CHAPTER 22:

The Deceit of the Innocent

Gerwin came over and shook Michael’s hand. The three of us stood in the room stunned wondering how they knew each other and since when.

“What are you doing here?” Michael asked.
“I should be asking you that question!”

“I’m staying at this hotel until I leave for Cologne.”
“How do you know Marie?” Gerwin asked.

“She’s best friends with my fianc—“
“WITH HIS TOUR PROMOTER!” I yelled interrupting what Michael was about to call me.

“What a small world.” Gerwin said as we all introduced ourselves.

“Gerwin used to work for Kingdom International.” Michael explained. “He was part of the production crew during the first leg of my tour earlier this year.”
“Small world indeed!” Marie said feeling even more excited.

“Used to?” I asked raising my brow.

“Yes. Once I had enough experience and all my credentials were in order, I started my own line of work.”
“Really? And what type of work is that exactly?”
“In the music business. I’m in the beginning stages of starting my own record label.”
“That sounds exciting!” Jasmine said.

“Michael has always been my muse and biggest inspiration.” Gerwin said. “I’ve never seen or heard a more talented, humble and extraordinary artist in my entire life.”

Michael blushed as he took in Gerwin’s compliments. Marie, who was now even more fascinated with Gerwin asked him to join us for brunch and he happily agreed. Jasmine suggested we invite Chris and she went to his suite and he too gladly took us up on our offer. As we made our way to the buffet table, Marie handed Gerwin a plate and we all sat down at the grand dining table. Michael sat at the head of the table with me on his right side. Across from me sat Marie and Gerwin followed by Chris and Jasmine at the far end.

“I haven’t seen you since my concert in Hawaii.” Michael said trying to start a conversation breaking the awkward silence in the room.

“I know. I’ve been doing my own thing for the past 6 months. I was at your concert last night. You were pretty amazing on that stage.”

“I thought I was horrible.” Michael said shocking all of us.

“WHAT? WHY?” Jasmine yelled.

“For the first time in 33 years, I actually felt a bit nervous.”

“Why is that?” Gerwin asked.

“I had a new and important set of eyes watching me.”

“Who are you referring to?” Gerwin asked.

“Someone very special in my life.”
“Oh, you mean Diana?”

Suddenly, my fork dropped and all eyes were on me.

“Excuse me.” I said as I took a sip of water from my champagne glass.

“Yes. That’s who I meant.” Michael said.

Chris and Jasmine were having their own private conversation at the far end of the table. I couldn’t hear their words exactly but I had a feeling it wasn’t about the amazing taste of our food. It seemed like the two of them were harmlessly flirting and enjoying each other’s company.

“So, tell me more about this lucky lady, Mike.”

“What would you like to know?”
“Where is she? What is she like? What does she do?”
“You can ask her yourself. She’s sitting right across from you.”
“You were talking about HER?” Gerwin asked pointing to me.

“Michael was just being silly last night.” I said taking another sip from my glass.

“He wanted to surprise me. It was all just for fun.”
“So, you have no interest in him?”
“Why is that of any interest to you?”

“ANA!” Marie yelled.
“I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to sound rude.”
“You didn’t. I apologize for being so forward.” He said as he drank from his glass.

Michael immediately sensed something was wrong and grabbed my hand from underneath the table.

“Are you alright?” He whispered.

“I’m fine.”

“So, Gerwin what brings you to Germany?” Chris asked from across the table.
“I’m here on business signing a new group to my label.”
“They’re a German group?” Marie asked.

“Indeed. They’re going to blow up as international artists once they arrive in the US.”
“You live in America?” I asked raising my brow again.

“Yes. New York.”
“That’s where WE’RE from!” Jasmine yelled.

“Really? Where exactly?”
“Upper Manhattan.”
“I’m from Rochester.”
“What a coincidence. That’s where Michael and Diana—“
“MARIE! Let’s get some more food!” I said as I stood up.

“Excuse us.”

When the two of us were out of sight, Marie asked what I thought of Gerwin.

“Before I answer that, you need to stop being so open with him.”
“Why?”
“Because he’s a stranger, Marie.”

“Michael knows him!”
“I know HE knows him, but YOU don’t. You should be extra careful around this guy.”
“Ana, I don’t think he’s harmful. If he was, Michael wouldn’t be so comfortable around him.”
“Marie, Gerwin had a BUSINESS relationship with Michael’s co-partner. That’s a different type of relationship.”
“So you’re saying I shouldn’t pursue anything?”
“I don’t mean that. Just take things slow. Get to know him first.”
“You weren’t slow with Michael.”
“What is THAT supposed to mean?”

“I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to say that. I guess I’m still a little bitter and jealous about your relationship.”

“I didn’t know it was still bothering you. I’m sorry you still feel that way but I really can’t change what happened in the past.”

“I know you can’t. That’s why I think Gerwin and I were meant to meet each other.”

I knew Marie wouldn’t take my advice seriously so I stopped lecturing her and went along with whatever she said.

“He seems nice. Very business minded.”
“He’s cute too!”
“Marie, I don’t care about a person’s looks.”
“Well, he’s not ugly.”
“No he isn’t and neither are you.”
“Thanks, I think?”
“You know what I mean. You’re beautiful, Marie.”
“Thanks. That means a lot coming from you.”
“Just be careful please?”

We headed back to the table and everyone was laughing and having a wonderful time.

“Did we miss something?” Marie asked as we both sat down.

“Chris was telling us funny stories about Michael when he was a baby.”
“Do tell!”

“No, please don’t. I think one is enough for today.” Michael said as he took small bites of his dinner roll.

Once we finished eating, we cleared our plates and left them on the buffet table. Chris called the hotel staff informing them we had finished and were leaving the suite for the day. Michael had to return to his rehearsal and wished the gang a great time sightseeing. He shook hands with Gerwin again and he left saying he’d meet everyone with Chris in the lobby.

“I think you all should go without me.” I said.

“WHY?” Marie asked.
“I’ve seen the sights of Bremen already and I have a few other things to catch up on.”

“Are you sure, Ana?” Jasmine asked looking worried.

“Yes. Have a great time. I’ll be here when you get back.”

I walked them to the door and Michael followed me.

“Make sure you keep a close eye on Marie and Gerwin and stay with Chris the WHOLE time!” I whispered in Jasmine’s ear.
“Don’t worry. I’ll keep my eyes and ears on him.”

“Thanks. Call me if there’s trouble.”

I closed and locked the door behind them after seeing them off in the elevator.

“Michael, I need to talk to you!” I said as he stood looking out the bay window.



“What is it?”
“How do you know this Gerwin guy?”
“He used to work with Waleed. Why?”
“Can he be trusted?”
“Of course. Why are you suspicious of him?”
“Because I don’t like the way he looks at me.”
“WHAT? Diana, you’re paranoid.”
“Am I?”

“YES. Gerwin is a great guy. He’s kind, generous and very professional.”
“I’ll kill him if he hurts Marie.”
“If he does, he’ll answer to me first. Believe me, he wouldn’t hurt a fly.”
“Like someone else I know.”
“Girl, I’m not that gentle.”
“Especially against the wall.”

He laughed and pulled me towards him kissing me passionately.

“You need to go to rehearsal.” I said pulling our lips apart.

“I still have time. Let’s make use of it.”
“ARE YOU CRAZY?”

“You know you want it.”
“Yes, but we both have things to do.”
“And right now that thing is YOU, Diana.”
“But what if—“
“GIRL, I WANT TO INVADE YOU!”
“Oh god. You sound amazing when you scream.”

We both ran into the bedroom and stripped down. I gently pushed Michael on the bed, ran my hands down his legs and kneeled in front of him. I stared at his gorgeous, large member and fondled it with my hands. Michael shifted from left to right adoring every sensation he felt. My inner ‘flower’ was dampening as I opened my mouth and licked his entire genitalia. Michael let out the most provocative howl and begged me to keep going as he placed his hands on the top of my head pulling my hair with every move I made.

“Oh my god. Oh my god. Oh my god.” He repeated as I took in every ounce of what he had. My insides were raging as I felt my panty becoming more and more drenched by my bodily fluids. I continued with my mouth on his tasteful, hard wood. I placed my hands on his upper thighs and rubbed them vigorously as I tightly encased my lips around my most favorite part of his body.

“You really DO taste like chocolate, baby.” I said as I curled my tongue around every part of him.

“Are you enjoying it?”
“Do you see me stopping?”

He giggled and asked me to keep going and I was more than happy to obey him. I felt confident knowing he felt satisfied. It was then that I realized I wasn’t just performing an act of sin. I was pleasing the man who would inevitably become my husband. Knowing this made me feel animalistic and I wanted Michael in me more fiercely than ever before. I climbed on top of him and sat on his lap sliding his massive, erotic organ inside my opening.

“Girl, where have you been hiding this side of you?” He asked straddling my hips against his waist.

“She was shy for a very long time.”

“You still feel just as good as you did the first time.”
“Really?”
“Yes. Tight, wet, sensuous and full of pleasure.”
“You feel enormous inside me.”
“Do I?”
“Yes. You expand in me like a water balloon.”
“I love you.”
“I love you too, baby.”
“We HAVE to do this more often.”

“FUCK YEAH!”

Our bodies penetrated against each other in perfect unison. Neither one of us wanted to stop and didn’t care about the fact that we both had somewhere else to be and other things to do.



“I can’t wait any longer. I have to do this NOW!”

“Do what?”

He slid himself out of me and sat me up on the bed pulling my legs rigorously apart. After eyeing my most salacious body part, Michael’s right index finger intruded inside of me making me roar like a lion ready to attack its prey.

I grabbed the blanket beneath me crying out for more hoping he would be generous and persistent enough to go on. My entire being tingled with excitement and my head swayed from left to right. Goosebumps flared over my entire body and all I could do in that moment was pray and beg for my future husband to continue giving me the most enjoyment I had ever felt.

“BABY, YOUR FINGERS…YOUR FINGERS…”

“What about them?” He asked lowering his tone of voice.

“THEY ARE SO LONG….AND THEY FEEL SOOOO GOOD INSIDE ME…”

“Do you like the way I dance, Diana?”
“OH GOD YES!”

“Did you see how I danced with this finger on stage?”
“YES!”

“Did you like that?”
“YES, MICHAEL! YES I DID!”

“Did you really?”
“YES!”
“Did you REALLY like it?”
“YES!”

“Then you’re going to LOVE this.”

He added all of his other fingers inside and lowered his face placing his sizable tongue directly against my clitoris rotating it in a circle around the entire formation.

“OH MY GOD. STOP!”

“You want me to?”
“YES!”

“Are you sure?”
“FUCK NO, KEEP GOING!”

He laughed as he tried his best to maintain what he was doing. It wasn’t long until I let myself go against his hand and face and he giggled with fulfillment as he felt my entire body deflate.

“Michael, you are so good to me.”
“Am I?”
“You have NO idea.”

He then bit his bottom lip and lay directly on top of me.

“Show me?”
“I’d love to.”

He placed himself inside of me again. I held onto his back as he rode me like a horse. I could feel he was seconds away from emerging and I couldn’t wait to have his warm, gratifying climax make its entrance into me. I sighed and gently licked his neck as he whispered the words I was not expecting to hear.

“I’m about to go inside of you.”
“OH MY GOD, YOU SOUND SO HOT.”

“Really?”
“SAY THAT AGAIN!”

“Say what?”
“BOY, SAY WHAT YOU JUST SAID AGAIN!”

“Diana…Diana…”
“YES, MICHAEL?”
“SHIT….DIANA...”
“YES, BABY TELL ME!”
“I’M GOING INSIDE YOU, GIRL!”

I felt Michael’s body vibrate sharply against me. He loosened his grip and pulled away as we both collapsed on the bed next to each other. I held his hand in mine and the two of us exhaled deeply allowing our bodies to come down from what just happened.

“That was….”
“RAVISHING!”

We both laughed as he tried to make his way over to my lips. We kissed and suddenly Michael realized he was late for his second set of rehearsals.

“OH MY GOD! I HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE!” He said looking at the alarm clock on the nightstand.

“ME TOO! I need to check on the crew members and make sure they’re doing their jobs.”

We both jumped up from the bed and held our unclothed bodies.

“I have to leave, Diana. Waleed is waiting for me.”
“I don’t want you to go.”
“I know. I hate to leave you.”
“We’ve reached a new level in our relationship.” I said looking into his eyes.
“I love it.”
“Me too.”
“Michael?”
“Yes?”
“Do you feel embarrassed?”
“A bit.” He said as he giggled and looked down. “Do you?”
“Not really. I was exploring with my husband.”
“That’s a good way to look at it.”
“You should see it that way too.”
“I do now.”

The phone in the suite suddenly rang.

“That must be Waleed looking for me.”

We both needed to leave but also needed to shower.

“We can take one together.” Michael suggested.

“I don’t think so!”
“We won’t do anything.”
“Except EACH OTHER!”

Michael laughed and pulled me towards him.

“I’m serious. It’ll be very quick and we’ll get to spend a little bit more time together.”
“You promise nothing will happen?”
“Yes, Diana.”
“PROMISE?”
“Diana, I don’t have time to fool around. Get in there!”

Without answering, I did what he said and he followed. We quickly did what we had to but of course, Michael lost focus and quickly started experimenting with his hands.

“MICHAEL, NO!”

“I’m sorry. I can’t resist you!”
“I’m done.”
“No, you’re not.” He said pinning my arms down at my sides.
“LET ME OUT!”

“Not until you kiss me.”

I smiled as he pressed my wet lips against his. He wrapped his drenched arms around me and I could feel his entire body squeezing against mine. As the warm water poured from the gold plated showerhead above us, a thick cloud of fog and steam covered the shower door and bathroom windows. Our handprints ended up on the shower door without us even knowing it.

“Look, baby.” I said as I let go of him and wrapped a towel around me.

“It’s beautiful.” He said as he quickly rinsed his hair.

“I can’t believe we just did that.”
“Did what?”
“Made love in such a crazy way and then showered together.”
“I loved every second of it.” He said as he got out and kissed me again.
“Me too.”

He put his arms around me and began pulling on my towel.

“STOP!”

He laughed as he turned around and reached for a towel of his own. I quickly removed mine and revealed my freshly washed body to him.

“I want you in me on this floor, Michael.”

“ARE YOU SERIOUS?”

I lay myself down against the damp, white shag rug on the floor and spread my legs apart placing my hand as a fan in between my spot.

“Come and get it.”

“Girl, you drive me wild.” He said as he made his way on top of me.

“We can’t do this. I have to go.”

“Shut up and do me again.”
“Not this way.”

He lifted me up and bent me over kissing my entire back from the top of my nape all the way to the very end of my tailbone before sliding into me making a perfect entrance.

“That was easy.” I said as he pushed further inside.

“It’s because you’re already wet.”
“Make me wetter, Michael.”
“Is that even a word?” He asked sounding confused.

“Did you understand me?”
“Yes.”
“THEN IT DOESN’T MATTER. KEEP GOING!”

 I placed my hands firmly against the bathroom floor as Michael did me from behind. He had me so aroused I couldn’t stop myself from placing my own hand on my spot feeling incredibly tempted to pleasure myself.

“Let me do it for you.” He said as he took his right hand and ‘deflowered’ me. His fingers moved swiftly as they revolved evenly from one direction to another.

“That feels amazing.” I said trying to absorb his every move. It wasn’t long until we both finished at the same time. I fell directly onto the floor and Michael graciously lifted me up placing me in his arms and kissed me with his hand on the back of my head.

“We need to stop now for real.” He said as he hugged me.

“I really don’t want to.”
“My wife is a freak.”
“Her husband made her that way.”
“Is that bad?”
“HELL NO!”

He laughed then fell to the floor completely exhausted lying on his back.

“Diana, I’m sore.”

“WHAT?”
“I can’t dance like this.”
“I’m sorry.”
“I’ll be fine.”
“You can’t even stand up!”

I lay down next to him holding his body against the floor.

“I’ll be ok. I just need to lie down.”

“I’ll help you up.”

I lifted him from the floor and helped him to his feet. I reached for his clothing as he quickly rinsed himself off and helped him put them on before getting washed up and dressed myself.

“Are you trying to dress like me?” He asked giggling with a smile on his face.

“Yes. Does it bother you?
“Of course not. I love seeing you so inspired by me. I also love when you wear my own things.”

“I noticed you wore my shirt on stage.”
“You left it in my hotel room in LA. I didn’t want to give it back.”

“It’s yours. You can’t even tell it’s for women.”

“That’s why I wore it.”

“Can I try on your pants?”
“You want to?”

“Yes, please!”

He gave them to me and to my surprise, they were almost a perfect fit.

“Look, baby!” I said as I spun around giving him a complete look.

“You look adorable, Diana.” He said as he came over and kissed me.

“They are dragging on the floor because you are taller than me but other than that, they actually look really good.”

“You can wear them anytime you want.”
“I guess I can say I ‘got in your pants’ now!”

He laughed as I took them off and helped him put them back on. He lay on the bed and asked me to join him. I felt horrible seeing him in so much pain as he curled up into a ball lying on his side.

“I’m sorry, baby. I shouldn’t have pushed you so hard.”
“Don’t be. I’m ok.”
“No, you’re not. You can’t even lay down straight.”
“Diana, this isn’t the first time this has happened.”
“I know but I don’t want you to be uncomfortable.”
“I’ll be fine. Just stay here with me please?”
“Of course.”

I held him from behind and he placed his arm on top of mine. I kissed the back of his head and pulled all of his damp hair away from his gracious face. I kissed his cheek and he smiled as I closed his eyes for him and whispered in his ear.

“I’m so glad we had day this day to ourselves.”
“Me too.”
“Do you need me to bring you anything?”
“No, I just need to relax. My muscles are starting to loosen up now.”
“I’m glad.”
“Waleed is probably looking all over town for me.”
“He doesn’t know where you are?”
“He thinks I went to the local hospitals.”
“MICHAEL! You didn’t tell him you were coming back here?!”
“Why would I?”
“Doesn’t he have a right to know?”
“He works with me, Diana. The man doesn’t own me.”
“I know but isn’t that risky for you?”
“If I wasn’t coming here then yes. But I was and he doesn’t need to know that.”
“I hope he doesn’t suspect me anymore then he already does.”
“I couldn’t care less if he does.”

A few minutes later, my cell phone rang on a nearby dresser.

“Your phone works here?” Michael asked.

“The girls and I have international business phones. They must be calling to check on me.”
“Answer it.”
“I’ll call them back. I don’t want to leave your side.”
“Diana, it’s mean to dodge your friends.”

“Says the man who lies to his own business partner about his whereabouts.”

“Do you want him to know I came to see you in the middle of the afternoon so he can go to the press with it?”
“On second thought – forget I said anything.”

“I know how to handle people in my line of work.”
“I believe that now.”

I could sense Michael was tired as he kept closing his eyes and speaking one word sentences. I didn’t want to keep him awake but also didn’t want the wrong people knowing we were together. The phone in the suite ran again and I had no idea what to do.



“Should I answer it?”
“No, let it ring.”
“Are you sure?”
“He’ll get the hint that I’m not here.”
“Are you feeling ok now?”
“Yes. I’ll leave in ten minutes.”
“How will you get to rehearsal?”
“My security will take me like always.”

Since he knew what he was doing, I decided it would be best to let things go for now and for Michael to get the rest he really needed. Feeling helpless, I didn’t leave his side and he stood up ten minutes later to touch himself up before leaving again.

“You look amazing, baby.” I said as I helped him straighten himself out.

“I’m not even dressed up.” He said buttoning his trademark red jacket.

“You don’t need to be. Everything you wear is stunning.”
“You’re sweet. I love how you wear my things as your accessories.”

“You mean my belt?”
“Yes. I’m surprised it fits around your waist.”
“Are you saying my waist is big?”
“Of course not. Your body is perfect.”
“So is yours.”

“You don’t think I’m too thin?”
“No way! You look amazing. You have the body of a god.”
“Girl, you are too much for me sometimes.”

We hugged briefly and I walked him to the door wishing him the best of luck at rehearsal.

“I’ll be home late. I need to catch up on so many steps before I come back.”
“Don’t overwork yourself. Take breaks and remember to eat.”
“Tomorrow we’ll go to the orphanages together, ok?”
“I’m looking forward to it. We also leave here for Cologne tomorrow, don’t we?”
“Yes, in the evening. You girls have rooms next to mine but separate ones at other hotels nearby too.”
“Perfect.”

I kissed his cheek as his guards came to escort him out of the hotel.

“I always enjoy our private moments together.” He whispered in my ear.

“So do I. I’ll be thinking of you all day.”
“Call me if you can?”
“I’ll try to.”
“I love you, space man.”

He giggled as I watched him walk with several of his oversized bodyguards towards the elevator. He glanced in my direction and smiled at me winking his eye at the same time. I waved to him and watched as he left the penthouse floor. Feeling pressed for time and noticed the hotel staff didn’t take the food away, I called them again asking if they would come up immediately since no one would be in the suite for several hours. They came up within minutes and as soon as they left, I got dressed and headed out to check on Michael’s and my production team to ensure everything was still going according to plan.

**\*\*\* FIVE HOURS LATER \*\*\***

“That was SO MUCH FUN!” Marie yelled as she, Gerwin and Jasmine came through the suite door.

“I take it you all had a good time?” I asked.

“Yes! Gerwin took us around the entire city! We bought so many souvenirs and took LOTS of pictures! You missed out on the fun, Ana!”
“It’s ok. I’ve already seen most of what this city has to offer but will definitely join you if we come here again. Where’s Chris?”
“He had some things to take care of for Michael. He was a great chaperone!” Jasmine said.

“Well ladies, it was fun but I must be off.” Gerwin said escorting the girls to the couch where I was seated.

“So soon?” Marie asked.
“I need to take care of some important business matters. Please be sure to call me when you all arrive in Cologne.”
“I’m assuming you will also be there?” I asked.

“If Marie would like me to be.”
“You know I do!”

“I’ll see what I can do. I know the concert is in three days. I’ll try my best to tie up loose ends and meet you there. What rows are you sitting in?”
“We’re going back—“
“We won’t be in the seating aisles.” I interrupted as Marie spoke.

“Why is that?”
“Michael’s tour is promoted under my business. We work and watch from backstage.”
“Wait a minute – YOU are Diana Dean, CEO of TSG Productions?!”
“Yes, that’s me.”

Gerwin gasped and looked stunned as if he had just seen a ghost.

“I had no idea. Forgive me but I didn’t recognize you out of print.”
“I’ve changed my look since my last photo shoot.”
“I’ll say. You are beautiful as ever.”
“So is Marie!” I said trying to get him to focus on her and not me.

“We work for Ana.” Jasmine explained. “She started her own business from the ground up. I’m her personal assistant. Marie is her admin coordinator.”

“That’s very impressive.” Gerwin said eyeing me again.

“So, how long have you and Michael known each other?”
“Michael and I are business partners.”
“Is that all?”
“Didn’t you say you were LEAVING, Gerwin?”
“Oh yes. I keep losing track of time.”
“There must be a reason for that.” I said under my breath.

Marie walked him to the door as he said goodbye to Jasmine and I and left. The girls showed me their new gifts and bought me a new Michael inspired dress and said they also had new outfits to wear to his next concert in Cologne.

“It’s beautiful. Thank you.”

“Ana, I wish you had come with us. Gerwin was really a great tour guide.”
“I’m sure he was. But to be honest I wanted to spend time with Michael before he left again.”

“Did you two do it?”

“I’m not even going to pay attention to you anymore, Jasmine!” I said rolling my eyes at her.
“When will he be back?” Marie asked. “I want to show him my new things!”
“It’ll be late but I’m sure he’d love to see them. I’ll let you know when he arrives.”
“We called you a few times. Were you not by your phone?”
“I took a nap for a while then left to check on the workers.” I felt guilty for lying but knew I had to.

“Well, I’m beat!” Marie said. “I think I’ll take a nap too.”
“I need to catch up on my soaps!” Jasmine said as she and Marie headed for the door.

“Marie, before you go – what’s Gerwin’s last name?”
“I don’t know. Why?”
“Just wondering. Let me know when you find out.”

The two of them left and I was alone. Gerwin was making my skin crawl. I decided to do a little research on Marie’s new ‘friend’ and find out who he REALLY was. Since I didn’t know his last name, I didn’t have much to work with but with a little detective work, I knew I could come up with something on him.

**\*\*\* LATER THAT EVENING \*\*\***

I spent more than two hours searching the internet trying to dig up dirt on Gerwin. To my surprise, NOTHING was coming up negatively about him. He was actually a very noble man in the eyes of the world. He worked his way through school as a coffee shop barista and a waiter, graduated from NYU with a Masters in performing arts, worked as an understudy for several Broadway producers and was hired as an intern for Kingdom International until he had enough stability to stand on his own feet and set up his own record label. I felt guilty for doubting him and blamed my intuition for being so judgmental. I knew, for Marie’s sake I owed it to Gerwin to give him a chance. I felt better knowing he had no hidden secrets and decided to keep an open mind about him.

**\*\*\* TWO HOURS LATER \*\*\***

“Ana! It’s us! Are you in there?” I heard Jasmine yell from outside the suite door.

I let the girls in and Marie said dinner was about to be served.

“I’m not really hungry.” I said as they both waited anxiously for room service to bring our meals.

“Why?”
“We had a huge feast earlier and I’m worried about Michael.”
“Why? He’s fine.” Marie said with stars in her eyes.

“Um, what’s with her?” I asked Jasmine.
“Marie has gone Gerwin crazy!”
“I HAVE NOT!” She said giggling to herself.

“What’s with the girliness all of a sudden?”

“He’s a sweetie. He sent me flowers.”
“REALLY? That was kind of him.”
“He wants to take me to the park tomorrow for a picnic.”
“ALONE?” I asked feeling concerned.

“Of course. Isn’t it romantic?”
“I don’t think that’s a good idea.”
“Save the speech. I already gave it to her. She doesn’t care.” Jasmine said.

“Can’t you two just be happy for me?”
“We ARE happy for you. But at the same time, we don’t know this guy. This isn’t LA and he—“

I paused for a moment remembering I had no reason to stop her.

“Ana? What were you going to say?”
“Never mind. Go with him.”
“REALLY?”

“Yes. He seems like a great guy.”

“I’m glad you think so!”

Moments later, Michael came through the door exhausted and out of breath.

“You’re back early!” I said as I got up to hug him.

“Can’t talk. Gotta shower. Be right back.” He said as he ran past me.

“What’s his problem?”
“He’s tired and sweaty.”
“This would be a good time to—“
“SHUTUP, JAS!”

“I was going to say call room service so they know he’s back so they can bring up his food too!”
“Sorry. I should have thought of that.”
“Then after he’s done you two can fool around!”
“JAS!”

“Even I KNEW she was going to do that, Ana!” Marie said laughing as she called the hotel staff informing them to bring Michael’s food.

He came out of the bedroom a while later looking refreshed and stunning as always. The scent from his Black Orchid cologne permeated the air making all of us swoon over him.



“You smell good enough to eat!” Jasmine said.

“You think so?” He asked sitting next to me crossing his arms.

“I know that smell.” I said as I took his hand in mine and kissed it.

“I’m glad you remember it.”

“The hotel staff knows you’re back and will bring our food soon.”
“They always keep track of when I come and go but thank you for doing that.” Michael said as he closed his eyes and took deep breaths.

“Are you ok?” I asked.
“I’m fine. Just tired.”

Marie and Jasmine started telling Michael about the incredible day they had and showed him what they bought including a new black fedora for him.

“I love it. Thank you, girls.” He said as he waved them over to hug him. Seeing Michael in his tired state began to worry me. I had never seen him look so worn out.

“Did you take breaks?”
“Of course.”
“Did you eat in between?”
“I tried to.”
“Meaning you didn’t?”
“I did. Just not a lot.”

“Well, you will do that now.”

“Did Gerwin come back here?”
“For a few minutes. He left after dropping the girls off.”

The doorbell rang and the girls ran to the door excited to know what our dinner menu was. They answered the door and Michael kept taking deep breaths concerning me even more.

“Baby, what’s wrong? Do you feel sick?”
“No, Diana. I’m fine.”
“Why are you breathing so hard?”
“I’m tired and I’m sore. My entire body hurts.”
“I’ll massage you later.”
“You don’t have to.”
“I want to.”
“I love you for thinking of me.”
“That’s what a wife does.”

He leaned over and gently kissed my forehead. The hotel staff came in with several trays and began setting up each item on beautiful silver lined trays with elegant cutlery and glassware. It felt like we were staying in a palace and not a hotel room. Michael hated that people would treat him so royally when all he wanted was to be considered as a regular human being.

“You can’t expect them to give you hamburgers and French fries, Michael.”
“I know. But I wish they’d stop being so fancy sometimes. I wasn’t raised this way.”
“Neither were we. But it comes with the job.”
“I guess.”

Michael was relieved to see our dinner menu wasn’t extravagant. It was very simple and included a few of his favorite things. As soon as he stood up, he collapsed landing on the couch. I screamed as I saw him hold onto himself as if he were struggling to breathe.



“MICHAEL!”

“I’M CALLING SECURITY!” Jasmine yelled.

She opened the front door informing them of what happened. Moments later, his medical team came running through the door including his nurse, Michelle.

Marie panicked and held Michael’s right hand and I held his left. According to the paramedics, he was severely malnourished and needed to increase his food and water intake, his blood pressure was low and was suffering from sleep deprivation.

“I KNEW you weren’t eating or taking breaks! I JUST KNEW IT!” I let go of him and ran into the bedroom not wanting to see him or anyone else. Jasmine followed me and Marie stayed with Michael. Chris also came in and saw Michael’s condition and sat next to him the entire time.

“Ana, you need to calm down.” Marie said as she entered the room and closed the door.

“CALM DOWN? He’s throwing his life away!”
“You know how he is.”
“I DO AND IT PISSES ME OFF!”

“Please don’t raise your voice. You will upset him.”
“HIM? WHAT ABOUT ME? Everyone is ALWAYS so concerned about him!”
“He’s Michael, Diana.”
“I KNOW THAT. But that doesn’t make him immortal. He NEEDS to stop torturing himself. His pain is my pain too!”

I couldn’t help but break down as I sat on the edge of the bed. I covered my face with my hands and Marie came and sat next to me putting her arm around me.

“He’s going to be fine, Ana. You’ll see.”
“Marie, I can’t do this. He’s so stubborn, I can’t stand it.”
“He’s just under a lot of pressure right now. Once the tour is over, he’ll feel a lot more relaxed.”
“Don’t tell anyone this but I’m having second thoughts again.”
“DIANA!”

“I don’t know if I can keep going through this.”

“Ana, you can’t leave him. It will make things worse.”

“I feel like being with him is making ME worse.”

Jasmine knocked on the door. I told her to come in and she said Michael’s medical staff had left and he was doing much better.

“Don’t tell me they sedated him!” I said jumping up from the bed.

“NO! Of course not. He’s ok now. He wants to eat but he said he won’t until you two join us.”
“Is Chris still here?”
“He had other plans.”

The three of us went back to the living room and heard Michael talking to Waleed on the phone. We didn’t want to be rude and listen so we took our food from the buffet tables and waited for Michael in the dining room. We heard him raise his voice a few times and wondered what the two of them were talking about so heatedly. After a few minutes, he returned to us with a small serving of his favorites and sat at the head of the table.

“I’m sorry I took so long.” He said as he joined us.

“Don’t apologize. It’s ok. How do you feel?”
“Much better.”

Wanting to break the tension in the air, Marie started a conversation.

“How well do you know Gerwin, Michael?”
“Well enough. Why do you ask?”
“I really like him.”

“He’s a great guy. I think you two would be great together.”
“You do?” I asked raising my brow at him.

“Yes. He’s a good catch. Smart, handsome, educated and he has his own business.”
“Does he have a brother?” Jasmine asked.
“Why do you care?” I asked.

“Just wondering….”
“You’re not fooling around on David, Jas!”
“I’D NEVER…”

“Jasmine, I worry about you.” Michael said laughing.

“Hey! I’m not bad!”
“Michael is!” Marie said making him laugh.

“Marie, you are so cute.”
“Thank you. I try.”

After everyone finished their meals, Michael said he had a business meeting to attend and would be back late.

“You’re leaving AGAIN?”

“I have to. I need to take care of something important.”
“Can’t it wait until tomorrow?”
“We’re going to the hospitals tomorrow, remember?”
“Oh, that’s right.”

Michael excused himself as he put his plate on the buffet table and headed for the bedroom. I questioned his behavior and told the girls I’d be back as I went to the room to talk to him.

“Michael, what’s going on?”
“Nothing. Why?”
“You’ve been acting strange since the second you walked through the door.”
“Diana, it’s nothing.”
“Don’t give me that. This isn’t like you.”
“Why are you doubting me all of a sudden?”
“Excuse me? Where is this attitude of yours coming from?”
“I’m sorry. I’m just tired and I have a lot on my mind.”
“Why won’t you tell me about it?”
“It’s nothing you can help me with.”
“How do you know?”
“I just do.”

His tone was started to irritate me.

“Did I say or do something to make you angry?”
“Of course not.”
“Are you stressed about the tour?”
“Yes but that’s normal.”
“Why didn’t you eat or take breaks today?”
“I did whenever I could, Diana. I have to make sure my moves are on point. I can’t waste time.”
“I understand but you need to take care of yourself. You are irreplaceable, Michael. If something were to ever happen to you—“
“NOTHING WILL HAPPEN, DIANA!” He screamed.

“DON’T RAISE YOUR VOICE AT ME!” I screamed back.
“I don’t have time for this.”

He pushed past me and left the room.

“MICHAEL! WAIT!”

He opened the front door and left without looking back. The girls noticed and wanted to know what happened.

“Did you two have a fight?”

“I don’t know. He just blew up at me.”

“Just let him be, Ana. He’ll come around.”

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

FALLTURM BREMEN DROP TOWER

****Michael approaches the monumental German landmark at the midnight hour. He is covered in black and wears his sunglasses hoping no one sees or recognizes him. He walks towards the very back of the monumental structure hearing his own footsteps against the solid pavement beneath him breaking the silence in the air as he approaches one of many people that do nothing but disgust him.

“What do you want now?”

“I think you already know.”
“I’m running out of ways to politely tell you to leave me alone.”
“And I’m running out of ways to care.”
“Why do you keep doing this?”
“You are making a big mistake.”
“My only mistake was being around you for so many years.”

“You can’t get rid of me, Michael. You know I’m used to getting what I want.”
“So am I and you won’t win.”
“We both know I never lose, Michael.”
“Don’t test me. You still have NO idea what I can do.”

“You know how much I love a challenge.”
“My life is NOT a game. Stay away from me. I don’t need you or anyone else.”
“Because you have her now?”
“Exactly.”
“We’ll see how long she stays with you.”

Michael becomes furious and grabs the mysterious person in black by their neck.

“DON’T you even TRY to get in between us! You’ve caused enough damage and I will NOT let you destroy the one thing that is going well for me. I allowed you to get away with your mistakes before but I won’t let you this time. LEAVE ME ALONE!”

The person pushes Michael aside and begins to walk away, threatening him before leaving.

“By the time I’m done with you, she won’t ever want to see you again. You will be alone, miserable and lonely for the rest of your pathetic life. No child you donate money or toys to will be able to save you either. You and your career will be ruined. I suggest you get on your knees and start praying for a miracle since that’s the only chance of survival you have. You can’t buy, sing or dance your way out of this one, Michael. You’re done.”

Michael scoffed as he saw the evil shadow disappear. A cold chill ran down his spine. He knew a storm was coming and he had to find a way to stop it, even if it meant deceiving his future wife.