CHAPTER 23:

The Beginning of the End

***To my beloved readers:***

*While preparing for this chapter, I did a lot of research about Michael during his History tour and came across some very interesting and intense facts about several things he went through during this specific time in his life. Based on what I discovered, I feel the time has come to add a significant twist to Michael and Diana’s ‘perfect’ love story. I must warn you that this chapter is NOT typical of anything I have ever written before and will probably shock some of you. I’ve never taken a risk like this in my writing before but I know this is one of many challenges every writer must go through in order to keep their readers intrigued. Situations will be changing very quickly and a large storm is definitely brewing. Due to the sensitive content in this chapter, no photos have been added. I hope you enjoy seeing a new side to each character as this story unravels into something I know you all were NOT expecting to read.* ☺

**\*\*\* A FEW HOURS LATER \*\*\***

The girls and I waited for Michael to come home. It was already past 3am and he still hadn’t returned. Chris, also feeling worried, called Michael’s and Waleed’s entire entourage and no one knew where he was. It wasn’t like him to go anywhere without telling at least one person and this startled Waleed. Michael was alone making himself an easy target to be followed by paparazzi and other unnecessary people. Chris managed to persuade Waleed into not informing the police since he offered to drive around and see if Michael had possibly gone to visit children in a local hospital which was what he was scheduled to do later in the day anyway. Waleed offered to go with Chris but he insisted on going alone and told him he would contact him once he had any information on him.

“I’m sure he just needed to be alone.” Jasmine said rubbing my arm.

“I agree. He’s under a lot of pressure. I think he needed to clear his head.” Marie said.
“I love you girls but your words are not helping me right now. He’s somewhere in Bremen, alone, angry and stressed out. I just don’t understand him. This is exactly why I didn’t want to get back together with him.”
“Ana, you two are meant for each other.” Jasmine said.
“As much as I don’t want to admit it, she’s right.” Marie said putting her arm over mine.

“I can’t deal with his antics. I don’t know how Katherine did it.” I said putting my head in between my legs.

“You can’t compare yourself with his mother.” Jasmine said rubbing my back.

“This is just the beginning. What is he going to be like after the wedding? And if we have kids? What if he starts ignoring all of us every time something gets to be too difficult for him?”

“Diana, you are paranoid. Michael would NEVER put you off for anything.” Marie said.

“I agree with her. He loves you way too much to ever do anything that stupid.”

Suddenly, we heard the door unlock and Michael came storming through slamming it loudly on his way inside. He completely overlooked the fact that the three of us were in the living room worried sick about him and headed straight to the bedroom.

“IN THE ROOM NOW!” He yelled looking at me as he went inside.

“QUICK, MARIE! GIVE ME YOUR CAMERA!” Jasmine yelled.
“NOT NOW, JAS!” I yelled getting off the couch.

“DID YOU NOT HEAR ME?” Michael yelled from inside.

“I DON’T TAKE ORDERS FROM ANYONE! IF YOU WANT TO TALK TO ME, YOU ASK! I DON’T TOLERATE DEMANDS, NOT EVEN FROM YOU!”

“Whoa.” Marie said under her breath.

Michael came out of the room calmly and stood directly in front of me. He grabbed my hand and kissed it.

“I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have yelled at you like that.”

“Girls…”

“We know. We’re out.” Marie said getting off the couch taking Jasmine with her.
“MAKEUP SEX!” Jasmine yelled.

“SHUTUP, JASMINE!” Marie yelled shoving her out the door and closing it behind her.

“Diana, listen—“
“NO. YOU listen! Who do you think you are talking to me like that? What have I ever done to deserve such disrespect from you? You had all of us worried half to death. Chris is out searching the entire city looking for you as we speak.”
“I figured he would be. I called him from the car saying I was on my way back here.”
“You couldn’t call me?”
“I was angry and wanted to see you in person.”
“Why won’t you tell me what’s wrong?”
“Nothing is wrong. I need to figure things out on my own.”

His passive attitude was starting to irritate me even more.

“You scream at me then storm out of here like some teenager mad at their parents and you’re saying nothing is wrong?”

“I was angry. I had to deal with someone important.”
“Who is this someone?”
“You don’t need to know.”
“WHY NOT?”

“I don’t want you getting involved.”
“A wife is not allowed to be concerned about her husband?”

Michael turned and lashed out at me again.

“STOP WITH THE WIFE THING, DIANA!”

“EXCUSE ME?”
“We’re not even married.”
“We ARE married, MICHAEL!”
“It’s just a piece of paper. It means nothing.”
“Why did you talk me into signing it then?”
“Talk you into it? You said you signed it willingly!”
“I did. But you challenged me first.”
“I knew you wouldn’t have done it any other way.”
“I can’t believe you’re saying this. You BEGGED me to marry you and when I finally decide to do it, you throw it in my face?”
“I’m not throwing anything in your face, Diana. I did want to marry you.”
“DID?”
“I still do.”
“No, you don’t. You just admitted it.”
“Diana, you are reading way too much into this. I don’t want to stand here and argue with you. I have so much I need to get done.”
“I’m not reading into anything, Michael. I should have followed my instincts and left you in the past where you belong.”
“Maybe you should have.”
“This isn’t you. What happened to the man who said he’d do anything to see me happy? The man who promised to give me anything and everything I ever wanted? The man who wanted to share his life with me and have children one day?”

“I don’t know. Maybe he died somewhere along the way.”
“Evidently, his love for me died with him.” I said with tears pouring down my face.

Michael was being so cold. He didn’t even have an ounce of decency in him to try and comfort me. This was truly a side of him I had never seen or heard of before.

“Are we breaking up?” I asked still crying.

“I never said I wanted to.” He said walking away from me with his face towards the bay window.

“What could be so bad that you would want to end your relationship with me all of a sudden?”

He was quiet. With his back towards me, I saw tears running down his face from his reflection in the window. As devastated and heartbroken as I was, all I could do was think of him in that moment. I went over to the window and linked his hand which was against the window with mine and placed my free hand around his waist.

“Why won’t you let me in, Michael? Why won’t you let me help you? What is hurting you so badly that you are shutting me out and willing to throw me away because of it?”
“I’m fine, Diana. I don’t want you to leave me.”

“You can’t even look me in the eye and say that. You haven’t hugged me, kissed me or told me that you love me all day.”

He turned around and kissed my forehead.

“I’m sorry for hurting you. I just have a lot to deal with.”

I kneeled down in front of him and folded my hands as fresh tears came out of my eyes.

“PLEASE, Michael! Please don’t dismiss me like this. Let me help you!”

He scoffed and walked away heading straight to the bar where his prescription medication was sitting.

“MICHAEL!” I stood up and ran towards him as he quickly swallowed three white pills without any hesitation.

“I CAN’T BELIEVE YOU! YOU WOULD RATHER TAKE PILLS THEN TELL YOUR WIFE WHAT’S BOTHERING YOU?”

“YOU ARE NOT MY DAMN, WIFE!” He yelled back.
“AND I NEVER WILL BE!” I yelled as I got up to pack my things.

Michael didn’t try and stop me. He stood near the window hitting the wall with his fist muttering under his breath. I knew at that moment it was over between us and there was no way I going to take his mental and emotional abuse any longer. I called the girls and told them to bring one of my suitcases from their suite. They showed up within minutes and saw the dent in the wall from Michael’s fist and blood dripping from his knuckles.

“MICHAEL! WHAT DID YOU DO?” Marie yelled going over to him.

“I’m fine. Just stay away from me.” He said extending his arm blocking her from getting near him.

“Leave him alone, Marie.” Jasmine said. “Let him have his time.”

Marie’s undying love for Michael made her deaf to his demand. She ran to the bathroom and dampened a small face cloth with warm water before running back to Michael and placing it on his bloody hand. She wrapped it to the best of her ability and kissed his hand saying she would never want to see him hurt.

“Ana, what are you doing?” Jasmine asked as she came into the room.

“I’m leaving, Jas. I’m going back home.”
“ARE YOU CRAZY? YOU CAN’T LEAVE US HERE IN GERMANY ALONE?!”

“I’ll make arrangements to fly you and Marie back when I get to the office.”
“Diana, don’t do this!”
“I have to. I’m done with him, Jas.”

Tears were streaming down her face as she tried blocking me from leaving the bedroom.

“Get away from me, Jas. I can’t be in this room anymore.”
“Why don’t you two just talk it out?” Jasmine said.

“Talking isn’t Michael’s style. He prefers to medicate his problems away.”
“Ana, you can’t just give up.”
“WHY CAN’T YOU JUST GET OUT OF MY WAY?” I yelled feeling frustrated.

Feeling incredibly confused and scared, Marie stood directly in the middle of the room between Michael and me not knowing which side she should choose. Her best friend or the love of her life.

“Jasmine, I can go around you or I can go THROUGH you!”

“You can’t leave him, Diana. He will be devastated.”
“I am NOT staying with him. End of story!”
 “MICHAEL SAY SOMETHING!” Marie yelled.

“LET HER GO!” He yelled still looking out the bay window.

My suitcase dropped and fell to the ground. The man who made me promise to marry and never leave him was suddenly telling me to walk out of his life.

“Diana, he doesn’t mean that. He’s angry right now.”
“Get out of my way, Jas.”
“NO, Diana.”
“JASMINE! MOVE. NOW.”

“You can hit me if you want, but I won’t let you walk away from him a second time.”
“I made the right decision five years ago. I was stupid to allow him back into my life. He is too full of secrets and I can’t be with someone who doesn’t trust me.”

Jasmine cleared my path and stood next to Marie infuriated.

“WHO ARE YOU TO TALK ABOUT SECRETS AND TRUST, DIANA? YOU’VE BEEN KEEPING THE BIGGEST SECRET OF ALL!”

“JASMINE!”

“What are you talking about, Jas?” Marie asked.

“She knows EXACTLY what I’m talking about. Why don’t you tell Michael and Marie the REAL reason you moved to California, Diana?”
“JASMINE, STOP IT.”

Michael looked over at her wanting to know more but didn’t say a word.

“TSG wasn’t the only reason. Diana has a secret that she’s been keeping from everyone and she hid it very well. Didn’t you, Diana?”
“JASMINE….DON’T DO THIS TO ME NOW!”
“What the heck are you talking about?” Marie asked.

“Diana didn’t move to California willingly. She HAD to.”
“JASMINE! KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT!”

“You mean it wasn’t because of Michael?”
“It was. But she also needed to get out of New York so she could hide—“
“YOU BITCH!” I ran and threw her down on the floor hitting her stomach.

“DIANA!” Marie peeled me off Jasmine and put us both in different corners of the room. Michael’s security burst through the door seeing Jasmine’s condition and asked if we were ok. We also noticed he didn’t move at all when Jasmine hit the ground. It seemed like he just didn’t have a care in the world for anyone anymore.

“Everything is fine.” I explained. “I was just leaving.” I pulled myself together and grabbed all of my things. Jasmine, being the true friend she is tried to stop me again even after I had just brutally attacked her. Michael’s security saw his bloody hand and wanted to know what happened. Michael convinced them he had a small accident and asked them to leave him alone and became unresponsive again.

“NO, DIANA!” Jasmine begged as she held her abdomen and crawled across the floor to me.

Marie helped Jasmine up and Michael’s security alarmed his medical staff who took Jasmine to the suite across the hall to help her.

“Diana, if you leave him I will NEVER speak to you again!” She said as she was being escorted out of the room. “You love him and you always have. You also know why I’m telling you not to give up! I’m the only one who knows the truth. For the love of your secret, DON’T leave him!”

Michael’s guard and medical staff took her across the hall and said they would take care of her. My head was spinning and had no idea what to do or say next.

“She’s right.” Marie said. “You can leave his room, leave his hotel, but you can’t leave his life.”
“You heard the man. He told me to go.”
“He wants to be alone right now. He doesn’t want you to leave his world.”
“That’s something HE should be telling me, Marie. NOT you.”
“Michael? Do you want Diana to leave you?” Marie asked Michael as he stood at the window with his bloody hand against it.
“Diana is a grown woman who is capable of making her own decisions in life.”

Without saying a word, I grabbed my purse, cell phone and suitcase and took one last look at him while standing underneath the suite doorframe.

“If I leave I am not coming back, Michael!”

Silence.

“I’m withdrawing from this tour. I will contact Waleed later today and let him know. All the necessary documents will be prepared and mailed to you once I get back to LA. I hope you have a better life now that I will no longer be a part of it. Goodbye, Michael.”

Silence.

“MICHAEL! STOP HER!” Marie yelled.

“Let her go.”

My hand trembled as I opened the door to leave. Tears would not stop flowing as I sighed and took a deep breath and began to walk out the door.

“NO, DIANA!” Marie begged as she grabbed my leg.

“YOU CAN’T LEAVE HIM! YOU TWO CAN’T BREAK UP!”

“Let me go, Marie. He doesn’t want me here.”
“HE’S JUST ANGRY RIGHT NOW. DON’T LEAVE HIM! HE WILL DIE WITHOUT YOU!”

“Michael is a grown man who is capable of making his own decisions in life.” I said as I gently shrugged her off my leg and walked out the door.
“DIANA!”

“Please tell Chris I said goodbye. I don’t want to see the look of disappointment on his face. I’ll leave it up to Michael to tell him the news.”

“Diana, for my sake. PLEASE! Don’t leave him like this.”
“You won, Marie. I lost.”
“What do you mean?” She asked with tears pouring down her face.

“He’s a free man now. You can have him all to yourself. I’ll call you when I get to LA.”

“Diana, PLEASE STOP! What has gotten into you two? I don’t want Michael anymore! You two belong together. Don’t throw that away all because of a silly fight.”

“This isn’t silly, Marie. If you want to know the details, you can ask him. I’m staying with Jasmine tonight and booking a flight back to LA. Stay with him until he goes to sleep.”

“Ana, he won’t sleep. You know that better than anyone.”
“He won’t do anything stupid if someone is here with him. I don’t want Chris to be bothered by this, at least not now. I trust you, Marie. Take care of him. I no longer have the right to do it myself anymore.”

I closed the door and went to check on Jasmine. Michael’s medical team said she was fine and just had some muscle spasms from where I hit her in her abdominal region. They gave her some mild painkillers and asked her to rest until sunrise. I asked if I could see her and they agreed as long as we didn’t have another altercation between us. I informed them no such thing would happen and they left closing the door on their way out.

I left all of my belongings near the door and went to the bedroom to see her. She was on the bed curled up holding her stomach. A perfectly still glass of water rested on her night table next to a small bottle of Aspirin. I took her hand in mine as she lay perfectly still opening her tired eyes.

“Ana?” She sounded small and faint.

“Yeah, Jas. It’s me.”

“Don’t leave, Diana.”
“I have to. He doesn’t want me anymore.”
“You can’t believe that.”
“I didn’t come here to talk about him. I came here to see you. I’m booking a flight out of here.”

“Please….please…don’t…”

Jasmine was groggy from her medication. I could sense the paramedics gave her something much stronger than Aspirin but left that with her in case the pain was to return.

“Forgive me, Jasmine. I’m sorry for hitting you.”
“Don’t….don’t apologize. I love you, Diana.”

Tears began to fall from my eyes. The girl that had always been by my side was telling me she loved me even after I assaulted her in the worst way.

“I love you too.”
“Don’t leave him….don’t leave him Diana.”

I kissed her forehead.

“Marie is staying with Michael tonight. I’ll stay here with you to make sure you are ok.”

“Diana….don’t leave…for his sake…don’t go…”
“Goodnight, Jasmine.” I said as I headed for the door.

“Ana…for his sake…I left my whole life in LA for you…”

I gasped as I heard Jasmine’s words.

“I left….David left….we all left…for you, Diana.”
“Jasmine, stop.” I said walking back to her putting my hand over her mouth.

“Tell him, Diana….tell him why we moved here...he won’t leave…if he knows….if he knows the truth.”

“Jasmine, you are talking out of sorts. Please go to sleep now. I’ll be across the hall if you need me.”

She finally stopped stuttering her words and fell asleep. I watched her as I leaned against the wooden door frame wondering how I got to be so lucky to have such loyal friends. I felt undeserving of it. As I watched her breath become light and steady, I prayed for her in the moment hoping that God would forgive me for being so cruel to someone who, in my eyes was worthy of being called a Saint.

**\*\*\* MARIE’S POINT OF VIEW \*\*\***

Michael still stood at the bay window frozen as ice with his bloody hand against the window. He tapped his right index finger constantly against the glass hearing nothing but the sound bouncing back at him. Marie stood and observed his confused, angry state and watched his tears as they fell from his eyes to the floor creating a small puddle near his feet. She walked over to him and gently touched his shoulder from behind.

“Michael…”

Silence.

“I don’t know what to say or do but please don’t end your relationship with Diana.”

Silence.

“I can’t even begin to imagine what’s going through your mind right now or what problems you are facing, but please don’t shut us out of your life now. We have come too far and been through too much to throw it all away now. If you were to tell us to leave you, I wouldn’t do it. There’s no way we’d be able to live without you. Five years was long enough for the three of us.”

Silence.

“Whatever it is, we will help you get through it. Please don’t push us away now. Please, Michael?”

“I need to be alone.”

“I’m not leaving you here by yourself tut I will go in the bedroom and give you your space. Call me if you need anything.”

She walked into the bedroom and leaned against the door frame staring at him.

“I love you with all my heart, Michael. You still mean the world to me.”

Silence.

She closed the door and grabbed her cell phone from her pocket calling the one person she could possibly think of who could help somehow.

“Marie?”
“I know it’s late and I’m sorry to be calling you at this hour but something really bad happened and I need your help.”
“What’s wrong? Are you alright?”
“Come to the hotel. I really need you.”

“Are you with Michael?”
“Yes, in his suite. Please hurry.”
“I’m on my way.”
“Thank you, Gerwin.”

**\*\*\* 30 MINUTES LATER \*\*\***

“Thanks for coming.” Marie said as she opened the suite door and threw herself into Gerwin’s arms.

“What’s wrong?”
“It’s Michael – something happened to him.”
“Is he sick?”
“He’s been quiet for hours. I’ve tried talking to him and so have my friends but no one is getting through to him. I didn’t know what else to do. My friends even got into a fight earlier.”
“Where is he now?”
“He was standing by the window for hours but then I came out here and he went to the bedroom and closed the door. I’ve been knocking for the longest time but he won’t let me in.”
“Where are your friends?”
“In the suite down the hall.”
“Why don’t you go and be with them? I’ll talk to Michael.”
“Are you sure?”
“He won’t hurt me. Michael would rather harm himself first.”

“That’s what I’m afraid of. I’m really shaken up. It’s been one hell of a morning. We were supposed to leave for Cologne tonight but that had to be postponed until tomorrow.”

“Go see your friends. I’ll talk to him and come see you before I leave.”
“Thanks Gerwin.”

They hugged again and Gerwin watched Marie enter the suite across the hall. When he made sure she was out of sight, he knocked on the bedroom door hoping Michael would respond.

“Michael, it’s Gerwin. Can I come in?”

Silence.

He knocked again louder making sure Michael heard him.

“Michael?”

He opened the door and saw Michael’s back was turned against the wall.

“What are YOU doing here?” Michael asked as he turned around completely shocked.

“Marie called me. She was worried about you. I told her I’d check on you.”

“I’m fine. I don’t want to see anyone right now. Please leave.”
“Michael, are you sure you’re ok?”
“I’m FINE. Just go.”

He ran into the bathroom slamming the door. Gerwin, feeling helpless turned his back to leave when he glanced over to his right and noticed something on the wall.

**\*\*\* A FEW HOURS LATER AFTER SUNRISE \*\*\***

“Good morning, Jasmine.” I said as I walked in her room with a cup of coffee and a bagel.

“Please tell me what happened was all a bad dream.” She said looking up at me.

“I’m afraid not. My flight is booked. I leave for the airport in three hours.”
“Diana, don’t give up on him.”
“He’s the one who gave up on me. I can’t deal with his shit anymore, Jas.”

“Diana, you love him.”
“Sometimes love isn’t enough, Jasmine.”
“I still think you should give him another chance.”
“Jas, I didn’t come here to talk about Michael. I came here to check on you and give you something to eat before I leave.”
“Did you tell Waleed?”
“Sort of. He knows I’m leaving, he just doesn’t know why.”
“You want Michael to tell him, don’t you?”
“It’s his mess – he should be the one to clean it up.”

“Where’s Marie?”
“She came here while you were asleep. I told her I was fine and she went back to Michael’s suite to stay with him. I was going to check on her after seeing you.”
“I’ll get dressed and meet you over there.”
“Can you get up on your own?”
“Yeah I feel much better now. I’ll shower and come there.”

I helped her out of bed then left to check on Marie. As much as I didn’t want to see him, I needed to talk to Michael too since he had something I needed to take to LA with me. I knocked on the door. Marie answered and hugged me tightly thanking me for not leaving. Obviously my being there made her think I wanted to reconcile with Michael.

“I’m so glad you didn’t leave.” Marie said as I walked in the suite.

“I’m not staying. My flight is in a few hours. Where is he?”
“On the patio.”
“Did he sleep?”
“Not a wink. He’s been out there for hours.”
“You mean he’s been out there ALL morning?”
“Yeah. I kept asking him to come in but he didn’t listen to me. How’s Jasmine?”
“She’s fine. She’ll be here shortly.”

Michael came inside and saw me standing at the door. He ran over and hugged me as if he hadn’t seen me in years all over again and nothing had just happened between us.

“I’m so glad you didn’t leave me. I was stupid and treated you horribly.”
“Get off me, Michael.”
“Please, just let me hold you.”
“GET OFF ME, MICHAEL!”
“Ana, please. Just hear him out.”
“Marie, go check on Jasmine. Don’t come back here until I call you.”
“Diana, don’t—“
“Marie, go now please.”

She left without saying another word leaving Michael and I in the room alone.

“I knew you’d give me a chance to explain.” He said running his hand down my cheek.

“I’m not here to here to listen to you.” I said pulling his hand away. “I’m here to tell you that I’m leaving Germany, leaving this tour and leaving YOU.”

“Diana, you can’t do that.”
“I can and I will.”

“You CAN’T leave me. I love you.”
“That’s why you let me walk out the door?”
“I wasn’t myself, Diana.”
“Then who were you, Michael? The werewolf from Thriller? Or the mayor from Ghosts?”
“Diana, I’m being serious. That wasn’t me. It was the medication.”
“Do you REALLY think I’m stupid enough to fall for that?”
“It’s the truth. What I took in front of you wasn’t pain killers.”
“What you’ve taken FROM me is much worse, Michael. I’m not doing this with you anymore.”

“Diana, PLEASE. You have to listen to me. I’m under a lot of scrutiny right now. I had to take pills to calm myself down. I had no other choice.”

“Not that I care but what were they?”
“Mood stabilizers. They are VERY strong. I only take them when I really have to.”
“And you chose to take them in front of me KNOWING they would turn you into an asshole?”
“Diana, I’m sorry. I panicked. I’m not used to having people who truly care about me around all the time. I’m still learning how to deal with relationships. Please don’t leave me.”

He came closer to me wanting to hold me in his arms but I pushed him away.

“I don’t come here to get your side of the story now. I’m here because you have something I need to take with me to LA.”
“What’s that?”
“The marriage certificate.”

Michael gasped. He knew exactly what my intentions were.

“Diana, are you going to—“
“File for divorce? Yes, Michael.”

“Why would you do that to me?”
“Why would you put me through what you did?”
“I never meant to hurt you. I told you it wasn’t me, it was the medication. I was sedated, Diana. I had NO idea what I was saying or doing.”
“And that’s supposed to make me want to stay with you?”
“It should.”
“Well, it doesn’t. Give me the certificate, Michael.”
“Diana, I won’t let you go.”
“What do you mean ‘you won’t let me’ go? I don’t need your permission.”
“Diana, you promised you would marry—“
“BRING ME THE CERTIFICATE, MICHAEL!”

He covered his ears with his hands asking me not to shout at him.

“It doesn’t feel so good when you’re the one being yelled at, right?”
“Diana, I’m sorry.” He said trying his hardest not to cry.

“I don’t care. Bring me the certificate.”

“Please, don’t do this to me now. I need you.”
“I don’t CARE. I have a flight to catch. Give it to me.”
“I love you my sweet girl.”
“Save it, Michael. It’s not going to work this time.”

“I won’t survive without you, girl.”
“You survived five years. You have your family, your music, your fans and your drugs to keep you alive.”
“Those things don’t mean anything to me if I can’t be with you. Believe me, Diana. You are the ONLY thing that can save me now.”
“You should have told yourself that before reaching for the bottle, Michael.”
“I won’t let you give up on us.”

I scoffed and walked past him feeling annoyed by his behavior.

“I’ll get it myself!”

“Diana, NO!” Michael yelled as he followed me into the bedroom.

“I see you’ve already taken it out.” I said looking at the wall.

“I didn’t touch it.”
“Then why is the safe open?”

“I was missing you and wanted to look at it. I opened the safe but then—“
“I don’t care, Michael. Just give it to me NOW!”

Michael walked over to the safe and noticed it was empty.

“Oh my god!” He said to himself.

“I don’t have all day.”
“It’s gone.”
“What do you mean ‘it’s gone’? Where the hell is it?”
“I have NO idea.”
“Michael STOP stalling and give me the damn certificate!”
“I swear, Diana. It’s gone. I don’t know where it is.”
“Did you leave the safe open?”
“When I was alone.”
“No one else was in here with you?”

Michael thought long and hard before finally putting two and two together.

“GERWIN!”

“What?”
“Gerwin has it!”
“HOW THE HELL DID HE GET IT?”
“Marie. Where’s Marie?”
“Down the hall. Why?”

“MARIE!”

Michael pushed right past me running down the hall.

“MICHAEL! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?”

He ran down the hall with his security eyeing him asking if he was alright. He told them he was fine but needed to speak to the girls right away.

Jasmine came to the door and Michael bolted inside with me following.

“Michael! Are you ok? What’s—“
“WHERE’S MARIE?”

“In the living room.”

“Are you feeling alright?” He asked Jasmine lightly kissing her forehead.
“Yeah, I’m ok.”

“Good. I’m glad you’re ok.”

He ran across the hall to where Marie was sitting watching TV trying to control her emotions.

“What’s up with him?” Jasmine asked.
“I have NO idea. He’s a completely different person now.”

“MARIE!”

“Yes?”
“Did you call Gerwin this morning?”
“Yeah. He came to talk to you, remember?”
“Where is he now?”
“I have no idea.”

 “Can you call him please?”
“Sure.”

Marie dialed his number twice. Of course, he didn’t answer her calls.

“Marie, you called Gerwin this morning and he came to see Michael?” I asked.
“When you came here to be with Jasmine, yes. I was so afraid for Michael. He was frozen like a statue near the window and I panicked and didn’t know what to do or who else to call. I called Gerwin and he came right over. He said he would talk to Michael for me and that was when I came back here.”
“Marie, why didn’t you tell ME you called him?”

“You were asleep and I didn’t want to wake you. I’m sorry if I caused any trouble.”

“Oh my god. I’m so dead.” Michael said as he ran back to his suite.

“I DON’T need to be going through this before my flight home!” I said following him again.

The girls came with me and we all put on fake smiles convincing Michael’s security that everything was fine and we were playing a game. Of course, they didn’t fall for such a lame excuse and decided to find out for themselves what was really going on. While Marie and Jasmine kept the guards busy with their ridiculous story, I followed Michael back into the bedroom hearing the guards eventually leave.

“I can’t believe him. Why would he do that?” Michael asked staring at the now empty safe.

I stood behind him and saw a brown envelope on the floor next to his right foot. Knowing he would try to grab it from under me, I snuck behind him and quickly grabbed it catching the corner of his eye.

“NO!” He yelled as I grabbed it, tucking it underneath my arm.

“I have what I need. I can finally go now.”

“DIANA, YOU CAN’T!”

“Watch me, Michael!”

I opened the envelope as Michael was trying to grab it making sure it was inside and it was. I was relieved that Gerwin hadn’t taken it and knew all I had to do was get on the plane and get Michael out of my life. He pulled my arm and slammed me against the wall cornering me into him.

“Diana, you can’t do this to me. I’m sorry I treated you badly. I’m under so much pressure. People are trying to ruin me. You have NO idea what I’m going through.”
“You’re right, I don’t and I don’t care to know anymore. You had your chance to tell me.”

“I couldn’t take the stress anymore. I had to escape somehow.
“So you turned to drugs instead of your wife?”

He smiled thinking I still wanted to be that.

“Diana, you still think of me as your husband.” He asked running his hand through my hair.
“Not for long.”
“I won’t let you walk out that door with that in your hand.”
“You can’t force me to stay here, Michael. You have to leave for Cologne today.”
“I’m not going anywhere without you.”
“You have no choice.”
“If you leave me, I will leave this tour.
“HA! Don’t make me laugh.”

I shoved him to the side and broke free of his enclosure.

“DIANA, NO!” He yelled grabbing my arm in the living room.

“GET YOUR HANDS OFF ME!” I yelled pushing him against the wall.
“You CAN’T leave me. I will DIE!”

“I warned you I wouldn’t come back if you let me leave.”
“Diana, I was medicated. You can’t use that against me.”
“No one put a gun to your head. You choose to put those pills in your mouth.”

“I love you.”
“I’m leaving.”

I went to the door and Michael clung to my leg dragging himself against the floor trying to stop me in my own tracks.

“DIANA, NO! DON’T LEAVE ME!”

“Oh my god. Michael LET GO OF ME!”

He was wailing and sobbing like a newborn child crying and wanting to be held. The girls couldn’t help but cry as they saw what he was doing. I, on the other hand couldn’t care less and wanted him as far away from me as possible. Michael’s security heard loud noises again and the girls kept saying he was fine. It wasn’t until one of them noticed Michael clinging to me that they barged in peeling him off me and placing him on the couch.

“Now I can finally get out of here!” I said heading for the door.

“DON’T LET HER LEAVE!” Michael yelled as got off the couch and broke through his own guards.

“Diana, don’t do this!” Marie said.

“I don’t have time for this. He had his chance. I don’t want to talk about this anymore.”
“Ana, you owe it to him to stay.”
“I DON’T OWE HIM SHIT! He owes ME!”
“Diana, I’ll give you anything just PLEASE don’t leave me.” He said running over to me.
“Get away from me.”

I walked out the door and headed towards the elevator. I quickly stuffed the brown envelope in my purse and pressed the button hoping the elevator would arrive before Michael tried to stop me again. I could hear him screaming at me as his guards held him back telling him to let me go in peace.

“DIANA! YOU CAN’T LEAVE ME!” He yelled as I stood across the hall waiting for the elevator. His guards kept trying to restrain him. Chris suddenly came through the stairway door and heard the commotion almost falling over from shock. He ran to Michael and also tried to keep him from falling over. Jasmine and Marie also joined him. It seemed like the entire world was against me for standing up for myself.

“Diana, come back!” Jasmine yelled.

The elevator arrived and dozens of Michael’s medical staff rushed through the elevator pushing right past me with a few more arriving from the stairway. I saw Michael collapse on the floor and the girls tried to help him as much as they could. All I could do in that moment was watch as he lay restlessly against the hallway floor screaming my name begging me not to leave him. His words hurt me deeply and I didn’t know if my love for him was strong enough to make me stay.

It wasn’t until I saw a paramedic remove a large syringe from his bag and fill it with a large dose of sedative that reality finally came back to me and I had to stop them from drugging him into forgetting about his problems.

“WAIT!” I yelled as I ran back.

“Don’t give him that. I’ll take care of him.”
“I’m sorry but he needs it. He’s blood pressure and body temperature is dangerously low. He could slip into a coma at this point. His sugar levels are also low and there are other factors involved making this a requirement for him.”
“PLEASE DON’T! He took something earlier this morning and I know it’s still in his system. I don’t want you counter attacking what he already took.”
“We know exactly what he took and he wasn’t supposed to. This is necessary for him now. It will remove the toxins from his system.”

They began to roll up his sleeve making me feel queasy. The girls couldn’t bear to see him that way so they both ran over to me hiding their faces screaming and crying. As the team brought the needle closer to Michael who was still screaming my name, I pushed them aside begging them not to inject him with it.

“I’ve helped him before. I know I can help him again. He doesn’t need that.”
“You need to let them do their job, Diana.” Chris said as he tried to pull me away from them.

They put an oxygen mask on him and tried to regulate his breathing. As much as I wanted to save him, I knew the only person who could at that moment was Michael himself. His stress and over exertion were finally taking a toll on him and even after several warnings, he failed to take my advice and continued torturing himself while depending on dangerous, addictive prescription medications to pull him together.

“Stand clear!” A paramedic yelled as he put the syringe towards Michael’s arm. When he was just centimeters away from him arm, I panicked and didn’t want to see him go out of his mind.

“NO!” I yelled as I pushed it away hearing it shatter as it landed across the room.

“WHAT DID YOU DO THAT FOR?” A paramedic yelled as he and two others went to clean up the liquid and broken shards of glass that scattered along the hallway.

“I don’t want him sedated!”
“Diana, you need to go from here. You can’t see this.” Chris said trying to take me away.

“NO! They can’t sedate him. I can take care of him, I’ve done it before.”

Michael stopped screaming but was still incoherent.

“Take this woman away from here.” One of the paramedics said.

“TELL THEM NO, MICHAEL!” I yelled. “TELL THEM YOU DON’T NEED IT!”

Suddenly, I felt extremely faint and dizzy. All the screaming and mental shock was starting to get to me and I had no idea what would happen next. My vision was blurred and the entire room was spinning. I heard the girls yell my name as they tried to help both me and Michael. I turned my head and saw Michael on the floor with his entire medical staff surrounding him. He looked over at me and extended his arm as if he were trying to catch me. I extended my arm as way to let him know I wanted to reach him but then everything instantly turned black…

**\*\*\* LATER THAT DAY \*\*\***

Gerwin had been in business meetings all morning. He noticed Marie’s missed calls and called her back once his meetings were finished for the day. He called Marie several times wanting to know if she and everyone else were ok but she didn’t answer. Feeling helpless and concerned, he decided to drive to the hotel to check on everyone. He rushed into his car and drove down the freeway as fast as he could running through several red lights and stop signs. His mind was racing and his heart jolted with anguish.

After making it halfway to the hotel, Gerwin increased his speed and a black town car with tinted windows unexpectedly cut him off in the middle of an intersection slightly crashing into his fender. He slammed his breaks as hard as he could and luckily wasn’t injured by the driver’s negligence. Furious, Gerwin stepped out of his car to find out who would be stupid enough to make such a dangerous, illegal turn almost killing themselves and him in the process. He tapped on the driver side window and saw someone with sunglasses trying to be discreet about their identity.

“What do you think you were doing back there?” He asked.

“You almost ran into me, fool.”
“ME? I was going straight. YOU made an illegal turn!”
“Whatever. I have somewhere to be. No harm, no foul.”
“We need to call this in. Give me your ID!”
“Hell no! You don’t need that.”
“Give it to me NOW! I have lawyers all over Europe. If you don’t comply with me, I’ll make your life a living hell.”

The person steps out of their vehicle not wanting to cause a riot in the middle of the road. Gerwin sees who the driver actually is and almost falls over from shock.

“My name is—“
“I…I…the entire WORLD knows your name.”
“Here, take my information.” They said as they hand Gerwin their ID.

Feeling incredibly stupid, Gerwin apologizes for being so forward to the person and reaches for his wallet to give them his ID as well. A white business card accidentally fell out from his wallet landing on the other person’s shoes. As they reach down to pick it up, a smile lights up their face thanking fate for allowing their path to cross with Gerwin’s.

“You work for Kingdom International?”

“I used to. That’s an old business card. I’ve been meaning to get rid of those for quite some time now.”
“Do you still have ties with this company?”
“Sort of. Why?
“You keep in touch with Michael?”
“You mean Michael Jackson?”

“Would I really be talking about someone else?”

Gerwin laughed.

“Well, I wouldn’t say we’re friends but yeah I know people that associate with him.”
“Interesting…”

Gerwin studies the other person wondering what they were thinking.

“On second thought, leave your information with me. I’ll take care of your damages.”
“What? WHY?”

“I want you to work for me.”
“Doing what?”
“I need you to find out every bit of information you can on him and bring it to me. I’ve been trying to come up something to end his relationship with that bitch for months.”
“Wait a minute. Who are you referring to?”
“That CEO he’s been secretly involved with.”

Gerwin suddenly smiled with an evil intent written all over his face.

“It’s funny you mention that. I just might have something that can help you.”

“So he IS still involved with her outside of the tour?”
“According to my research he has been for a while. They have history. No pun intended.”
“So that’s why he called his tour that.”

“Exactly. So are you in?”
“What do I get out of it?”
“I’ll give you a new car.”
“I want more.”
“What else do you have in mind?”
“A new car and a beach front property in New York.”
“Deal.”
“That’s not all.”
“What else?”
“30 million dollars.”
“ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR FUCKING MIND?”
“Believe me. You REALLY want to see what I have on him.”

“This better be worth it.”
“You have my word.”
“Deal. I’ll call you later and arrange a meeting. I want those two destroyed.”

“But you’re his—“
“I KNOW who I am to him. I don’t need fools like you who can’t drive reminding me. I’ll be in touch.”

They get back to their car and drive away. Gerwin calls roadside assistance and heads back to his hotel forgetting about wanting to check on the girls and Michael. He now has a plan – a plan to help destroy the greatest entertainer’s life and reputation for good.