CHAPTER 25

No More Mr. Nice Guy

I woke up to the sounds of trains and taxis honking their horns outside the clear bay window in the bedroom. To no surprise, Michael was already awake and out of bed. The gentle, white percale sheets persuaded me to stay in bed a little longer but the time on the clock forced me to wake up and face the day that was ahead of me. I went into the bathroom and ran a bath in the classic, marble lined antique style bathtub. As the warm water touched my bare skin, I felt rejuvenated as I washed away the pains of the last few days from the outer core of my being.

After bathing and draining the tub, I slipped into one of Michael’s red shirts and a pair of black jeans. I blow dried my hair while sitting at the vanity mirror when Jasmine stormed into my room without knocking checking to see if I was awake.

“Good morning sunshine!”

“Good morning, Jas. How are you?”
“Fabulous as always. How are you feeling today?”
“I’m a lot better, thank you. Where’s Marie? And how are you feeling?”
“Out to breakfast with Gerwin. I’m doing much better. Dr. Klein examined me and said the swelling in my abdomen has gone away. I don’t need to take meds anymore.”
“I’m sorry again, Jas. I never should have done that.”
“It’s forgiven and in the past now. But Ana, I really think it’s time…”
“I know, Jas. I know.”
“I mean, with the wedding coming up and all…”
“I’ll tell him after the tour ends. I promise.”
“Ana, he wants to get married right after the tour and we all have a lot of planning to do. When do you plan to tell him exactly?”

I sighed realizing how pressed for time I was and had to tell Michael and Marie about the biggest skeleton hidden in my closet. The only problem I had was HOW.

“I’ll tell him, Jas. I just need to figure some things out first.”
“I’ll be there with you.”
“I think I might need you to be.”
“Just say when.”
“Thanks. When did he leave?”
“A while ago.”
“Did he eat?”
“We ate together and had a long talk.”
“I’m glad he’s finally starting to feel closer to you.”
“Me too. He has a nickname for me.”
“Really? What is it?”
“Tea flower.”

I laughed out loud while Jasmine stood across the room with crossed arms frowning at me.

“Hey! Don’t laugh. I think it’s cute.”
“Well your name does represent both of those things so I can see why he chose that.”
“He’s a good guy, Diana. I’m glad you two worked things out.”
“It’s not a perfect relationship but we’re trying.”
“I’ll let you finish getting dressed. I’m going to the venue with Chris to help set things up and sign some of the paperwork on your behalf. Your breakfast awaits you at the buffet table.”

“Thank you Jasmine. Have a good day.”
“You too and don’t forget – we leave at 5 SHARP.”
“Got it.”

I finished setting my hair and makeup and went to the living room and gazed upon the wonderful goodies that were perfectly set on large serving tables. My nose followed the tantalizing smell of fresh coffee, tea, orange juice, assorted fruits, muffins, Belgian waffles and pancakes with an array of butter and flavored syrups. As I made my way towards the amazing cuisine, I saw a small envelope embedded with gold trim and my name written on the front in Michael’s trademark cursive script. A small white cupcake with sprinkles shaped in the letter of a “D” lay next to it making my heart flutter and my face light up with happiness. I shook my head in delight as I opened the envelope and read the card inside:

*“At rehearsal. Will call you later. I love you cupcake. MJ.”*

‘Silly boy.’ I said to myself.

I didn’t have much of an appetite as I poured myself some orange juice in a fluted glass with a gold edge around its rim. I wanted to save my little treat for last and ate a few slices of cantaloupe, grapes, kiwi and a pancake. An hour later, room service knocked at the door asking to take away the serving tray and plates. I welcomed them as they entered the suite and a thin framed woman with red hair and freckles on her adorable face spoke to me.

“Ms. Dean?”
“Yes?”
“Mr. Jackson received a few phone messages this morning at the front desk. Would it be alright to leave them with you?
“Of course. I’ll see to it that he receives them.”

I thanked her as she took the buffet items and left the suite informing me on her way out that the cleaning crew would arrive in the evening after we left for the venue. I didn’t want to intrude on Michael’s privacy by reading his phone messages. As curious as I was, I knew it would be rude. I guessed it was his family members and business associates wondering how he was doing and also to congratulate him on our engagement.

I placed the message sheets inside a locked drawer and put the key in my purse so I’d remember to tell him the next time I saw him. As I made my way back to the living room, a sudden gust of wind rushed through the suite forcing the patio doors to fly open. I gasped as I heard the loud shutter of the glass doors. To my surprise, it was a clear but drafty day. I stepped out on the patio and let my hair down as I felt the breezy waves of air going through me sending chills down my spine as well as an amazing sense of serenity through my damp, flowing hair.

I went inside to grab my treat when the phone rang. I smiled knowing exactly who it was.

“Hi, baby.”
“Good morning. How are you?”
“I’m well. When did you leave?”
“About two hours after we fell asleep.”
“WHAT?!”

“I have so much to do, Diana. I lost so much time.”
“I’m sorry. I feel horrible.”
“Don’t. It’s not your fault.”
“I miss you.”
“I miss you more. Did you get my surprise?”
“I did and I was just about to eat it.”
“Diana?”
“Yes?”
“Will you let me lick your cupcake?”
“MICHAEL! You’re sick!”
“Is that a yes?”
“ANYWAYS…how is your rehearsal going?”
“Hectic as always. I had to hear your voice.”
“Am I your muse?”
“Since that day at the museum.”
“You’re sweet.”

“How are the girls? Where are they?”
“Marie is out with Gerwin. Jasmine went to the venue with Chris.”
“You didn’t go with them?”
“Jasmine wanted to. I feel like a bored princess in this suite by myself.”
“We’ll spend the day together tomorrow.”
“When are we going back to Bremen?”
“In the morning. We’ll visit the children before my rehearsal for my last show there.”

“Please don’t overwork yourself, Michael.”
“I’m trying not to. I feel like I’ve lost myself, Diana.”
“What do you mean?”
“My work just isn’t the same. I’m losing my touch.”
“You’re not losing anything baby. You’re just healing in more ways than one.”

“You might be right.”
“Everything will fall into place once you hear your fans scream your name and chant how much they love you. You’re not one to give up and I won’t let you.”
“I love you, girl.”
“I love you too, Moonwalker.”

I ran my finger across the top of my cupcake and put it in my mouth tasting the sweet buttercream frosting and feeling it tingle as it landed on my tongue.

“What are you doing?”
“Eating my treat.”
“Are you enjoying it?”
“Yes. Would you like some?”
“Girl, you have NO idea.”

“I was referring to the CUPCAKE!”

“So was I.”
“STOP!”

He giggled making me smile at his adorable nature.

“I miss hearing you sing, Michael.”
“You heard me sing in Bremen.”
“I mean to ME.”
“What would you like to hear?”
“Anything. I love all your songs.”
“You don’t even know them!”
“Here we go again. I DO know them.”
“Right.”
“Ugh! Fine whatever.”
“Why are you so irritated?”
“I’m not.”
“Yes, you are. Is it your time of the month?”
“MICHAEL!”
“I take that as a yes?”
“We just made love last night.”
“You could have got it this morning.”
“I didn’t.”
“That’s a relief.”

“You are so mean.”
“It’s out of love.”
“Yeah, yeah.”
“I hope you have a relaxing day.”
“I wish I could say the same to you.”
“My day will be fine now that I’ve spoken to you.”
“You are such a sweetie.”
“I do my best.”
“Good luck, baby. The girls and I will be right beside you.”

“I can’t wait to marry you, Diana.”

“Me too.”
“You should start practicing signing my name.”
“I’ll do that when the time comes.”
“Are you afraid it won’t happen?”
“Boy, will you stop doubting me?!”

“Ok, ok. I’ll see you later.”
“Yes you will. I’ll meet you backstage.”

I happily devoured my cupcake right after my conversation with Michael. As I took the last bite out of its lovely little wrapper, Marie and Gerwin walked with several shopping bags from designer stores and a few delectable items from a local bakery.

“Hi Ana!” Marie yelled as I made my way inside from the patio.

“Where did you two go?”

“Gerwin took me to this amazing shopping outlet in another town.”
“Another town?”

“I took her to Muenster.”
“That’s two hours away!”
“Is that a problem?” Gerwin asked with a sarcastic tone in his voice.

“No, but it would’ve been nice if you had told me you were taking her so far.”
“I didn’t know Marie needed a signed permission slip from you.”
“LISTEN, GERWIN—“

“Ana, let me show you what I bought!” Marie said breaking up our argument.

She bought several dresses, boots, sweaters and skirts showing them to me one at a time. As happy as I was, Gerwin’s presence irritated me. His aura was excruciatingly unpleasant. All I could think about in that moment was squashing him like a bug underneath my shoe.

“Where’s Jas?”
“At the venue with Chris. She’ll be back in a few hours.”
“What venue is that again?” Gerwin asked.
“Mungersdorfer Stadion.”
“What time will he be there?”
“Why do you want to know?”

“I don’t want to be late.”
“You’re attending?”

“Why wouldn’t I?”
“You saw him perform in Bremen.”
“Am I not allowed to see him again?”
“Why would you want to?”
“Why do you keep questioning me?”
“Guys! Can we not get into this again?” Marie asked.

“I’m not getting into anything. I was just wondering why Gerwin would want to see Michael on stage again when he already saw him and his whole routine.”
“Ana, no matter how many times you see Michael, you can never stop watching him.”
“True, but don’t you have a business to run?”
“Don’t worry, Diana.” He said with an ugly smirk on his face. “From one business person to another I don’t need advice on how to do my job.”

“Speaking of which, I have to take care of mine because that’s what successful business people do!” I said as I got up from the couch.

“Marie, I have to get to the venue and check on the workers. Jasmine and I will be back by 3. We need to leave by 5.”

“What time does the concert start?” Gerwin asked.

“Around 7. It depends on Michael.” Marie said.

“I’ll be there early.”

“Why is that?” I asked.

“Because I can be.”
“WHAT IS YOUR PROBLEM?”

“WHAT’S YOURS?”

“GUYS!” Marie yelled.

“From the second I walked in here you’ve been on me like I did something wrong.” Gerwin said.
“That’s because I know you have – I just can’t prove it yet.”
“And you never will. You need to get off your high horse and stop looking down at people, Miss. CEO.”
“Get out, Gerwin.”
“Ana!”
“Marie, I don’t want him here.”
“This isn’t your suite.”
“It’s not yours either.”

“It’s belongs to my—“
“It’s MICHAEL’S!” Marie interrupted.

“I’ll call and meet you at the venue tonight, Marie.” Gerwin said as he stormed out the door.

“I can’t stand that arrogant jerk!”

“Why are you so defensive around him?”
“Because I don’t trust him. He thinks he’s clever but he’s not. He can’t fool me.”
“Ana, he’s a good person. You just don’t know him.”
“I know all that I need to know. He makes my skin crawl. I don’t know what you see in him.”
“He’s just a friend. I have no romantic interest in him.”
“GOOD. Wait...why?”
“Because it won’t work. He lives in New York and we live in LA. I don’t do long distance relationships. I saw what it did to you and Michael and I won’t let that happen to me.”

“We didn’t exactly have a long distance relationship but I see your point.”

“I just don’t see it working out. Plus he’s a business man, he can do better than me.”
“Don’t you dare say that! You are a great catch, Marie.”
“Thank you.”
“By the way did you find your camera?”
“Gerwin had it.”

I gasped at her response.

“How did he get it?”
“I left it in his car.”
“Marie! Your camera has pictures of me and Michael in it.”
“So?”
“SO? HE PROBABLY MADE COPIES OF THEM!”

“Ana, the man proposed to you in front of a HOSPITAL entrance. Why would Gerwin copy your photos from my camera and sell them to the press when they already know you two are together?”

“I guess you’re right. But I still don’t like the thought of you leaving that with him. Please make sure you don’t do that again.”
“I won’t.”
“I’m off to the venue. I’ll see you in a few hours.”
“I’m going to take a nap. Did Michael call?”
“Yes, before you came in. I don’t think he’ll call again but if he does can you please let him know where I am?”
“I will.”
“Thank you. Call me if something comes up.”

**\*\*\* GERWIN’S POINT OF VIEW LATER THAT DAY \*\*\***

He meets the unknown person in a dark alley a few blocks away from the venue where Michael is scheduled to perform in less than two hours.

“Plans have changed. You know what you need to do?”
“Yes. I got your instructions. I’m fully prepared.”
“DON’T let me down this time.”
“You better keep your end of the bargain.”
“Don’t worry about me. I got this shit.”
“His fiancé is starting to doubt me.”
“She will no longer be his fiancée after this.”
“I hope it’s enough to break them up.”
“Follow my instructions and it will be.”

The person leaves him standing in the dark. A thunderous cloud hovers over Gerwin as he hears a loud boom in the distance. The clock was ticking and Michael’s entourage was starting to arrive at the venue. Gerwin discreetly slips away making sure he comes into contact with no one as he drives to his hotel to get ready for the biggest concert in Cologne history.

**\*\*\* AN HOUR LATER FROM MICHAEL’S POINT OF VIEW \*\*\***

He’s been rehearsing all day and is about to leave for a last minute meeting with the production crew. As he steps off the rehearsal stage he heads towards a back room for a water break and suddenly is pulled into a dark room by a mysterious person covered in black across the hall out of plain sight. Once they are alone, the person reveals their identity to him and Michael realizes it’s the same person he met with previously. He rolled his eyes in disgust again as they begin to speak to him.

“What do you want NOW?”

“Michael just listen to me--”
“You are wasting my time. I have a show in less than two hours.”
“You are making a big mistake marrying her!”
“Is that the best you can do?”
“She will ruin your life and your career! Why can’t you see that?”
“You really need to get a hobby. Chasing me all over the world and telling me how to live my life is starting to get really boring.”
“Michael, this is not a joke.”
“Neither is what you’ve done. I let you get away with the last stunt you pulled, I’m not about to make the same mistake twice. LEAVE ME ALONE. I’m not asking you, I’m TELLING you and if I see you anywhere near me again I’ll make sure you don’t live to tell anyone about it.”

He then heard voices calling him faintly from across the hallway. He knew it was time for him to leave for the venue.

“I don’t have time for you anymore. I have a concert to bring to life and 70,000 fans waiting for me with REAL LOVE for me in their hearts.”
“Can I at least get a hug?”
“I don’t want you touching me.”
“Please Michael? For old times’ sake?”

Reluctantly, Michael walks closer to them and allows them to hug him. Being so close to them makes him flinch as they place their hands on the small of his back. He moves away from them when a sudden flash of a white light beamed through the window above them.

“What was that?” Michael asked looking panicked.

“Must’ve been lightning.”

Suddenly, Chris knocks at the door looking for Michael.

“Are you in there, sir?”

“Stay in here until I leave.” Michael whispered as he opened the door and left.

The person looks up at the window and sees Gerwin’s shadow. He gave them a thumbs up indicating he got the photo. The person disguises themselves in their thick black cloak, hat, and sunglasses and waited until voices could no longer be heard before opening the door and leaving the rehearsal studio. Phase one of their plan was a success. It was now just a matter of time before phase two would be executed.

**\*\*\* TWO HOURS LATER FROM DIANA’S POINT OF VIEW \*\*\***

“Are you dressed girls?” Marie asked as Jasmine put the final touches on my hair and makeup.

“Almost done! Give us ten minutes.”

“Chris called. He dropped Michael off and is on his way here to get us.”
“How’s the crowd looking outside?” I asked.

Marie went out on the balcony and saw a large number of reporters and fans lined up hoping to catch a glimpse of the King of Pop’s future bride to be.

“There’s a good number out there. I guess everyone is dying to see the future queen of pop.”

“Stop it, Marie.” I said as my cheeks turned rosy.

“She’s right, Ana.” Jasmine said she placed a barrette in my hair. “Every magazine and tabloid is calling you that now.”
“I am no queen. I’m just Michael’s fiancé and a CEO.”

“Well, you’re Michael’s queen.” Marie said smiling.

“I agree!” Jasmine said as she turned me around and made me see myself in a full length mirror behind us.

“Diana, you are VERY beautiful.” Jasmine said as she and Marie stood next to me. “Michael is an extremely lucky man.”

“I’M the lucky one. Michael is amazing. He really deserves someone better.”
“Don’t say that! You two are meant for each other.” Jasmine said playfully nudging my arm.

Chris rang the doorbell to the suite. The girls went to answer him while I took one last look at myself before grabbing my purse and heading for the door.

“You girls should be fashion models walking across a runway.” Chris said as we all stood in the living room twirling around showing him our outfits. After taking a few selfies, Marie handed her camera to him and asked politely if he would take a group photo of us. Jasmine then asked him to take one with us but he refused saying he didn’t want to look unprofessional.

“Are you ready to see your husband perform again, Mrs. Jackson?” Chris asked making me blush.

“We’re not married yet but yes I am.” I smiled and kept my head up trying my best not to look insecure or under confident.

“Let’s do this!” Marie said as she and Jasmine linked arms and left the suite.

“Shall we, my lady?” Chris asked as he extended his arm out to me.

I linked my arm with his as we took the elevator to the main lobby. My body trembled as I watched the floor numbers on the elevator panel slowly decrease.

“What’s wrong, Ana?” Marie asked as she gently wiped my face with a tissue.

“I’m nervous, girls. The world knows who I am now.”

“They’ve always known you. It’s just now you went from CEO to Mrs. Michael Jackson.”
“That’s a pretty big leap!” I yelled as I paced around taking baby steps in the elevator.

“Don’t worry. The guards will be downstairs and we’ll make sure no one gets in your way.”
“So will I.” Chris said as he and I moved behind the girls letting them step out the elevator first.

Once inside the lobby, thousands upon thousands of people were in our faces. Guards were surrounding us and Chris was doing his best to push away cameras and several dozen microphones from my face. I could hear the girls enjoying their 15 seconds of fame again as they posed in front of cameras again acting like they were the future stars of Hollywood. When it came time to enter the limo, I decided to give the press something to comment about and took one last look at the cameras and waved at them flashing the ring on my wedding finger.

“SHE’S GOT THE RING ON!” One reporter yelled as he ran towards the limo trying to get a photo of my sparkling piece of jewelry. Being the tease I was, I quickly ducked inside the limo not allowing anyone to photograph it up close. I simply wanted to give the paparazzi another reason to add a ridiculous headline to their useless magazines.

“This is so awesome!” Marie said as she and Jasmine stuck their heads out of the moon roof. Once the guards confirmed to Chris he had clearance to leave, he quickly pulled away from the curb and we were off to the venue for the second concert of Michael’s History tour.

**\*\*\* GERWIN’S POINT OF VIEW \*\*\***

He arrived early at the venue trying to come up with a way to enter the back doors which were surrounded by armed security guards. Michael was due to arrive any second and Gerwin had to make sure he could sneak in behind him so that phase two of his plan could work. Several people from the media were present waiting impatiently as they too wanted to catch a glimpse of the man who was about to grace the stage inside the biggest stadium in Cologne. He stood in the distance away from the view of the public eye until the sounds of cheers and laughter seeped into the night air.

“The star of the show has arrived.” One of the guards said with a huge smile on his face. A few of Michael’s entourage members stepped out of his driver’s black SUV followed by Michael behind them. As soon as Gerwin saw Michael step out of the vehicle he quickly ran through the crowd hoping his plan to get in would work without being noticed. As he saw Michael being hovered over by several people, the controlled access doors opened allowing Gerwin to enter directly behind Michael’s entourage hiding behind a bodyguard’s large frame.

Once inside, he made his way to the audio section where several people were setting up lights, speakers and performing sound checks. Afraid of getting caught, he frantically searched for the audio visual equipment and found it with no difficulty. To his surprise, the components were already set up and no one was nearby. Knowing his plan would now become a success, he did what he had to and cautiously left the area not drawing a single ounce of attention to himself. He chuckled as he opened an emergency exit door and ran towards the parking lot while patting himself on the back on a job well done.

**\*\*\* DIANA’S POINT OF VIEW \*\*\***

We were minutes away from arriving at the venue when several people bombarded our limousine from all sides. Chris kept his hand on the horn trying to get everyone to move out of his way as more and more people swarmed the vehicle.

“You better get used to this, Diana.” Jasmine said looking over at me. “This is just the beginning of life with Michael.”
“I know, Jas.”
“You will be just fine.” Marie said trying to comfort me. “I know you will get used to it and once you do you can put them all in their place.”
“I’m just not sure what I’ll do if they start harassing us at Neverland at all hours of the night.”
“Send them to me. I’ll deal with those poop heads!” Marie said trying to sound funny.

“Very nice, Marie.” Jasmine said gently hitting her shoulder.

“We finally made it.” Chris said as he tried to make his way into the overcrowded parking lot.

“Can any of you see if Michael is here yet?”

“HE IS!” Jasmine yelled pointing to his usual SUV as we drove past it.

“Thank god.” I felt happy knowing he arrived safely.

“He must be waiting to see his wife.” Jasmine teased making me blush again.

“Stop it.”
“You know it’s true!” Chris yelled from the front seat.

Once he parked the limo, dozens of guards came to the passenger door waiting for their signal to open it and let us out. Chris was let out first then our door swung open and within seconds, the girls and I flew out and quickly ran to the back entrance door. Large drops of water leaked through the back of my dress as a heavy rainfall began. One of the guards opened his large, nylon umbrella covering the three of us as we made our way inside pushing through dozens of overbearing crowds that kept asking ridiculous, irrelevant questions about Michael.

 “He’s in here.” One the guards said as they escorted us down a long hallway.

Chris and the girls wanted to see him since none of us had all day and wanted to wish him good luck. Once the guard opened the door with a key and scanned an access card, we went inside an extremely large dressing room with a lounge, bathroom, mini bar and another private room for hair and makeup away from the main entrance.

“This looks like our suite!” Jasmine said as she wowed her way inside.

“Where is he?” I asked the guard not caring about what the room itself looked like.

“Getting dressed. Wait here, please.” He said as he walked towards the far end of the room.

While the girls admired the scenery, Gerwin came through the door flashing his backstage pass Michael had left for him with one of his security guards.

“He didn’t tell me he left you one.” I said raising my brow.

“He’s a busy man. It must’ve slipped his mind.” He replied. “So, you girls ready for day two?”
“You know it!” Marie yelled feeling more excited than ever.

“I’ll go check on the workers.” Jasmine said as she headed out.

“Must be nice to have people work for you.” Gerwin said with his signature smirk.

“All it takes is hard work, Gerwin.” I said smirking back.

The guard came back and said Michael was ready but was pressed for time since the show was already 30 minutes behind schedule.

“Excuse me. I must speak with my HUSBAND before he goes on stage.” I said looking at Gerwin as I walked away.

“She doesn’t like me.” He said to Marie.

“She just doesn’t know you.” She explained. “She’s going through a lot. Give her time.”

Two of Michael’s guards escorted me to the far end of the room where he was having the final touches of his hair and makeup done. The entire back room seemed like a green room where Kingdom International members stood and discussed financial and other business related matters. Waleed made eye contact with me from across the room and I waved to him as a courtesy. Once inside, Michael was seated at a makeup table with Karen. His face lit up when he saw me enter the room and he immediately jumped out of his chair and ran towards me.

“There’s my beautiful queen!” He said as he held me tightly.

“How are you baby?”

“Relieved now that you’re here.”
“You look amazing.”

“I’m just wearing gold, Diana.”
“Yes and it looks stunning on you.”
“Thank you.” He said blushing with his trademark iconic smile.

“You’re just in time!” Karen said as she held an eyeliner applicator in her hand.

“Oh no, not again!”
“Please?” Michael asked.

“I don’t want to ruin Karen’s work.”

“You will only make it better.” She said as she handed me the thin vial of black liquid.

“Practice makes perfect!” Michael said winking at me.

“Ok, if you insist.”

He sat back in his chair and faced me closing his eyes. Karen put her hand underneath mine to keep it from shaking and to help maintain my swiftness. With one long prompt stroke, Michael’s final touch was completed. I sighed happily as I looked at my finished product.

“Michael, you are so handsome.” Karen said making him look down and giggle in embarrassment.

“I agree.”
“You two are a beautiful couple. Congratulations.”

We thanked her as she gathered her things and said she would watch the concert with the rest of Michael’s entourage in a special reserved VIP box above the audience. Michael hugged her and said goodbye as she made her way to the door and left.

“Now that we’re alone, I need to tell you something.” Michael said looking extremely worried.

“What’s wrong?”
“This probably isn’t the best time to tell you this but—“

“Michael! Are you in there! It’s us!” Marie yelled.

“I’ll tell the girls to come back.”
“No, I’m already behind schedule. They can come in.”
“Are you sure?”
“Yeah, it’s fine.”

I opened the door and the girls entered with Gerwin wanting to wish Michael good luck. He hugged the girls and kissed their foreheads and complimented their beautiful outfits.

“You are going to shine like the gold star you are!” Jasmine said.

“And please don’t drag me out on the stage again.” Marie said laughing.

“That was just a one-time deal. I won’t do it again if you don’t want me to.”
“And PLEASE don’t sing Remember the Time!” I added.

“I have another surprise for you.” He said smiling.

“Oh god. I don’t want to know!”

“STAGE SEX!” Jasmine yelled. “I’M KIDDING! Don’t freak out at me.”
“Pervert!” Marie yelled.

Gerwin snickered at Jasmine’s joke and shook Michael’s hand wishing him a good performance.

“This will truly be a night to remember.” He said with a deep tone in his voice as if he were trying to warn him of something. He let go of Michael’s hand and left with the girls saying they would meet me near the corner of the stage where we would be watching.

“What’s with him?” Jasmine whispered as I walked them to the door.

“I have no idea. All I know is I don’t like him. He’s up to something. Keep your eye on him, Jas.”

“Will do.”

Once they left, Michael stood behind me kissing my neck and put his arm around my waist not allowing me to turn around and face him.

“You look beautiful.” He whispered in my ear.

“Thank you. What did you want to tell me?”

He then turned me around and looked in my eyes.

“Diana, you know I’d never hurt you on purpose.”

“Yes…”
“But I’ve been keeping something from you…”
“I know. I’ve wanted to ask you about it but I didn’t know how—“
“Diana!” He said putting his finger on my mouth. “Someone is still after me.”
“Who?”

There was a loud knock at the door and one of Michael’s guards came in the room.

“IT’S SHOW TIME! We gotta get you in position NOW!”

“I’ll be right out.” He said as the guard closed the door.

“I don’t think this is a good time to talk about it.”

“Diana, this person is after me and I’m afraid they will go after you too.”
“Who are you talking about?”

He took a deep breath and closed his eyes. Just as he was about to tell me, two of his guards burst through the door saying he had to leave immediately.

“We gotta do the huddle then get you situated underneath the stage before the film starts playing!” His guard yelled as he stood next to him.

“We’ll talk about it later.” I whispered as the guards and I walked with him outside of the room.

Michael held my hand and kissed it gently as we made our way towards the underground of the stage after the huddle. He giggled and smiled profoundly as he heard his name being called by 70,000 people waiting eagerly to see the greatest entertainer in the world.

“They love you, baby.” I said as we continued walking.
“I love them more.”

“This is the point of no return.” Michael’s guard said as we approached the under layer of the stage ground. “You will slip in from the opening underneath the pipe lines and follow the cloth strip all the way across until you reach your space ship.”

Michael thanked the guards as they left. He didn’t want to let me go and looked extremely upset.

“Something is really bothering you.” I said as I gently ran my hand through his beautiful wavy hair.

“Diana, I need you to stay with the girls. Don’t be alone.”
“Why?”
“I think that person will try to harm you.”
“WHAT? WHO?”

Michael’s opening film began to play on the big screen. He knew he had to get into position.

“Just stay with the girls.” He said as he quickly pressed his lips to mine.

“Promise me you will?”
“Michael, who are you talking—“
“PROMISE ME!”

“Ok, I promise.”
“I love you.”
“I love you too.”
“Don’t leave me.”
“Where is this coming from?”
“DON’T leave me.”
“I won’t.”

He hugged me then left to take his position underground. My body shook with fear as I watched him crawl in the distance. When he was no longer visible, I walked towards the upper floor to join the girls. On my way up, I noticed a dark black shadow run right past me. It had a familiar scent. One that I recognized but couldn’t match who it belonged to.

“There you are!” Marie said as I stood and joined her, Jasmine and Gerwin at the corner of the stage.

“Is he ready?” Jasmine asked.

“Yeah, but he’s shaken up about something.”

Gerwin cleared his throat.

“What’s wrong?” Marie asked.
“I have no idea. He kept trying to tell me something important but wasn’t able to.”
“I’m sure he’ll tell you at the hotel.” Jasmine said.

**\*\*\*30 MINUES LATER \*\*\***

As the concert went on, I couldn’t help but notice Michael’s inattentiveness. He seemed distracted by something and didn’t have the same glow or style in his performance. Marie noticed it too and questioned me about it.

“Is it just me? Or does he seem different on stage tonight?” She asked.

“You noticed it too?” Jasmine asked.
“He’s been through a lot these past few days.” Gerwin added. “I think he’s trying to get through the night so he can rest for the next few days until his next show in Bremen.”

I wondered how Gerwin knew Michael was going back to Bremen but didn’t bother to ask since I thought Marie might have told him. As we continued watching, I couldn’t help but wonder what Michael wanted to tell me backstage. The thought was eating away at me and I knew I had to ask him as soon as possible.

“I’ll be right back girls.” Gerwin said.
“Where are you going?” Marie asked.
“I need to make an important call.”

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

The concert was half over and the crowd loved every minute of it. Michael’s energy seemed to be returning as he smiled and looked in my direction regularly making sure we were still watching him.

“Where is that boy?” Marie asked noticing Gerwin still hadn’t returned.

“He might be on a business call.” Jasmine said.

“I’m going to find him.”

Jasmine and I cheered for Michael as he started his routine for Smooth Criminal. I blew him a kiss as he continued glaring in my direction winking at me with his seductive eye.

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

She searched everywhere for Gerwin but couldn’t find him. She ran into Chris who told her he also hadn’t seen him and a few guards didn’t see him either. She then noticed an open door at the far end of a long hallway with two silhouette type shadows moving around in the faded light. Feeling curious, she walked across the hall wanting to know if Gerwin was inside.

“We’re just seconds away.”

“Excellent job.”
“A deal’s a deal.”
“Not now. Meet me out back. Do they suspect anything?”
“Diana does but the tramp is too concerned for her man.”
“He won’t be her man after this.”

Marie gasped at what she saw and heard. She walked backwards and accidentally tripped over a wire falling to the ground making a loud thud. Gerwin and the other person heard the noise and Gerwin realized Marie was eavesdropping. He ran to catch her leaving the other person to hide in disguise but as she tried to get up and run away from him he caught her and violently threw her against the wall cornering her making it impossible for her to escape.

“YOU SAW AND HEARD NOTHING! DO YOU HEAR ME?!”

“Gerwin, how can you do that to Michael?”
“SHUT UP! NOT ONE WORD OR I WILL CUT YOUR THROAT OUT!”

Marie’s heart raced as Gerwin spat his words at her. Feeling incredibly frantic, she agreed with him under duress as he let go of her and ran his cold hand through her hair making her cringe.

“Now you go back to your friends like the good little girl you are and act like nothing happened.” He said as he disappeared down the hall.

Marie checked to see if the other person she saw was still in the room but they vanished. Now that she knew Gerwin’s plan, Marie had to say something even if it meant going against her word. Michael meant the world to her and she wasn’t going to let anyone destroy him any more then he already was. She ran back to the girls wanting to tell them everything she knew and saw.

**\*\*\* DIANA’S POINT OF VIEW \*\*\***

“Where the heck did those two go?” I asked.
“They’re probably getting all huggy buggy backstage.” Jasmine said laughing.

The time came for You Are Not Alone to be performed making my eyes roll and my head ache. As soon as the song began to play, the entire venue’s lights went out and everything was pitch black, including the big screen TV.

“What’s going on?” Jasmine asked.
“I have no idea. Did Michael change his routine?”
“Not that I know of. Why would he do that without telling us?”

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

She found the audio visual section backstage where Michael’s equipment was set up and saw where the tapes were being played for the big screen. She tried to open it but got caught by Gerwin who covered her mouth and dragged her into a nearby room throwing her inside and dislodging the door by placing a chair in front of it making it impossible for her to leave. She screamed for her life asking someone to help her but couldn’t be heard over the loud screams, noises and sounds of the concert. Gerwin covered himself and snuck out the back door meeting the person he made his deal with. They handed him a briefcase and a large envelope with the deed to his new house in New York and keys to his new car inside. Gerwin opened the briefcase and laughed as he shook hands with his former business partner before quickly disappearing from view and not returning to the concert.

**\*\*\* DIANA’S POINT OF VIEW \*\*\***

“Where is Marie? It’s not like her to miss anything of Michael’s. I’m starting to worry.”
“Let’s just see what this new routine is then we’ll go look for her. She might be in the bathroom or getting some fresh air outside with Gerwin.”

Michael looked extremely confused. He looked at his band members who also didn’t know what was going on then looked at us. Jasmine and I shrugged our shoulders since we too didn’t have a clue about what was about to happen next. Suddenly, the short film to You Are Not Alone began to play with the most intimate scenes of Michael and Lisa Marie Presley shown openly on the screen for the entire venue to see.

“WHAT THE HELL?” I yelled as I watched the screen from backstage. “HE ADDED THIS TO THE SHOW?”
“Why?” Jasmine asked.

I looked at Michael who was so angry smoke could have come out of his ears. His face was fire red and his mouth twitched as he saw what was being played. As soon as he was about to run backstage and find out who was responsible, a picture of Michael hugging Lisa Marie appeared on the screen making half the audience boo and the other half cheer. My heart shattered into pieces as I watched the image on the screen. Michael, now completely livid, saw what was being played and gasped in astonishment as he ran off the stage and came to me.

“It’s not what it looks like.”
“You met her? You met her again, Michael?”
“She’s the one I tried to warn you about.”
“You’ve been seeing Lisa behind my back?”
“Diana, no. I swear I’m not.”
“She was the reason you stormed out of the hotel in Bremen?”
“Diana, you have to believe me—“
“Do you not remember her drugging you and getting away with it?”

“Of course not but Diana she’s been after me ever since—“
“ANSWER ME! DID YOU SEE HER BEHIND MY BACK?”
“Yes, but—“

All I could do in that moment was scream and push him away. He tried to console me but I was in no position to be touched or spoken to by him. Jasmine came to my side as Michael ran to the audio visual section and took the video tape out of its dispenser throwing it onto the ground and smashing it to pieces. He then demanded his production crew to keep the crowd entertained with his short films until he could figure out what to do or say about his now sabotaged concert.

“That bitch set me up again!” He said as he made his way back to me. Jasmine told him not to come near me but of course, he didn’t listen to her.

“Diana, she set me up. Someone switched the tape. I didn’t mean for this to happen.”

“I think you better finish your concert, Michael.” Jasmine said. “She is way too upset to deal with you right now. I’m taking her back to the hotel.”

Michael patted my head and cried lightly. I pushed him away from me and Jasmine called Chris on his cell phone and asked him to meet us at the back entrance. He arrived within seconds and walked me to the car while Jasmine stood with Michael as he tried to explain himself to her.

“You have to believe me. I didn’t do this. She set me up again and I won’t let her get away with it.”
“Diana might not believe you this time, Michael. You need to figure out who you want to keep in your life and who you don’t want to keep. She won’t run around in circles with you forever.”
“SHE’S the one I want. Lisa is history and I will make sure she knows it. Where is Marie?”
“I have no idea. She and Gerwin disappeared a while ago.”

A few of Michael’s guards ran over to him asking what was going on and the crowd was getting restless wanting to see him perform on stage again.

“Please take Diana to the hotel. I’ll deal with her when I get there.” He said to Jasmine as he left to finish what he started on stage.

Jasmine ran out of the venue from the back entrance and jumped inside the limo. Chris kindly took us both to the hotel and I couldn’t help but break down again.

“Ana, calm down. You can’t do this to yourself again.”
“I can’t believe he’s still talking to her, Jasmine. How could he after what she did to him?”
“I’m sure there’s a very good explanation. I don’t think he’s involved with her.”
“Did you not see them hugging on screen? The entire venue saw it!”
“Diana that might have been a final hug. Maybe he wanted to say goodbye to her in a peaceful way. It’s better than him staying angry and her going to the press making up some bullshit story saying Michael treated her harshly.”
“It doesn’t matter. She deserves to be treated that way. No matter what, that bitch will always be the wife before me.”
“She’s his EX wife and was nothing but a temporary replacement. She’s his past. You’re his future.”
“We’ll see, Jasmine.”

**\*\*\* MICHAEL’S POINT OF VIEW TWO HOURS LATER \*\*\***

After the concert ended, Michael thanked his fans and told them he loved them and apologized for what happened before going backstage. He yelled at every single member of his and Kingdom’s entourage and crew members saying he could not believe how someone could sneak in and switch their tape without anyone knowing. Waleed stood next to Michael and told him he personally had no reason to suspect anyone and did not find any clues as to who it could have been. Michael said they needed to make sure all equipment and materials were kept securely and no one was to be left unattended for any reason moving forward.

Once the crew packed up and the venue was cleared out, Michael wanted to be the last one to leave just in case he were to find something he could use to piece together who else besides his ex would want to hurt and destroy him. As he examined each area backstage, he heard a vague murmur and noises coming from across the hallway. As he got closer, he immediately recognized the voice and saw the chair blocking the doorknob and ran towards it.

“MARIE? IS THAT YOU?”

“YES, MICHAEL!”

He moved the chair aside and opened the door seeing Marie scared and incredibly shaken. She threw herself into his arms and he held her putting one hand on the back of her head and the other on her back rubbing it gently asking her to stay calm.

“MICHAEL, GERWIN SET YOU UP!”

“WHAT?”

“I saw him! He was across the hall talking to Lisa. She was here.”
“Where are they now?”
“I don’t know. Gerwin was with us watching you perform and then he left to make a phone call and was gone for half an hour. I went looking for him and saw him down the hall talking to Lisa about ruining your show. He saw me eavesdropping and then threatened me to stay quiet about it.”

Michael heard every word Marie said as she continued explaining the entire story. She couldn’t help but cry and Michael, still infuriated put his feelings aside and comforted her as much as he could.

“Thank you, Marie. You really are an angel.” He said wiping her tears.
“Why would they do that to you?” She asked between sniffles.

“Lisa still thinks we can be together. Now that she knows about Diana, she’s gone over the deep end.”

He and Marie both left the room and Michael made arrangements for one of his guards to take her back to the hotel.

“Don’t let Diana leave no matter what and please tell her everything you just told me.”
“I will, I promise.”

“I need to find out where those two are.”
“Be careful, Michael.”
“Don’t worry about me. I’ll see you back at the hotel.”

He kissed her forehead and walked her to his guard’s unmarked SUV where she safely got inside and headed for the hotel.

Michael knew he needed to find Gerwin and Lisa before they both made matters worse. He wanted to console his future wife so badly but had to get rid of the ex first. The only way he could take one step forward would be to take one step back. He signaled one of his guards to give him the keys to his car. Not caring about his own safety, Michael got in the driver side and turned on the ignition.

“WHOA! WHERE ARE YOU GOING WITH MY CAR?” His guard asked.
“Get in. He’s going to need someone to hold me back.”
“From what?”
“ME BEATING THE SHIT OUT OF HIM!”

Seeing so much rage in Michael’s eyes made his guard afraid for his own life. He jumped in the passenger seat as Michael drove away screeching the tires and speeding out of the venue parking lot. He was on a mission. A mission to find Gerwin and to destroy Lisa’s image even if it meant tarnishing his own. He had his share of deception and no longer had a tolerance for it. At that moment, sensibility had left him and all he had on his mind was payback. No one was going to get in the way of his relationship with his fiancé ever again. NO ONE.