**CHAPTER FOUR:** Another Missed Encounter

*OH, MY GOD! How did I get this?* I thought. Suddenly, I realized Michael must have accidentally dropped it out of the window when he apologized to me earlier in the museum parking lot for being in my way. I knew I had to find a way to return it to him but it was just so beautiful that I couldn’t take my eyes off it. It was shining like the moon. It felt a bit heavy because of all the stones on it and it even had a clasp on one side. *This must cost a fortune*. I noticed it also had a faint masculine smell. I have to admit, I was somewhat mesmerized.

Curiosity suddenly got the best of me so I decided to go online and check out some of Michael’s performances. I walked over to my desk where my laptop was and typed his name in the search field on YouTube. Several thousand links popped up and of course, a few included him wearing the glove. I noticed one in particular that really caught my eye. *Motown 25: Yesterday, Today, Forever*. There was a picture of him with the same exact glove on.

I started to watch his performance to Billie Jean and was completely blown away. I didn’t know what it was exactly, but something about him just struck me. I was finally starting to understand why everyone is so crazy about him. Just then, my phone rang and it was Marie. “Hello?” “Just letting you know the museum has updated their website and they’re getting a new icon to cut the ribbon at the door. Michael has backed out. Thanks for nothing!” She said as she hung up.

I felt bad. I knew the only person who could possibly save this whole thing was me so I called her back. “What?” “Marie, I’m sorry about what happened. But you have to know something—““No, Ana.” She interrupted. “I don’t want to know anything or ever talk to you again. I don’t even want to go to this museum thing anymore. I was really looking forward to this and now it’s ruined.” “Marie, will you just let me speak? Believe me, you want to hear this!” “NO!” She said as she hung up again.

I realized Michael’s glove was still in my hand. Seeing it up close and in person put a smile on my face. I started getting butterflies in my stomach and felt like Marie does whenever she thinks about or sees celebrities. But then reality hit me and I realized I am not a fan of his and snapped out of it. *This is stupid* I thought. *I’m not like other girls. I need to get a grip*! I then wrapped up the glove carefully just the way it was in the tissue paper, put it back in the plastic bag and placed it at the very back of my closet shelf. I knew no one would ever find it there.

I decided to let Marie have some space seeing as how she was still fuming at me. I figured if I try to explain things to her now, she wouldn’t take me seriously and would think I was making things up just to be her friend again. I decided to go downstairs and spend time with my family when I heard a noise outside. I looked outside my bedroom window and saw a car was approaching our driveway. “Someone’s here!” I yelled as I was going downstairs.

My dad answered the door. There was a man standing at our doorstep with a large bag draped over his shoulder. “I have a letter for Diana Dean.” “That’s me.” I said barging in front of my dad. “Who is sending you a registered letter, D?” My dad asked. “Beats me. I guess there’s only one way to find out.” I thanked the post man and my dad closed the door.

“Well, open it honey!” My mom said. “It doesn’t have a return address. I have no idea who sent this. I sat down at the kitchen table and opened it. There was a small card that had black dancing shoes with sparkly socks on the front. I didn’t get the hint so I opened the card and a message was written inside:

***“You have something that belongs to me. Please bring it with you to the museum re-opening. If you do, I promise to let you keep it after I am done with it. Thank you, M.”***

I gasped loudly. “Well, who is it from?” My mom asked. “Uhh, no one important. It’s just a card from the owner of the museum saying he’s sorry for canceling the event and will let people know when it’s going to be re-scheduled.” “Well, that was awfully courteous of him.” My dad said while planted on the couch. “Yeah, I know. I’m going to call Marie from my room to see if she got one too.” “Ok, but dinner’s almost ready!” My mom yelled as I was racing up the stairs.

I ran upstairs, closed my door and jumped on the bed. I had never felt this way before. *My first letter from a famous person*! I thought. I kept reading the lines over and over again. I was amazed at the fact that he knew I had his glove. ‘No wonder they call him a genius.’ I said to myself out loud. I then pulled myself together and decided to give Marie a call and tell her.

Just as I reached over to grab my phone, it rang. I answered and it was Jasmine. “DID YOU HEAR?! MICHAEL HAS AGREED TO DO THE OPENING AGAIN?! “He did?” I asked trying not to sound like I already knew. “YEAH! I just saw it on TV but there’s one condition.” I stayed calm. “What’s that?” “I don’t know. All they said on TV was there’s some kind of personal clause involved and that person knows who they are.” I gulped loudly. “Ana, are you ok?” “Yeah, I’m fine.” “So, did you hear from Jermaine?” “Yeah, I did. He’s going to make arrangements for my car to be fixed. He said he’ll call me again with the details.” “Did you talk him into telling Michael to do the opening again?” “No. I didn’t even mentioned Michael’s name to him. It was strictly business.” “Does Marie know about this?” “Yeah, she called me a while ago and blew up at me. I tried to explain things to her but she just hung up on me.” “She called me too and yelled her head off.” Jasmine said. “She’s really pissed that we knew the truth and didn’t tell her.”

Just then, I glanced over at Michael’s card again and took a deep breath, staying quiet for a few seconds. “Ana? Ana? Are you still there?” “Yeah. Look Jas, there’s something I have to tell you but you have to promise you won’t freak out and start screaming.” “Um, ok.” “You promise?” “I promise.” “You better sit down for this one.” “I am sitting down. What is it?”

“Ok, here goes. Earlier today at the museum opening, someone was playing one of Michael’s songs—““REALLY? AND I MISSED IT?! GIRL, WHICH ONE WAS IT? I LOVE ALL OF HIS SONGS, HE IS JUST SO AMAZING! THOSE EYES, THAT AMAZING SMILE AND THE WAY HE DANCES OH LORD HE JUST MAKES ME WANT TO—““JASMINE!!” “Sorry. I lost my head there for a second. Continue.” “As I was saying, someone was playing one of his songs and-“ “Just for the record, what song was it?” “Oh, my god! Jasmine, are you serious?” “Just tell me which one and I swear I’ll let you finish.” “The way you make me feel.” “GIRLLLL! THAT’S MY JAM! I hear that song at least five times a day. Have you seen the video for that song? OOO girl, you have GOT to see him, he was totally rockin’ that blue shirt and those dance moves LORD HAVE MERCY! I don’t know what he saw in Tatiana though. Girl I could’ve done a WAAAY better job than her skinny, curly fry hair, no boobs having ass.” “THAT’S IT! I GIVE UP! Now, I understand why you and Marie are best friends. You two are totally alike and totally insane. I’m hanging up now.” “NO, ANA! I’m sorry. I won’t do that again. You were saying?” “Forget it. You can’t handle it.” “NO, I CAN! Believe me, my serious face is on. No more unnecessary interruptions. My ears are yours.”

“If you cut me off one more time, I will hang up and don’t even THINK about calling me back!” “It won’t happen. I swear. What’s going on?” “So, as I was saying, when we got there, that song of his was playing which got Marie all pumped up and excited so she jumped out of my car before I had a chance to park and she ran towards the museum. After I parked the car, I started walking across the parking lot when a limo was driving past me. I decided to wait and let it go by before I walked across. “And?” “And so I noticed my boot lace was untied so I bent down to tie it and the person in the limo rolled down their window and apologized for being in my way.”

“Ana, you’re losing me here. What’s the point of this story?” “I’m getting to that! So, after the limo drove off, I accidentally stepped on a bag and I didn’t think anything of it so I just stuffed it in my pocket and didn’t tell anyone about it.” “SO, WHAT?” “Will you shut up and let me finish?!” “Fine, but I have to warn you, this is a REALLY boring story.” “JAS, IT’S NOT A STORY! It’s what happened!” “Well, get to it already – what the heck happened??!!” “So, after you came to the museum and everything was said and done and we parted ways, I came home and while I was on the phone with Jermaine the bag I stuffed in my pocket fell onto the floor. “ “And?” “And I got curious so I opened it.” “And?” “Jas, stay with me on this. A limo drove past me, a person spoke to me, something fell out of the window, that person was supposed to be at the opening today but canceled because they were missing something…” “I have no idea what you’re talking about, Ana.” I grunted loudly. “Never mind, forget it. I never should have brought it up. I’m hanging up now.”

Just as I was about to, Jasmine screamed right in my ear. “THE GLOVE!! YOU HAVE HIS GLOVE!! THE GLOVE WAS IN THE BAG!! YOU HAVE IT! YOU HAVE HIS GLOVE!” “Jas, calm down.” “YOU HAVE MICHAEL JACKSON’S GLOVE AND YOU’RE ASKING ME TO CALM DOWN??!!” “Will you shut up?! I don’t want the whole world to know!” “Ana, you have a very important piece of music history and you’re telling me to shut up?! Does Marie know about this?” “NO and I don’t want you blabbing this to her! I want to be the who gives her the news. I figured this would be the perfect way for her to stop being so mad at me.” “Wait, are you sure it’s his glove?” “Let’s just say this – it’s white, sparkly, was wrapped in white paper with an MJ sticker on it.” “OH, MY GOD ANA! Can I come over and see it?” “There’s more.” “THERE IS? MORE?!” “He sent me a card.” “Who?” “JAS! Are you REALLY that clueless?” “OH MY GOD, HE DID?! How does he know where you live?” “I’m guessing either Jermaine told him about the accident and figured out it was me or he’s just that famous and can find anyone he wants.” “I’ll put my money on the second option. So, what does the card say?” I grabbed it and read the message to her, word for word.

“AHHHH!!” She screamed in my ear again. “You are the luckiest girl in the world! Do you have ANY IDEA how many girls would love to trade places with you?!” “Oh, please. It’s not that big of a deal.” “Ana, you have no idea. Michael is huge. He’s the meaning of song and dance. He is a god!” I scoffed. “Well, I didn’t want to go back to the museum but since the man sent a card to my house I guess I have no choice.” “Ana, you’re making it sound like a bad thing.” “Well, I’m not his fan. I don’t care about his glove or his songs or anything else involving him.” “Ana, I know one day you will change your mind about him.” “I wish everyone would stop saying that. It’s getting pretty old.” “So, are you going to call Marie and tell her?” “Yeah, I’ll do it and get it over with now.” “Can you do a conference call with me? I want to hear her reaction.” “Are you serious?” “HELL YEAH! I know she won’t believe you so I can be a witness. This is all true, isn’t it?” “Jas, why the hell would I make something like this up? Especially when I’m not a fan of his?” “Good point. Ok, call her NOW!”

I called Marie and she answered. She told me she didn’t want anything to do with me but then Jasmine interfered and told her everything. Marie said she didn’t believe either one of us and said she’d have to see it to believe it. I told her to come over but she said she didn’t want to see me. So I asked Jasmine to come over and take a picture of the glove and the card and show it to her. She did and Marie still thought the two of us were making it all up as a scheme to be friends with her again. I tried to convince her it was the truth but she thought Jasmine and I were liars. At that point, we both knew what needed to be done.

\*\*\* TWO WEEKS LATER \*\*\*

Jermaine’s associates came to my house yesterday and took my car to have it repaired. He called me and said it wouldn’t take longer than a few days. Because of this, I asked Jasmine to pick me up and take me and Marie to the museum re-opening.

“Are you ready to go?” Jasmine asked as she walked in my bedroom. “Yeah. Just getting my shoes on.” “Do you have it?” “Yes, Jas. I have it. I already talked to Jermaine and set everything up. He said he’ll introduce me to Michael, I’ll give him back his glove and this whole thing will be over and done with.” “Do you think he’ll let Marie and I meet him too?” “I don’t know and I don’t care. I’m not meeting him for the same obsessive, compulsive reasons you and Marie want to. I just want to return the man’s glove, get my car back and get on with my life!” “Ana, you really don’t know how lucky you are. There must be a reason you got his glove. It was fate, I’m telling you.” “Fate? More like a burden.” “Ana, once you meet him, you’ll see for yourself.” “Funny, his limo driver said the same thing.” “Right, Marie told me you two met his driver and that was when Marie thought the icon was Madonna. Just then, Marie yelled from outside. “Can you two please hurry up? I don’t want to be late!!”

“I guess she’s still not talking to you, huh?” Jasmine asked. “Nope. She won’t call me, she won’t answer if I call her and she doesn’t come over. If you hadn’t come here today to pick me up, she wouldn’t be here.” “I think she’ll get over everything after she sees Michael today.”

We both headed downstairs and out the door. My family went out of town for a week so I had the house to myself. When I got in the car, Marie didn’t say one word to me. “Ana, you have it right?” Jasmine asked. “Yeah. I got it. Now let’s go.” “Marie, please say something to me. It’s been two weeks. I said I was sorry. You’re going to see your idol today. How are you?” She looked in my direction and then looked away. I didn’t say a word after that.

Jasmine played Michael’s songs in the car the whole way to the museum. She and Marie were both singing happily. I knew this was going to happen so I planned ahead and put some ear plugs I bought from the drug store a few days ago in my purse. I happily took them out and shoved them in my ears. I then had the biggest smile on my face because I could not hear a thing those two were singing.

We were about 4 blocks away from the museum when we noticed there was a huge road block. Hundreds of cars were parked all over the place, police and security guards were lurking everywhere and the place was swamped with people, especially screaming fans. “Looks like he really is here.” Jasmine said excited. “I just hope we get to see him. Maybe he’ll notice one of us Jas!” Marie said. “I can probably get you an autograph, Marie since I have to return his glove.” “Whatever, Diana.” Marie said. “Marie, you really shouldn’t talk to her that way. We both said we were sorry and you forgave me. Why not her?” “Because you didn’t lie to me the way she did. All you did was go along with it. She came up with the whole thing.” “I only did that because I knew what you would have done.” I explained. Marie still didn’t say a word. “Ugh, I can’t believe this. I so don’t want to be here, especially with all these people. I guess we’re going to have to park around here since the museum parking lot is for VIP’s only.

Jasmine drove around the parking lot hoping to find an empty space. I had plans to meet with Jermaine at the back entrance of the museum so I asked Jasmine to let me out so I could walk there. As she pulled over, I noticed a sign taped to one of the poles near a parking space in the museum lot that said ‘RESERVED: DIANA DEAN.’ I removed my ear plugs and put them back in my purse. “Hey! I have a parking space.” “Well, look at that! I bet that was Michael’s idea! He’s so sweet. Ahhhhh.” Jasmine said floating into la la land. “Jas, can you please just park the damn car so I can get out and give this thing back?” “There she goes again with that negative attitude.” Marie said. I rolled my eyes and stayed quiet.

Jasmine parked the car. “I’ll meet you two inside.” I said as we all got out. “Jermaine said for you two to go to the red carpet entrance over there and tell security your full names and you should be able to get in just fine. If you don’t, call me on my cell and I’ll have Jermaine take care of everything.” “Ana?” Marie said as she stuck out her hand as I was leaving. I looked at her. “Please, be nice to him. For my sake. I know you hate him but, he’s a very special person and you don’t know how lucky you are to be meeting him. Please don’t forget my autograph and a photo too, ok?” She said smiling. “If I do that, will you forgive me?” “In a heartbeat!” “It’s a deal then!” I said as I gave her a hug. “Ok, I have to get to the back before more people show up and we get pushed around out here. I’ll see you both inside.”

I wanted to make sure Jasmine and Marie got in ok so I waited in the parking lot trying to catch a glimpse of them. Marie looked over and gave me a thumbs up which meant everything was ok. I then tried walking to the back entrance but there were thousands of people in the way. I had to push and shove just to get through.

After a good fight, I finally struggled through the tough crowd. There were people from all over the country here to see Michael. One person had a shirt on that said “I came all the way from Japan just to see MJ!” *What is so special about him*? I asked myself. After pulling myself together, I saw a sign that said NO ENTRY. I figured if I knocked someone would let me in. I checked my purse to make sure I had the bag with me and I did. I knocked on the door but there was no answer. After five minutes, I knocked again. A few seconds later, Jermaine came out and greeted me. “I’m so glad you made it!” He said shaking my hand. “It’s so nice to see you again.” “You too. How’s my car?” “It’s great. We’re almost finished with it. Just a few more touch ups and you’ll get it back.” “So, has your brother arrived?” “Not yet. He should be here any second. Do you have it?” “Yeah, it’s in my purse.” “Ok, great. If you don’t mind, please hang onto it for now. I don’t want to be responsible if I take it now and it goes missing again.” We both laughed.

“Did you reserve a parking space for me?” “No. I was going to but they were all taken.” “There’s one there with my name on it.” “It must’ve been my brother.” *He doesn’t even know me.* I thought. *I guess I should thank him for thinking of me*. “So, which song of his is your favorite?” “Of whose? I asked stupidly. Jermaine laughed. “My brothers'!” “Oh, umm...” I didn’t want to be rude and say I wasn’t a fan of his so I just said the only thing I could think of. “In the backseat!” “Excuse me?” Jermaine asked looking puzzled. “Isn’t that one of his songs?” “You mean in the CLOSET?” “Right!!” I said sounding foolish. “Sorry, he has so many, it’s hard to remember them all.” Jermaine laughed again.

A few seconds later, the crowd began to scream and yell even louder. It became so loud that I had to cover my ears. “HE’S HERE!!” Jermaine yelled. I could barely hear him. “I guess I should give you his glove now!!” I yelled. “WHAAAAT?!” Jermaine yelled back. We both looked over and I saw Michael waving as he stuck his head out from his limousine roof top window. Within seconds, several security guards bombarded his limousine as thousands of fans crowded around to catch a small glimpse of the man they always admired from afar. “I’ll give you his glove now!” I said to Jermaine again. He still didn’t hear me. I repeated myself a third time. “OH, YEAH RIGHT!” He said. I took the plastic bag with the glove in it out of my purse and handed it to Jermaine and just as he took it, I was pushed violently to the side as thousands of fans and security guards rushed right by me. I immediately fell to the ground landing on my hands.

Jermaine saw me fall and tried to get to me. I could tell he wanted to help but the crowd was so out of control, he couldn’t reach me. I managed to pull myself up and as soon as I did, I turned my head and noticed Michael was running in my direction. All I could see was his long, curly black hair from the back and he had a red shirt on. A girl standing behind me yelled “MICHAEL!!” And he looked in my direction. For a split second, we made eye contact. He smiled at me, blew a kiss, and then looked away quickly as his security guards took him inside. Just then, my body went numb. This feeling only lasted a few seconds until another person shoved me and I got pushed back about four feet. I looked over and noticed Jermaine had already disappeared too. The crowd then rushed to the front entrance doors and I was left alone.

I no longer had the glove and wasn’t sure if Jermaine did or if someone else had taken it as the crowd came in between us. I had to find out for sure. I knocked on the door but there was no answer. I kept knocking repeatedly but there was no answer. I then decided to go in through the VIP access door.

As I did, I noticed there were huge glass doors between the VIP entrance and the general public entrance. I figured Michael would do his ribbon cutting, speak and perform for his fans then come over to the VIP side, see these people then leave. It made sense to me. I noticed Marie and Jasmine at the far end of the room mingling with other people. There were a lot of familiar famous faces. I wanted to make sure I looked ok since I was in a VIP section of an art museum with a very famous icon. I then realized I forgot my purse at the back entrance. I quickly ran out of the VIP room and around to the back entrance again. There were dozens of security guards around the area by this time.

“Sorry, ma’am, this is a restricted access zone. The general public entrance is that way.” “I’m a VIP.” I explained. “Here’s my badge. Jermaine gave this to me, he knows me personally. You can ask him.” They inspected my badge and then said it was ok for me to enter. “I lost my purse. I was just here a few minutes ago. Has anyone seen it?” The guards and I looked around and luckily I noticed my purse was lying on the parking lot ground where I had fallen earlier.” “There it is!” I said as I ran over and grabbed it. I immediately checked to make sure everything was still in it and it seemed like nothing had been touched or stolen.

As the guards continued with their patrolling, I turned around and started walking towards the museum entrance again. Just as I did, I noticed I had stepped on something. It wasn’t a bag this time. I lowered my gaze slowly and saw a black fedora.

