CHAPTER FOUR:

Recapturing What Was Lost

I couldn’t stop screaming as I read his words. I was so loud that Marie heard me and came running into my office. “Ana! What’s wrong?” I hid the papers and cloth in my drawer so she wouldn’t see them. “Marie, call Jasmine in here please.” “Ok, but are you alright?” “I’m fine. Just call her for me.” She ran and immediately brought Jasmine to my office. She closed the door and saw me on the floor completely broken down and emotional.

“Diana, what is it?” “Jas, he found me. He found me!” “Well, of course he did.” “I never wanted to see him again after what happened. Now after all these years, he shows up in my life again.” “Ana, you were bound to see him again. I just wasn’t expecting it to be like this and so soon.” “Jas, I’m sorry for treating you the way I did. Thank you for trying to help. I was just praying it wouldn’t be him of all people. “I warned you that it could be.” “How did he find out?” “I have no idea. I was about to tell him but Waleed came in the room before I could.”

“Jas, I can’t accept him as my client.” “WHAT? Are you crazy?” “There is NO WAY in hell I can work with him. It’s not going to happen.” “Ana, you’re not thinking clearly.” “My thinking is perfectly fine. Do you really think after everything that happened between us I can just act like it means nothing now and can help bring his tour to life?” “Ana, you have to do this. You will regret it if you don’t.” “I will regret it even more if I DO!” “Just listen. You’re really disoriented right now.”

“If you refuse him as your client, it will be all over the news and media that Diana Dean turned down the biggest entertainer in the world for the second leg of his European tour. You will lose creditability and NO artist will EVER come to you because they will say anyone who is stupid enough to turn down Michael Jackson doesn’t deserve ANYONE’S business.” I realized she was right. “Whatever personal relationship you two had ended in New York in that hospital room. I’m sure the two of you can let that stay in the past and have a professional relationship now.”

“Jas, I really can’t do this. I don’t want anything to do with him.” “You know that’s not true.” “YES, IT IS!” “No, it isn’t.” “Why do you think that?” “Because you still wear the man’s ring on your finger and haven’t taken it off in five years.” “That’s to keep the guys away from hitting on me.” “You have his pictures on your desk.” “To promote my business.” “You moved to Los Angeles. The same city he lives in.” “I didn’t move here because of him. I moved here because LA is where all the celebrities are and it was the best place for me to open this office.” “You’ve also been single ever since you two broke up and never let any other guy come near you.” “That’s because men are intimidated by me. I’m a successful businesswoman and no man can handle a woman who’s got more going for her than he does.”

“It’s obvious you are in denial about this whole thing.” “I am NOT. I wasn’t expecting him to find me here. I even registered this business under YOUR name for that reason.” “I know that, but your name didn’t change. Just your location did.” “I thought that would be enough.” “It doesn’t matter now. The point is, he found you and was meant to come back in your life at this time. He needs your help now and you have to create this tour from the ground up. If anyone can do it, it’s you. Please accept him, Diana. If you do this, you will get the exposure TSG has been looking for. If you don’t, your career will be over for good.”

“Jas, why are you always right?” “Because I’m your friend.” She hugged me then helped me pull myself together. “Jas, look at this.” I showed her the gold cloth and she smiled at me saying she was happy to see it. “He still loves you, Diana.” “I know.” “You need to tell him the truth.” “NO, JAS.” “Ana, he’s not stupid. He’ll figure it out.” “Not if I can help it.” “What are you going to do? Act like you don’t remember him?” “Exactly. I’m going to behave like I’m meeting him for the second time after the hospital visit and go from there.”

“How long will you run from the truth?” “He can’t know, Jas. He just can’t.” “Why are you so afraid to tell him?” “Because I can’t be with him. I wasn’t ready then and I’m not ready now.” “I think you are.” “No, I’m not.” “Diana, it’s been five years. You’re not that girl in your mid-20’s anymore. You’re mature, responsible, educated, beautiful and a successful businesswoman. You are the PERFECT match for him.” “I’m not going down that road again. Does Marie know?” “Not yet. I’ll tell her.” I sat on the couch trying to calm myself down. “Diana, you can do this. I know you can. Marie and I will be there with you in Europe to pick you up if you fall.”

“Jas, how is he?” “He’s good. Still looks amazingly beautiful.” “Did he ask about me?” “Of course.” “What did you tell him?” “Like I said, I couldn’t say anything. Waleed walked in the room.” “How does he sound?” “Ana, I know why you’re asking. You’re still in love with him!” “JAS!” “It’s the truth!” “It is NOT! I’m just curious.” “He looks and sounds exactly the same except he’s older now and his skin is lighter.” “What does his voice sound like?” “JUST ADMIT IT! YOU STILL LOVE HIM!!” “I DON’T!” “I won’t win. You are way too stubborn.” She got up to leave then I asked her again what he sounded like. “You’ll find out yourself. I’m not telling you. I have to tell Marie now so she can scream and get it out of her system.” “Bring her in here please. We don’t need her alarming the entire building and the other staff members.”

Jasmine called Marie in my office so she could tell her the good news. “Marie, as you know we have a new client.” “Well duh!” “Ana, where are the papers?” I went to my desk and handed them to her face down. “You know every new client has to be entered in our system by you and then you make a proposal agreement for Ana and the client to sign together?” “Yes, I know my job.” “Well, this is one proposal you are going to LOVE putting together.” Jasmine looked over at me and I shook my head giving her the signal to tell her.

“This is our new client.” Jasmine showed her the front page where Michael’s signature was. “Cover your ears, Jas!” Surprisingly, Marie didn’t overreact at all. “Marie, what’s wrong with you? Did you not read the name?” “Yeah, I did. I already knew it was him.” “WHAT? HOW?” We both said shocked. “He called and told me.” “HE DID?” I asked. “WHEN? WHAT DID HE SAY? WHAT DID HE SOUND LIKE?” Jasmine was laughing at my reaction. “A while ago when you two were arguing in here. He called to say hi and tell me he’s our new client.”

“That little sneak!” Jasmine said. “I told him I’d tell you!” “He said you were going to. That’s why I stayed quiet until you did. I did my screaming on the phone with him earlier. I’m good now.” “Marie, why didn’t you say anything?” “Because Michael asked me not to.” “SINCE WHEN DO YOU LISTEN TO HIM?” “Since you told me to obey our client’s wishes.” Just then, she lost control and screamed her head off jumping up and down. “HE’S BACK! HE’S BACK!” Jasmine couldn’t contain herself either and started jumping letting Michael’s signed documents fly across the room. “GIRLS! WE’RE AT WORK!” “Come on! You know you’re excited too!”

“Marie, did he ask about me?” “He sure did.” “Did you tell him this is my company?” “Sorry, can’t tell.” “Why not?” “It’s company policy never to disclose what the client asks or tells us in confidence.” “MARIE! This is MY company!” “I know it is. But I promised him I wouldn’t tell you anything that we talked about.” “You work for ME, not HIM!” “True, but I love him to death and would never say or do anything to violate his trust.”

“NOW she actually does her job!” Jasmine said. “Girls, we have a lot of work to do. When are they scheduled to come back?” “Tomorrow morning.” “OH MY GOD. I have to get my hair done, my nails done, get a new dress and buy new shoes!” Marie and Jasmine looked at each other and couldn’t help but laugh. “What’s so funny?” “Do you hear yourself? ‘I don’t love him anymore. He means nothing to me, Jas!’” “STOP IT.” “Marie, he’s the past. I’ve moved on and you should too.” “GIRLS!!” “Ana, you still love him!” “I DO NOT!” “RIGHT.” “Come on, Marie. Let’s get back to work so Mrs. Jackson can schedule her beauty appointments.” “Don’t forget your bikini wax!”

“I’M GOING TO KILL YOU TWO!” They left my office singing his songs and making fun of me. “By the way Ana--” Marie said as she and Jasmine both came back. “You won’t be seeing him here. You have a business meeting with him alone at London West.” “LONDON WEST HOTEL IN BEVERLY HILLS?” “That’s the one.” “Ana, you better get some lubricant!” Jasmine said. “SHUTUP! THAT IS NOT GOING TO HAPPEN.” “YET.” “I’m serious! The man is divorced. We have to respect that.” They both started to laugh again. “Why do you keep laughing?” “Because we know how full of crap you are!” Marie said. “OK, GET OUT. Both of you!”

“Ana, we love you. But we know you love him too.” “I’ll prove it to you. Jas, you’re coming with me tomorrow.” “Sorry, no can do. He’s assigned Marie and I our own projects to keep us busy while you’re with him tomorrow.” “WHAT? He’s giving YOU work to do?” “Just some things to prepare for the tour. Weren’t you the one who said we have to do whatever the client wants to make sure they are happy?” “I can’t believe you two are ganging up on me like this.” “Enjoy your \*ahem\* business meeting with him.” Marie said as she and Jas left my office giggling.

I couldn’t believe what I was hearing. My heart was racing. I knew I had to look spectacular so he would go crazy at the first sight of me. “Girls! Clear my schedule. I’m going shopping!” “Go get ‘em, Diana!” Jasmine said. “Email me your current projects and messages. I’ll take care of them for you.” “Thanks Jas. Marie, do you have the address?” “Be here tomorrow morning at 9. He’s sending a limo for you.” “Still the same Michael. Always has to be fancy.” “Was he fancy in bed?” “JAS!!” “I’m kidding. But was he?” “I AM NOT HAVING THAT CONVERSATION WITH YOU!”

“See you both tomorrow.” “Be sure to wear some lingerie.” “STOP!” “Better yet, don’t wear ANY!” “That’s enough. I’m still your boss!” “Yes, Mrs. Jackson!” Marie said as she saluted me. “I’M OUT OF HERE.” As I waited for the elevator, I asked Jasmine to walk me to my car. When we got in the elevator, I told her I was worried. “Jas, what if something happens between us again?” “Isn’t that what you want?” “Stop kidding around. I’m serious.” “Ok. Just tell him you want to keep things strictly professional and ask him to respect that.”

“Jas, we both know that’s not going to work.” “Well, it’s your decision, Ana. You hold the power to your emotions. It’s all about will and I know you have it.” “But Jas, this is Michael. The guy that I gave my all to. The guy that got me pregnant.” “I know, Ana. But that was then, this is now. Things are different. He’s older, you’re older. You’re not a bunch of crazy kids in love. You’ve both been through a lot these past few years. You’ll be fine.” “What if all those feelings start coming back?” “I can’t answer that, Diana. If it’s meant to be, it will happen. If it doesn’t, then you know it’s not. Who knows, maybe he just wants to share his pain with you. He may not even be interested in you that way. You both could start a beautiful friendship first. Especially now that you’re business partners.”

She was starting to make a lot of sense. “You might be right.” “But remember, tell him the truth.” “I will.” “About EVERYTHING.” “No, not everything.” “Yes, Ana.” “Not yet. It’s too soon. I’ll see how far things go and figure it out from there.” “Ok, keep me posted?” “I will.” “You need me to go with you anywhere today?” “Come over tonight. I need all the coaching I can get.” “Sure. I’ll go home first and make dinner for David and little man then come over.” “I love you, Jas.” “Me too.” As Jasmine hugged me, a thought came to her mind. “Ana, you have to tell him about this too.” She placed her hand underneath my chest.

“OH MY GOD, MY TATTOO!” “Will you show him?” “I can’t, Jas. Then he’ll know.” “You can’t hide the truth from him. Tell him you regained your memory that day.” “Jas, he’ll be crushed and will hate me.” “You’ll hate yourself more for not being honest with him. If you don’t tell him, I will. ABOUT EVERYTHING.” “You wouldn’t dare.” “Don’t test me. TELL HIM.” I took a deep breath and agreed with her.

“If you feel overwhelmed, call me. I’ll meet you down there.” “In Beverly Hills?” “Ana, I’d go anywhere for you. Did David and I not move here for you?” “I know. There are no words to express how grateful I am to have you and Marie here with me. Ever since my parents died, I’ve been so alone.” “That’s why we moved here. If he asks, tell him about your situation too. I think he’ll be a great support system for you.” “I will, Jas. Thanks. See you later?” “For sure. I better go up and take care of your projects. Knowing Marie, she’s probably still dancing to Michael and ignoring all of the phone calls.”

She hugged me again then went back to the office. I got in my car and scheduled a few appointments to get myself pampered. As nervous as I was, I knew it would be great to see him again. I went home trying to keep an open mind and a sense of peace in my heart.

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

**Inside the Presidential Suite at the London West Hotel**

*“You know what time to pick her up tomorrow?”
“Yes, of course.”*

*“I want everything to be perfect.”*

*“Don’t worry. It’s all taken care of.”*

*“I’ve never been so nervous in my life.”*

*“Why, sir?”
“I’m seeing HER again.”*

*“I know, it’s a great thing.”*

*“I hope she still feels the same way.”*

*“I’m sure she does. If she didn’t she wouldn’t have agreed to see you.”*

**\*\*\* DIANA’S POINT OF VIEW THE NEXT MORNING \*\*\***

I came out of the elevator and the girls were already at work waiting for me to arrive. The look on their faces was priceless. “Good morning, girls!” “OH.MY.GOD.” Jasmine said as she examined me from top to bottom. “Ana, you look sensational!” “You like?” “Ana, you look so hot, I’D marry you!” Marie said. “It was A LOT of work but definitely worth the effort.” “I agree! You are going to make him BEG, Diana!” “That’s the idea.”

I cut my hair short, colored it light brown, had it flat ironed, bought a new dress by Versace, new high heel shoes, a new purse, had a manicure and pedicure done with red and pink colored nails, had my makeup done professionally and bought a new pair of diamond earrings. “I cannot believe you did all of this just for him.” Jasmine said as she followed me in my office. “I had to. Why should he be the only one looking desirable?” “I love your confidence.” “Besides, this is just a reminder of what he could’ve had.” “Could’ve or WILL?” “We’ll see.”

“I’m happy for you!” “Calm down. I’m kidding. No mixing business with pleasure.” “Oh come on! You won’t even kiss him?” “Well….it depends where.” “ANA!” “I’m joking. No, not even kissing. I want him to go crazy with anticipation.” “You are such a tease!” “Only with him. He deserves it. I have a feeling the aura at London West is going to be VERY irresistible.” “For who?” “SHUTUP! Did you and Marie get the documents and visual designs ready?” “Yes. We both came in this morning at 7 and made sure everything was done before you leave at 9. I’ve also included some wardrobe pictures and written reports he asked Marie and I to type so that he can go over them with you.”

“Jas, tell me the truth – am I over dressed?” “Absolutely not. You look ravishing. He is going to lose his mind when he sees you.” “Let’s hope that doesn’t happen to me. I know how that man dresses. BELIEVE ME, he knows what he’s doing too.” “Forget when he’s dressed, how about when he’s not?” “STOP.” “TELL ME!!” “Reality check: YOU’RE MARRIED WITH A SON!!” “Hey, it’s not like I’m cheating. I just want information. You never did tell us about his style in bed.” “There is NO STYLE, Jas. He’s just like every other man.” “Meaning?” “Meaning NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS!”

“Ana, COME ON!!”

“Fine. What do you want to know?”
“Was he good?”
“Yes.”
“Was he persistent?”
“Very.”

“Is he big?”
“JAS!”
“I’m dying to know!”
“He’s huge.”
“Did you taste it?”
“JAS! STOP.”

“ANA, YOU FREAK!!” “Ok, that’s it. I have to get ready. The limo will be here any minute.” “HEY MARIE!! GUESS WHAT ANA DID?!” I ran and grabbed her covering her mouth. “JAS, YOU TELL HER AND I SWEAR TO GOD I WILL BREAK YOUR LEGS AND PUT THEM IN YOUR ARMS!” “I wasn’t going to. I just wanted to make sure your judgment wasn’t clouded yet.” “It’s not going to be now leave me alone! I have to mentally prepare for this.” “I’m sure it won’t take that long for you to get out of that dress!” “JASMINE!” “Ok, I’ll stop but I really hope you have lubricant in your briefcase!” She said as she ran out of my office laughing.

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

“Ana, I took care of your messages and projects for the next two days. You’re officially a free woman now.” “Thank you, Jas.” Marie said one of Michael’s assistant’s called saying his driver should be here in ten minutes. “I totally lost track of time. Do I still look ok?” “Ana, you look like a super star, but you seem REALLY nervous.” “I AM!” “Don’t worry. It’s going to be GREAT.” “That’s what I’m afraid of.” “Just be yourself. Stay positive, upbeat and professional. Keep your head on straight and walk out of there like the boss that you are!”

“I’ll try, Jas. But just in case, keep your cell phone near you at ALL times.” “I will, I promise.” A few minutes later, Marie came in my office saying Michael’s driver was on his way up. “Oh god. Oh god. Oh god.” “Ana, RELAX!” Marie said as she and Jasmine came up to me and touched up my hair and face. “You are going to be fine. You’re acting like this is your first time seeing him!” “IT IS IN FIVE YEARS!” “Think of it as a reunion.” Marie said. “Yeah, with LOTS of benefits.” “SHUTUP, JAS!”

Marie heard the elevator and ran to see the driver. Jasmine did a few last minute touch ups to my hair and face and walked me to the door. To my surprise, Michael’s driver was still the same person. “OH MY GOD! CHRIS!” “I remember you, pretty lady.” I ran and hugged him. “How are you?” “Good. I see you are doing well.” “Yes, this is my business.” I introduced him to Jasmine and Marie who couldn’t stop asking him a million questions about Michael.

“We should get going. He’s waiting for you and we have a 35 minute drive ahead of us.” “HE’S ALREADY THERE?” “Of course. He’s been there since last night making sure everything is perfect for you.” “He hasn’t changed a bit.” “Not when it comes to you.” “Oooooh, I’m so excited!” Marie said. “You are SO lucky, Ana!” “It’s just business. Nothing else.” Chris scoffed as he heard me. “Right.” “IT IS!” “Uh huh, that’s what he said too.” The three of them started laughing together. “Why doesn’t anyone believe me?” “One word: HISTORY.” Jasmine said. “I bet that’s why he named the tour that.” “It is.” Chris said. “WHAT?”

Just then, the three of them huddled together and started talking. “Did you see his new gold wardrobe?” Marie asked Chris. “I sure did. I was the one who drove it to each venue.” “HE LOOKS INCREDIBLE IN IT!” Jasmine said. “HELLO? Did you all forget about me?” “Sorry, Diana. We should be going.” “Goodbye, you two.” “GOODBYEEE, DIANA!” Chris couldn’t help but laugh as he went inside the elevator with me. I heard Marie answer the phone saying “Mrs. Jackson’s office.” “MARIE, THAT’S NOT FUNNY!” “It wasn’t meant to be.” Jasmine said. “We know it’ll be true in a matter of time.”

“I’ll see you both later. Jas, keep your phone next to you!” The doors closed and we were on our way downstairs. “So fill me in, how have you been?” I asked. “Same old. No big changes for me. I see you’ve blossomed into something beautiful.” “Thank you. I’m just trying to make a living.” “From what I can see, you’ve done very well.” As we made our way into the limo, I wanted to have a better idea about what I was getting into so I asked Chris a few questions to try and help ease my mind.

“Chris, how has he been over the years?”

“He’s been through a lot.”

“I heard. Is he ok now?”
“He’s slowly recovering, but I don’t think he’ll ever heal completely.”

“What happened between him and his wife?”
“EX-wife.”
“Right. Sorry.”

“She wasn’t there for him the way he needed her to be.”

“Was she mean to him?”
“At times.”
“SHE WAS? That cow!”

Chris laughed as he explained their relationship briefly to me and said he seemed very unhappy with Lisa Marie near the end of their two year marriage. “I think in all honesty he was just trying to find someone to replace you in his life.” “You think so?” “Michael became even more of a recluse after you two separated from each other. He didn’t tell me what happened and I never questioned him about it. All I know is I saw him decline rapidly and wanted to help him get out of whatever it was that was destroying him.” “Did you?” “I think so. I was the one who suggested he get back on stage.”

“I’m glad he listened to you.” “Me too. I think performing around the world really helped him overcome his demons.” “Marie watched him on TV and said she could feel something wasn’t right about him. He had lost his spark.” “She was right. Don’t tell him I told you this but there were times when he was VERY sick on tour. He had a string of doctors and nurses around him 24 hours a day. Some of them were even at his bedside all night.”

I was shattered hearing Chris’s words about what Michael had gone through. “I’m sure when you see him, he will tell you everything.” “I think so too. I really hope I’m strong enough to handle it.” He continued driving and within 30 minutes, we reached the hotel. My emotions were all over the place and my heart felt like it had stopped beating. “We’re here.” Chris said as he let me out of the limo and walked me into the lounge.

“I remember when you took me to the hotel in Rochester.” He laughed. “That was a different time for all of us.” “It sure was. Will there be security upstairs?” “Yes, but just outside. No one will search you here.” “Thank goodness.” “Except Michael might want to.” “Now, don’t you start with me!” He laughed as he escorted me in the elevator and then to the very top floor. “Oh man, is he all the way at the top again?” “He’s rented the top seven floors.” “Again?” “He always does. It’s a security thing.”

Chris walked me across a long hallway then opened a door at the very end with an access card. “He awaits you.” “Thank you so much.” “Don’t worry, it’ll be ok. He asked that you wait for him on the patio. It’s straight down and to the right.” I thanked him again as he closed the door and left. Once again, Michael had sent me to a luxurious room full of amazing furniture and art work. I noticed the patio doors were open so I went and stood outside looking at the beautiful blue lake in front of me. Suddenly, a strong gust of wind came rushing through and I noticed several thousand rose petals moving swiftly across the ground near my feet.

As I bent down to pick up a few of them, I noticed something sparkle against the pavement as I stood up...