simply came here to tell you to stay away from my daughter. As a married man, you should conduct yourself in a more professional way, especially since you have been accused of—“  
“ACQUITTED, MS. CLARK!” Michael said over her abrasive voice. “I was acquitted.”

“Again, that is not my concern. As a mother to an only child, I am requesting that you steer clear from Aurora. She is NOT the one for you and I don’t want you anywhere near her. STAY AWAY.”

Jill turned around and walked toward the suite door.

“And if I don’t?” Michael asked.

Jill froze and slowly turned her back facing the torn looking singer.

“I will see to it that you never perform on any stage again as long as you live. You are also not to utter a word about this conversation to anyone. Have a safe trip back to Los Angeles, Mr. Jackson.”

Jill walked out of Michael’s hotel room leaving him to wonder what just happened. He sat on the couch and cried tears of intense sadness feeling confused about why Jill would belittle him in such a way. Did Aurora tell her to do that? Was he moving too fast with her? Did she not have the guts to tell him herself? He spent the next few hours pacing his hotel room as his fans screamed and cheered for him outside his balcony. Not knowing what to say or do next, Michael packed his things and changed his flight for an earlier departure. He no longer wanted to be in New York and wanted to make sure he never came in contact with Jill Clark ever again.

Dennis woke up from his guest bed and decided to make breakfast for David to thank him for allowing him to stay at his place. Dennis wasn’t sure if revealing his new friend’s secret would be the best thing to do especially since he wasn’t 100% sure so he decided to act as if he didn’t know anything. After taking a quick shower, Dennis ran his fingers through his hair, put on his clothes and went downstairs. The smell of fresh coffee brewing teased his nose as he made his way into the kitchen. David was already awake and had a huge breakfast waiting for the two of them.

“Wow! This looks amazing!” Dennis said grabbing a plate and helping himself to scrambled eggs, sausages and pancakes.

“I’m glad you like it.” David said as he poured himself and his friend a cup of coffee. “How did you sleep?”  
“Very well. I actually wanted to come down and do all this for you.”  
“That’s nice but I’m a little iffy about people in my kitchen.”  
“Why?” Dennis asked scooping eggs into his mouth.

“I like to keep things a certain way. I don’t like people making a mess in my house.”  
“Makes sense.” Dennis said as he noticed how neat and tidy David was.

“I’m sorry about last night.” David said as he poured milk into his coffee mug. “I tried getting to know her for you and honestly thought differently about Aurora Clark.”  
“So did I.” Dennis said as he put two sugar cubes in his mug and stirred them into the hot liquid. “I appreciate you trying to help but I’m over her now.”  
“That fast?”  
“It’s not like I loved her or anything. It was just a crush.”  
“Those can be painful too.” David said referencing his own feelings.

“Not if you can find a replacement. In a good way of course.”  
“What do you mean?”

Not wanting to give too much away, Dennis quickly changed the subject.

“Nothing. So when was the last time you dated?”  
“It’s been a while. It ended badly.”

“Tell me about it?”

David explained a past relationship (without revealing it was with another man) when his partner had cheated on him after a two year relationship that involved them living together. David caught his partner in the act with another man forcing him to move out of their former apartment and into his loft. Unknown to Dennis, the real reason David was not comfortable with people in his kitchen was due to the fact that David caught his partner with another man on the kitchen table. Since then, he never wanted anyone in his kitchen. Hearing David’s painful story, Dennis wiped his tear filled eyes and apologized to his friend for what he went through.

“No one deserves that.” Dennis said looking at his now empty plate.

“Whatever. It’s his loss.” David said sipping his coffee.

“His?”

David shook his head.

“I mean hers.”  
“D, you don’t have to hide it from me.”  
“I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

Dennis told David that he knew his secret and wondered why he never told his friend about his sexual orientation in the beginning. David explained he didn’t want to be judged or lose his new friendship, especially since his feelings were deeper than Dennis’s. It was then that Dennis revealed a little secret of his own.

“D, you really should have told me. We could’ve saved ourselves A LOT of time and heartache.”  
“What do you mean?” David asked with a puzzled look on his face. “You’re straight.”   
“No, David. I’m bisexual.”

Michael arrived back at Neverland safely and got settled at his magical estate in just a matter of time. He couldn’t get Aurora out of his mind and her mother’s crude words were echoing throughout his brain. Wanting to know the truth, he decided to call his brunette haired friend to get the answers he desperately needed. They had a great time together – why all of a sudden did Jill Clark not want him around her daughter?

“Mr. Jackson?” Sandra asked knocking on his office door. “May I please come in?”  
“Of course, Sandra.”

The chocolate skinned woman with a picture perfect smile entered the room welcoming her boss home. He smiled as she placed a small stack of letters, packages and phone messages on his desk.

“Dinner will be ready soon, sir. Is there anything else you need?”

Michael quickly browsed through the phone messages hoping to see one from Aurora. He sighed deeply as he looked at the last one and didn’t see her name on it.

“Sandra, did anyone else call for me?”  
“No, sir. These are all of the phone messages.”  
“If Miss Clark calls, please let me know?”  
“Of course.”  
“Thank you. That will be all.”

Sandra left the Pop star’s office closing the door on her way out. Michael was still disappointed about Jill’s words. He could never leave or turn his back on Aurora, especially after the wonderful night they shared. Things weren’t making any sense to him and he owed it to himself to find out what was really going on. After gathering all of his courage, he stood up to reach his cordless phone from the base when one of the packages Sandra put on his office desk fell to his feet. It was a registered package sent from an attorney’s office. He picked up the large, dark yellow colored envelope and tore the seal from the top. As he emptied its contents, a large document with the words ‘Divorce Settlement Agreement’ at the top was written in bold, black ink.

Lisa Marie had already met with her divorce lawyer and arranged to have her husband served with legal papers explaining her demands and requests once their marriage ended. Michael skimmed the document carefully trying to find loopholes or any other kind of clever attempt to lure him into something he didn’t agree with. To his surprise, all of the terms listed were consensual and what they had initially agreed upon prior to getting married. However, Michael’s temper got the best of him when he noticed a hidden Claus in the document that was never discussed with his soon to be ex-wife.

***“The aforementioned spouse is to receive a lump sum alimony settlement***

***in the amount of $10 million dollars by the spouse's consort.”***

“WHAT?!” Michael yelled reading the bold print several times. “SHE FILES FOR DIVORCE AND NOW WANTS ME TO PAY HER 10 MILLION DOLLARS??!!”

Sandra heard the commotion all the way from the main living room and immediately ran inside Michael’s office to check on him.

“Sir? Are you alright?” She asked.

“I’m fine, Sandra. Please leave.”

Not wanting to upset her boss any further, she immediately left and closed the door behind her again. Michael was so angry he threw the documents across the room watching them scatter all over his office floor. Fresh tears erupted from his grief ridden eyes like hot lava out of a volcano. He was beyond angry. His soul was damaged beyond repair. He needed to feel loved. He needed to be comforted. He needed Aurora Clark.

Jill and her daughter met at the Clark mansion for their weekly Sunday brunch. As the two ladies sat down on the veranda, Barbara and the rest of the staff served the two ladies an array of their favorite items. While pouring herself a glass of iced tea, Jill decided to suddenly make small talk to lighten her daughter’s obvious and horrible mood. She smiled wickedly to herself knowing exactly why her only child was so upset. She knew her plan had worked and that Michael was now far away from her and never coming back into either of their lives.

“You seem awfully distraught today, dear.” Jill said eyeing her daughter’s sour look. “Did something happen?”  
“No, mother.” Aurora replied rolling her eyes.   
“You cannot fool me, child. Tell me what’s on your mind.”  
“I’m just not in the mood for anything today.”  
“Does it have something to do with Mr. Jackson?”  
“It’s none of your business, mom.”

Frustrated with her daughter’s bitter attitude, Jill decided to snap her daughter out of her disrespectful state once and for all.

“For God’s sake Aurora! You were not raised this way! What has gotten into you?”  
“YOU HAVE!” Aurora yelled standing up from the patio table. “You always stick your nose where it doesn’t belong! Michael left town without calling me to say goodbye and I know you had something to do with it!”  
“That’s not the worst thing to happen.” Jill said under her breath. “Besides, the man was just following orders.”

Aurora, now livid, stared at her mother with daggers in her eyes wanting to know what she said to the Pop star resulting in his unexpected way of leaving the city.

“What did you do?” The grey eyed beauty asked in a low, calm like tone of voice.

“I simply asked him to stay away from you and if he didn’t there would be extreme repercussions.”  
“HOW DARE YOU?!” Aurora yelled throwing her plate across the patio table. “YOU HAD NO RIGHT TO INTEREFERE WITH MY RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM!”

“There IS NO relationship with him!” Jill yelled back. “He is gone and out of your life now and if that home wrecking pedophile knows what’s good for him he’ll stay that way.”  
“I can’t believe this. Even after all these years you STILL don’t know when to keep your mouth shut and stay out of my private life. When are you going to realize that I AM NOT A LITTLE GIRL ANYMORE?!”

“You watch your tone of voice with me, young lady!”

“I’m out of here.”

“IF YOU WALK OUT THAT DOOR YOU WON’T EVER BE ALLOWED TO COME BACK AURORA CHASTITY CLARK!”

“GOOD! THAT MEANS I’LL NEVER HAVE TO SEE YOU AGAIN!”

Aurora grabbed her things and ran towards her car. She was so upset she couldn’t even unlock her door with her keys. Her hands were shaking and she literally felt like she was going to vomit. Her mother had embarrassed her in front of the biggest entertainer in the world. How was she ever going to face him again? Did Michael think Aurora put her mother up to this? Was he ever going to talk to her again? Feeling flustered, Aurora turned on the ignition and drove home. She needed answers. She needed to explain herself. She needed to talk to Michael.

While waiting at a red light, Aurora kept thinking about her mother’s evil intentions and never ending desire to interfere in her daughter’s life. Being a grown woman with her own place just wasn’t enough for Jill Clark to realize that her only child was no longer a child. Feeling trapped and suffocated, Aurora came up with a plan. A plan that would definitely rattle her mother’s shallow feelings for good. She needed to talk to her friend and tell him exactly what was on her mind. Aurora prayed in that moment hoping that Michael hadn’t already pushed her away as she continued driving home.

David was stunned. He couldn’t believe what Dennis had just told him. A cloud of happiness rose above his head instantly washing away every bit of sadness from his being.

“What did you say?” He asked staring at his new friend and love interest.

“I’m bi-sexual.”  
“Since when?”  
“Since birth.”

David laughed. He couldn’t believe he asked such a ridiculous question.

“Sorry, I didn’t mean to offend you.”  
“You didn’t. But I am and if you had just told me in the beginning we could’ve avoided all this drama.”  
“I had no idea. When you told me you liked Aurora Clark I assumed you were only into women.”  
“Well, now you know that I’m not. So where do we go from here?”  
“Wherever we want, I guess.”

Dennis stood up from his friend’s bar stool and walked over to him. He gave him a hug and the two shared a passionate kiss in the middle of David’s kitchen. David was glad and very relieved that he no longer had to hide his feelings from his friend turned partner. Dennis also wanted to create new and happy memories for David by sharing their first intimate moment in the one place he dreaded the most. The two of them finished their meal and spent the entire afternoon together. Dennis invited his new partner to his place to spend the night and David happily agreed. In their minds, this was definitely the start of a beautiful relationship.

Aurora arrived home and saw her answering machine light blinking constantly. She quickly put her purse, jacket and keys on her granite kitchen countertop and ran towards the machine hoping it was the one person she desperately wanted to speak to. To her disappointment, it was none other than her own mother cursing and yelling for walking out on her. Not wanting to hear her voice, Aurora deleted Jill’s message and went to the next one. She smiled brightly as she heard the most beautiful voice in the world say her name.

*“Aurora, it’s me. I really need to talk to you. Please call me back.”*

She reached for a notepad and a pen and wrote down the number Michael provided in his message. After hearing the rest of her messages, the beautiful brunette quickly marched up the stairs to her room and closed the door wanting to speak to her friend in complete privacy. As she dialed the Pop star’s number, Aurora giggled to herself as could not wait to hear her friend’s voice and tell him about her great idea. After a few rings, there was no answer. She then hung up and redialed – no answer. Disappointed, she hung up and lay on her bed thinking he was either too busy or not at Neverland. She tried not to assume the worst by thinking that Michael was avoiding her and hoped he would see her missed calls and return them.

A few seconds later, her phone rang. Aurora closed her eyes and prayed that it was Michel and not her mother.

“Aurora Clark.”  
“I miss her very much.”  
“She misses you too, Mr. Concur.”

Michael laughed making Aurora’s heart melt all over again.

“I need to talk to you.” She said getting his attention.

“So do I.”  
“May I go first?”  
“Sure.”

Aurora apologized to Michael about her mother’s behavior and told him that she had no idea Jill would pull such a crazy, embarrassing stunt. Michael then explained he could not call Aurora before leaving New York due to her mother’s request and also not having enough time to make the call. They both understood each other’s situations and were happy to be speaking with one another again. It had only been one day but to them, it seemed like an eternity went by without hearing each other’s voices.

“There’s another thing I want to tell you.” Aurora said with a tone of excitement in her voice.

“I have something to say too but you go ahead.”

“No, you go first this time.”  
“Lisa Marie’s attorney sent me her divorce papers.”  
“I’m sorry, Michael.”

“She wants 10 million dollars in alimony.”  
“WHAT?!”

“She had a new Claus written against our original agreement when we got married and now she wants me to pay her just for being my wife for less than two years.”  
“In that case, what I have to say is definitely going to cheer you up.”

“What is it?”

“I’m coming to see you, Michael.”  
“YOU ARE?”

“Yes. I’m leaving in two days.”  
“Are you serious?”  
“You’ll see how serious I am when I arrive at LAX.”

“But how—“

“Don’t worry. I’ll take care of everything. Will you have someone get me from the airport?”  
“Of course. Fax me your itinerary?”  
“Absolutely.”

Aurora wrote down Michael’s fax number and told him she would help him fight against Lisa Marie’s ridiculous request for money that she didn’t need. The last thing the only child of Elvis Presley and sole inheritor of his estate needed was additional funds from her soon to be ex-husband.

“She won’t get away with it, Michael. I’ll make sure of it.”

“I can’t wait to see you again. You are so wonderful.”  
“I concur.”

Michael giggled and told the intern he would clear his schedule for her arrival. Aurora laughed thinking about the King of Pop dropping his entire workload just to see her. She felt special and knew Michael would do anything to make her feel welcome at his beautiful and otherworldly home. The two of them talked more about Michael’s upcoming tour as well as Aurora’s spat with her mother. Michael did not approve of the young Clark’s behavior towards her mother but understood her reason for defending herself.

“She reminds me of Joseph.” Michael said with a hint of sorrow in his voice.   
“They are quite similar, yes.”

“I’m sorry she treats you that way.”  
“So am I. But she won’t anymore.”

“You will always be her daughter, Aurora.”  
“I know. But that doesn’t give her the right to control me or my life.”  
“I concur, Miss Clark.”

“Always so formal.”

“You Clark women bring out the fanciness in me.”  
“I’d love to bring something else out from you when I get there, Mr. Jackson.”  
“What exactly did you have in mind Miss Clark?”

Sandra knocked on Michael’s office door informing him that his meal was ready. He thanked her and said he’d meet her in his dining room after finishing his call.

“I’m sorry. What were you saying?”  
“Nothing important. I shall see you in two days.”  
“You have no idea how excited I am to see you.”  
“And I, Mr. Jackson.”

“I look forward to receiving your fax.”  
“I’ll send it right away.”

“I’m smiling hugely because of you, Aurora.”

“I’m happy to know that. You are too beautiful to frown.”

“So are you, my lovely lady in red.”

Aurora’s heart skipped a beat. She had never heard anyone pay her such a beautiful compliment. She thanked Michael for his kind words and they both stayed on the phone in silence waiting for the other to say something or hang up. After a few minutes of dead air, Aurora decided to end the call not wanting to take up any more of the superstar’s precious time.

“I don’t want to keep you any longer, Michael.”  
“It’s alright. I don’t mind.”  
“Please stay strong and take care of yourself. At least, until I get there.”  
“I will, I promise.”  
“You know I care about you, right?”  
“I do now.”

“How can a man of your intelligence not know something so elementary?”  
“How can a woman of YOUR intelligence not know when I am being sarcastic?”  
“Another point noted. You seem to enjoy keeping me on my toes.”  
“I’m hoping to have you in a different position when you come here.”  
“And what position is that?”  
“Vertical.”

“I believe you are getting too personal again, Mr. Jackson.”

“Was I too personal at the park?”

“Yes but it was thoroughly enjoyed.”  
“I believe you don’t mind me getting personal with you then, Miss Clark.”  
“You are one perceptive man.”  
“I concur.”

The two of them both giggled as their cheeks turned rosy.

“You need to eat, Michael.”  
“I know. I’ll go do that now.”  
“Good boy.”  
“I try to be.”  
“I’m hoping to change that when I get to Neverland.”  
“I’m looking forward to it.”

“Have a good day.”  
“Aurora?”  
“Yes?”

“I—“

Sandra walked into Michael’s office again reminding him of his meal. He told her he was almost finished and on his way to the dining room. Once Sandra left, Michael thanked his friend for their wonderful conversation and reminded her to send him her flight details.

“What were you saying before?” She asked.

“It’s not important.”  
“I’m sure it was.”  
“Believe me, it’s better said in person.”  
“As you wish, Mr. Jackson.”  
“Have a good day, Miss Clark.”

The two of them hung up with the biggest smiles on their faces. Aurora wanted to get back at her mother for being so cruel and nosy and Michael was feeling vulnerable due to the breakdown of his marriage. Both were going through something so personal but somehow managed to shed some light into their worlds of darkness. Michael proudly ate his meal that day and Aurora ran to her office, booked her trip and faxed Michael her flight details in a matter of minutes. Friendship, excitement and happiness permeated the air and neither one of them wanted their feelings to fade. Another strong existence unknown to both Michael and Aurora was also lurking around them. One with a much stronger force that cleverly hid itself behind their other emotions. A force new to both of them. A force that was destined to change the growing relationship between the intern and the King of Pop forever.