CHAPTER 10

Face to Face With Dismay

Feeling extremely frightened, I didn’t go inside and immediately called 911. The police came within minutes and asked me to wait outside while they went in and checked the house. When they came out, they informed me nothing was really harmed or stolen. The only real damage was done outside. One of the officers showed me a note that was on my kitchen table:

***“Stay away from him if you value your life.”***

“I don’t know who this is from.” I told the police. They asked me if I had a grudge against anyone or if I recently had a fight with someone. I told them I didn’t. They decided to take the note with them to check for fingerprints and start an investigation. “Is there somewhere you can stay for the night?” “Yes. Someone is coming to get me in an hour. I wasn’t planning on staying here tonight.” “Looks like someone knew that which is why this happened.” The officer said.

They gave me their card and asked me to notify them if anything else happens. I was relieved they didn’t ask me where I was going as I was sure they wouldn’t believe me if I told them. “We’ll have a few officers stay here and monitor the house. Please don’t come back here tomorrow without calling us first. We will check again before you come back. Do you have insurance on your home?” “Of course. I will take care of all that.”

I asked if it was ok for me to go inside the house and grab some of my things. They said it was fine and would wait for me to come back out before they left. I saw them take a sample of the blood that was smeared across the front door. As disturbing as it was, I really had no idea who would do such a thing to me. I ran upstairs to my room and grabbed a few things to take with me to Neverland. My phone was ringing again. I didn’t answer and forgot there was a message left from before. I couldn’t believe what I heard:

***“I will destroy you before I let you take him away from me.”***

I told the police about it. They said they’d have to seize my phone for 24 hours just in case that person called back. “If by some chance they do, we’ll have someone impersonate you and run a trace on the call to see if we can find their location.” “It sounds muffled, like it was dubbed by computer so you can’t figure out who it is.” “They’re trying to be clever. But we’ll catch whoever it is.” As they were leaving, I realized without my phone, Aria had no way of contacting me. I wasn’t allowed to go back in the house so I ran to the police and asked to make a phone call before they took my cell with them.

I called Aria hoping she’d answer. “Hi Elle!” “Aria, listen to me. I won’t have my phone all night so stay out of trouble and I will check on you tomorrow sometime.” “What’s wrong sis?” “Nothing. Just be good and I will talk you tomorrow.” “Are you sure you’re ok?” “I’m fine. My cell is dead and I’m having an issue with the house phone. If anything happens or if you need me, tell Janet to call Michael and he will help you.” “Ok, sis. Goodnight.” I said bye and gave my phone back to the police. As soon as it landed in their hands, it rang again. “That’s the unknown number.” They didn’t answer but said there would be a good chance that person would keep calling. “We’ll take care of it. We’ll also wait here until your ride gets here.” “That’s really not necessary.” I said hoping they’d leave.

“I’ll just wait in my driveway. I don’t want the person coming to get me to know this happened.” The police understood and said they’d wait at a distance until I left so my ride wouldn’t see them. “It’s for your safety.” One of them said. “We’ll wait across the street in our car out of sight. We’ll wait here to see if anyone comes back then leave a few hours after you’re gone.” I thanked them as they drove away.

I was hoping to catch Michael before he got out of his car. I didn’t want the police to see him or him to see my house. Luckily, it was pitch black outside and I made sure all of my lights were turned off making it difficult to see the house in bad shape. I felt better knowing the police would be monitoring so I wouldn’t be worried all night. I saw Michael’s driver arriving and stood in front of the house so I could quickly get in.

I signaled the police car to inform them I was leaving. As soon as Michael’s driver stopped, I immediately opened the door and got in. “I hope you weren’t waiting too long.” Michael said as he helped me inside. “No, I just came out now.” He sensed right away that something wasn’t right. “Are you ok?” He asked as he grabbed my hand. “I’m fine. Why?” “You look so scared.” “I’m just nervous.” “About?” “Spending the night with you.” He giggled then moved closer to me. “Don’t worry, Michelle. I don’t bite.” “Yes you do! What about in the editing room today?” “That wasn’t biting, that was just nibbling.” “Right, Michael. Whatever you say.”

His driver turned the car around and we were on our way to Neverland. “We have about an hour and a half before we get there.” I put my head on his shoulder and tried to relax. I did my best to be strong but couldn’t help but feel distraught about what happened to my house. I thought it could have been one of Aria’s competitors who felt jealous that she got the part in Michael’s film. The note and voicemail message was also going through my mind.

*Maybe it’s all just a big misunderstanding*. I said to myself. *She must have the wrong house*. “Michelle, what are you talking about?” “I was just thinking out loud.” “About?” “It’s not important.” “Something’s not right.” He said after seeing me like that. “Look at me, please?” He put one hand on my cheek and his other hand on my waist and held me close. “Michelle, you’re shaking and I can feel your heart beating really fast.” I knew I couldn’t tell him because he’d worry.

“It’s nothing, really. I’ve just never spent the night alone with a man before.” “I won’t hurt you.” “I know.” “We’ll have lots of fun together. I’ll show you the rides, the movie theatre and the animals.” “Will you show me your boa constrictor?” “Sure. It won’t scare you?” “I wasn’t scared of it in the car.” “Girl, you are crazy!” “Will you show it to me?” He laughed to himself as he bit his bottom lip and said yes. “I love you.” “I love you more.” Michael loved behaving like a child. He poked and grabbed me and enjoyed when I did the same to him. It was an adorable characteristic about him, one that I truly admired.

**\*\*\* 2 HOURS LATER \*\*\***

We arrived at Neverland and Michael took me on a tour. He showed me the amusement park, theatre, his studio and some of the animals. It was a beautiful place filed with happiness and love. There was just no room for disappointment or sadness of any kind. I felt content knowing that Michael created a world for himself. One that he didn’t have to feel ashamed of. After all, it was his peaceful sanctuary.

He took me to the central part of the ranch where the huge iconic clock was. I sat on a nearby bench and stared at it with him. “Michael, this is beautiful. How did you design this?” “It just came to me one day.” “Really?” “Yes. A lot of the designs you see were just part of my imagination. I’ve been really blessed to be able to bring them to life.” “I agree with you. Do you have children from all over the world come here to visit?” “Yes. Even those who are sick and cannot do things on their own. I love being with them.”

“How did you get to be so caring?” “It started when I was really little. Mother once told me—“As he was talking, I noticed something in the background. “MICHAEL, LOOK!” He turned his head but the shadow was gone. “I think someone’s there.” “Michelle, it’s nothing.” “I’m serious. I saw someone there.” “It was probably just the leaves on the tree moving around in the dark.”

I felt scared. I couldn’t shake the feeling that someone was watching us. “Michael, can we go inside?” “Of course.” He walked me to the house and we cuddled on the couch in his living room. “Do you feel tired?” I asked. “Not really. I’m used to staying up late, remember?” “Oh, right.” “You seem distracted.” He said as he held me. “I’m ok. Just not used to being in such an extravagant place.” “This is your home. I want you to be comfortable.” I thanked him as he kissed my lips.

Suddenly, I saw another shadow near the window. I screamed and pushed Michael away from me. “What is it?” “Michael, someone is outside. I know it!” “Where?” “By the window.” “Michelle, that’s impossible.” “Michael, someone is OUTSIDE!” “Michelle! There is no way anyone can get in without going through the main gate which is locked and secured by this time of night.” “Michael, I’m not going crazy. Believe me, I saw someone outside.” “Ok, wait here.” He got up to use the phone. “Who are you calling?” “Security.”

Within seconds, a ton of security guards surrounded the entire house and searched the ranch with guns. “Whoa, where did they come from?” “They stay in hiding, Michelle.” “REALLY?” “Yes. They watch and guard everything for me. They only come out if I command them to.” “That sounds intense!” “They protect me and my animals. They have to be.” After searching the entire ranch and not leaving a single stone unturned, Michael’s guards told him no one was on the property and everything was fine.

“See? I told you.” They all came through the main door of the house and stood in single file. I couldn’t help but snicker as I saw them leaving one by one, saluting Michael on their way out. “Who are you? The president of the United States?” Michael laughed. “Why do you ask?” “They treat you like their military commanding officer.” “They have to. I’m Michael.” “Is that your reason for everything?” “It was a good enough reason for you.” He said as he winked at me again.

“Don’t flatter yourself.” “Michelle! I’m sad now.” “You know I’m kidding.” He came and lay beside me on the couch. “You feel so tense.” He said as he rubbed my legs against his. “I’ll be ok. I feel safer now that this place has been checked out.” “Don’t worry. No one knows you’re here and we are completely alone.” He winked at me again making me giggle.

“What?” “Your eye makes me laugh.” “You know I only do that to you.” “Really?” “Yes.” “You do it so well, I thought you had years of practice.” “There’s something else I do really well too, Michelle.” “Uh oh.” “Please?” “Here? On your couch?” “You prefer a bed?” “That’s the one place we haven’t done it yet.” He and I both laughed. “Come with me please.”

He walked me down a hallway and we entered a beautiful master bedroom with mahogany colored wood and a bed the size of a hot tub. “Michael, is this your bedroom?” “One of them.” I wanted to wear my nightgown before we stared doing what he had in mind. “Do you mind if I change first? I want to look pretty for you.” “You look pretty in your birthday suit.” He made me laugh. “Your bag is in my other room. I can get it for you.” “That’s ok. I’ll get it. Which room is it?” “Across the hall.” He pointed me to a smaller room. “I’ll be right back.” I kissed his cheek as I went to get my bag.

**\*\*\* MICHAEL’S POINT OF VIEW \*\*\***

The phone rings and he answers it.

*“Sir, there’s been a breach of security.”
“WHERE?”*

*“Where you are, by the main house.”*

*“Who is it?”
“We don’t know yet but we’re searching the premises again.”*

*“How did they get past the front gates?”
“A code was entered at the secondary security gate that we don’t recognize. It was accepted and the person was granted access inside.”*

*“That’s impossible. My own family doesn’t even know that code.”*

*“Are you sure no one else has it?”
“Oh my god.”
“What is it, sir?”
“No one….except her.”*

*“Please tell me it’s not who I think it is.”
“Don’t stop looking until she’s found. Search EVERYWHERE. I want her off my property NOW!”*

*“I’m on it, sir.”*

**\*\*\* MY POINT OF VIEW \*\*\***

I changed into my favorite red silk nightgown and went to join Michael in the other room. As I walked in, I saw him hanging up the phone. “I heard it ring. Was it something important?” “It was, but it’s taken care of. You look beautiful.” I thanked him as he asked me to join him on the bed. He turned off the light switch next to him on the wall. I noticed several shadows running against the closed curtains.

“Michael, what is that?” “My guards. They’re doing night patrol.” “Is that a regular thing?” “Yes. But I asked them to do it twice tonight because you were afraid earlier.” “I’m not anymore. I’m with you.” “Michelle, I’m not like other guys.” I burst out laughing. “Are you kidding me?” “I mean, I’m different.” “I know that, Mr. Thriller werewolf.” He giggled. “Did that film scare you?” “To pieces!” “Really?” “Yes. When Aria was a little girl I used to threaten her with that song.” “You did?” “If she didn’t eat her vegetables or do what I asked, I’d say ‘if you don’t listen to me, I’m going to put Thriller on!’ She’d run like the wind and do her chores or shove all the vegetables on her plate into her mouth.”

He laughed. It made me smile to see him happy again. “I didn’t think it was scary at all.” “Of course not. YOU made it!” “But even if I hadn’t, I wouldn’t find it scary.” “Well, I did and so did the rest of the world. You have a high tolerance of fear.” “Only when it comes to movies. Not when it comes to people.” I had a feeling he was referring to his father. Not wanting him to feel upset, I changed the subject.

“Michael, you’re handsome.” “Stop it.” “I’m serious! You really are. You’re stunning.” He thanked me as I pulled him on top of me. “Someone wants their boa constrictor. “ “Yes, I do!” “You like it?” “I LOVE IT!” “Really?” He asked as he ran his fingers across my nightgown. “Yes, Michael.” “It likes you too. Really, really, REALLY likes you.” “It misses its cave.” He giggled like a little boy. “I love when you talk like that.”

I grabbed his thin but beautiful frame and quickly started to undress him. My heart was racing as I put my hands on his soft, flawless skinned body. As blissful as it felt, sex was the last thing on my mind. I just wanted to be alone with him and explore his magnificent anatomy all night long. Of course, I knew he wanted much more but he was kind enough to let me do what I wanted with him.

As he laid me on the bed, Michael removed my nightgown and dropped it on the floor. As my body fell against his sheets, I felt myself sliding around with him. His lips felt like so incredibly soft against my body. His tongue resembled a feather as he tickled me with it. I placed both of my hands on his head as he made his way to my perineum and spread my legs open. As I looked down at him I realized he was just seconds away from looking at me there.

“MICHAEL!!” He looked up and laughed like a boy. “What?” “What are you doing?” “Exploring your body.” “Are you crazy? I don’t want you looking there.” “Why?” “Because it’s embarrassing!” “It’s beautiful to me.” “Don’t tell me you saw it.” He giggled again. “Oh my god you did!” “Barely. You stopped me before I actually could.” I pulled him up towards me and kissed his lips. “I won’t look if it makes you uncomfortable.” “You can see it after we get married.”

“Are you serious?” “We have to save something for the wedding night.” “I have something in mind.” “You mean you actually have a plan for that evening?” “Of course. Doesn’t everyone?” “What is it?” “It’s a surprise.” “Please tell me!” “Like you said, we have to save something for then.” “Will you take me on a honeymoon?” “Yes.” “Where? Where?” “That’s part of the surprise.” “REALLY?” He laughed. “You’re so lovely.” We then continued our intimacy, loving each and every second as it went on.

As we moved back and forth, it felt like our souls were connected. Michael asked me to keep my hands on his body and said my touch felt spiritual to him. As pleased as I was, I missed hearing his pleasant voice. I noticed Michael was always quiet during this time. I loved the way he respected what he was doing with me and didn’t think of it as adulterous or some kind of illicit act of sin. “Baby, you’re too quiet.” I whispered in his ear. “I miss your voice.” I heard him laugh quietly to himself as he began to sing:

*“I like the feeling you’re giving me, just hold me baby and I’m in ecstasy. Oh, I’ll be working from 9 to 5 to buy you things just to keep you by my side. I never felt so in love before, just promise baby you’ll love me forever more. I swear I’m keeping you satisfied ‘cause you’re the one for me. The way you make me feel, you really turn me on, you knock me off of my feet now baby, my lonely days are gone…”*

“You forgot something.” I said. “No, I didn’t.” “Yes, you did.” He then kissed my forehead and said his famous “hee hee” which made me giggle and hug him. “Michael! I love you!!” He buried his head in my shoulder and said he loved me more. “You are SOOOO cute. I love when you do that.” “You do?” “Yes! Don’t ever, ever, ever, EVER stop doing that!” “Thank you. I won’t.” He then continued going faster and much harder. It seemed like he wanted it to end. “Michael, why are you going so fast?” “I don’t mean to. I’m just so into you.”

“Please don’t hurry.” “We can do it again and again and again.” “Michael, you are very insistent.” “Does that bother you?” “No, I love it.” We pressed our lips together until we both came to an end. I thanked him as he laid his beautiful head against my chest. “You always make me feel so good.” I knew it was a delicate subject, but I just to ask. “Good enough for you to look in the mirror?” He got up and faced me. “Would that make you happy?” “VERY. Like a dream come true.”

He paused for a second then reached for a shirt and a pair of pants from a nearby drawer. He put them on and sat on the edge of the bed looking like he was deep in thought. I wanted to comfort him so i went and sat beside him. “What’s wrong, baby?” “I haven’t seen my own face in ten years. I have no idea what I really look like, Michelle.” I knew at that moment he was finally ready to open up about that issue. I was more than happy to be there to listen to his every word. “Why is that?” He didn’t say a word. The sudden tears falling from his eyes were louder than anything his voice could have told me just then.

I got off the bed and sat on the floor directly in front of him. I touched his face with mine and wiped his tears away. “Michael, I’m listening.” After taking a deep breath, he verbalized what he had buried inside of him for years. “They used to call me big nose, Michelle.” “Who did?” “Everyone. Joseph called me ugly throughout my entire childhood and adolescent years. I was forced to go on stage every single day in front of millions of people looking and feeling like I was nothing but trash. Joseph hated my face which made me hate it too. I had acne growing up and no one helped me get through it. They would all make fun of me and told me no girl would ever come near me. I always think it would have been easier if they had just stuck a knife right in me.”

He started to cry uncontrollably. I couldn’t handle seeing him that way. I quickly grabbed my nightgown from the floor, slipped it on then held him as close as I could. “Michael, please stop. I can feel your pain through your tears. I swear it’s hurting me just as much as it’s hurting you.”

“Ten years, Michelle. TEN YEARS!” “I know, baby. I know.” He stopped crying but was clinging to me as if I were his life support. “Michael, Joseph didn’t know any better back then. He was born in a different generation when things were very unjust and harsh. In his day, it was acceptable for parents to treat their children like that. My father was raised that way too.” “He was?” “Yes. I remember when I was a little girl, he told me stories about his father and all the horrible things he said and did to him. Believe me, Michael. I understand.”

“It still feels like he’s right.” “HE’S NOT!” I let go of him and sat down on the bed beside him. “Michael, listen to me. I believe that one day, you will see yourself the way everyone else does. There are so many women in this world who think you are the most gorgeous person they have ever seen. You are a blessing to everything and everyone you come in contact with. Your aura is so sincere and so full of love that anyone who comes near you gets captivated by it. You are also the most amazing looking man I have EVER met or seen or been with in my entire life. And Michael, I’ve never dated or been with any other man before you.”

“Why is that?” “Because they weren’t you.” “I feel like you’re telling me the truth.” “That’s because I am. I have no reason to lie to you, especially about this. There’s a HUGE difference between the way your family sees you, the way the world sees you, the way Aria sees you and the way I see you. Michael, I will make you see yourself through my eyes one day, even if it kills me.”

“I could never live without you.” “Neither could I and hopefully we never have to. I’m not going anywhere unless you’re in front of me leading the way.” “What if I’m lost?” “Then you’re obviously at Havenhurst.” He laughed. “It’s so nice to see you laugh. I missed that dazzling smile that only you have.” “You have no idea how lonely I was before you came into my life.” “I was too.” “Marry me?” “I’d love to.” “You won’t change your mind?” “No, Michael.” “Even if someone forced you to?” “Like who?” He was quiet.

“Michael, who are you referring to?” “No one.” “Are you sure?” “I just don’t want my fame to get in the way of your decision. It scares people away from me. I’ve seen it happen.” “If you weren’t famous, I’d still be with you.” “Really?“ “Of course. I grew up the same way you did. In a small house with not a lot of money. I don’t care about being rich. I care about being happy and that’s something money WILL NEVER buy.” Michael stood up and grabbed my hand as he lifted me from the bed. We held each other in silence as he rubbed his hands up and down my back. “I love you, baby.” I whispered in his ear. “I love you more. Do me a favor?” “Anything.” He let go of me and kissed my forehead.

“That door leads to a bathroom.” He said pointing across the room. “Inside the cupboard underneath the sink is a vanity mirror.” I gasped as I smiled at him. “Michael, are you serious?” He shook his head yes and smiled back at me. “I’ll do it for you.” I wrapped my arms around him once more and lovingly kissed his entire face. “I’ll get it for you.” “I’ll be back. I’m just going to change.” “AGAIN?” He laughed. “I told you it’s a habit. My clothes are in another room. I’ll just be two minutes.” “I’ll be here.” Suddenly, the phone rang. “I’ll get it in the other room then come back.” I shook my head yes as he left.

**\*\*\*MICHAEL’S POINT OF VIEW\*\*\***

He ran into another room and answered the phone.

“Sir, we can’t locate her.”

“She’s STILL here?”
“We believe so.”
“FIND HER! She can’t be seen. Do you understand me?”
“Sir, we’ve been patrolling for hours. Our vision is also restricted at this time of night.”

“She knows that which is why she’s here now.”

“Sir, I think your friend should know.

“She won’t understand.”
“I think it’s necessary.”

“Just find her. When you do, make sure she never steps on my property again. Did you hear what I said?”

“Yes, sir.”

“She is unpredictable. I don’t want her finding out about Michelle or Arabella. She can’t even know what they look like!”

Michael then hung up and started to change his clothes.

**\*\*\* MY POINT OF VIEW \*\*\***

I went to the bathroom to get Michael’s mirror. As I walked inside, someone dressed in a large, black cloak and face mask slammed the door shut, threw me up against the wall and put a knife to my face….