

**Kendall Stewart (1)**

The words slashed her heart.

Divorce Decree.

The knock on the door pulled Kendall's eyes away.

"Hey."

Her hands covered the packet resting on her lap.

"What are you doing here, Anthony?"

He strutted in as if he hadn't heard the venom in her voice.

"I had to pick up a proposal from one of the designers. And...I wanted to check on you." He slid into the chair like he had an invitation.

She stared at her ex-husband and hated that he looked the same as the day they'd met six years ago - like a super-size order of chocolate decadence. But that was then. Now, she had to find a way to look past the mocha-colored skin and light brown eyes, the strong angle of his jaw and the muscles that made him a man. She had to close her heart to his rhythm - the way he walked, talked. She had to stop all of that and just remember what he'd done.

"No need to check on me; I'm fine."

"Good."

"I know you got the divorce papers." She lifted the packet. "Mine were just delivered. And, I'm fine," she

repeated, and nonchalantly tossed the package onto her desk.

He nodded, his smile gone. "I know you are."

"So, why are you here?" she asked again.

He leaned forward. "Because I care." He paused.

"And, I'm sorry about all of this...."

She held up her hands. "You've said that before and I've heard it enough. No need for sorry anymore because I no longer care."

He sat as if there was more he wanted to say. But his lips stayed pressed together as if he knew his regret meant nothing.

Kendall stared at him as he stood and walked toward the door. She couldn't wait for him to get out of her sight. And then the other part of her heart yelled, "Wait."

When he turned, she realized she had to say something.

"Ah, the meeting with...Lawrence." She paused.

"Lawrence Orbach."

He frowned. "We have a meeting with the banker?"

"No. We don't. I do."

He sighed. "Kendall, you don't have to do this. This business means as much to me as it does to you."

"But it's mine and I want you out."

The pain that spread across his face was familiar. It was the same every time she said those words, in that way. He opened his mouth, but then surrendered. "Do what you have to do," he said before he left her alone.

Kendall banged her fist against the desk. She hated when he saw her emotion. Hated that he still got to the weakest part of her.

She should have let him walk out the office, but she'd stopped him just so she could have a little more time. It wasn't like she had a meeting with their banker. She didn't need one. Already knew that she couldn't afford to buy Anthony out. And in their divorce settlement, they'd agreed to run the business they started five years ago - before they were even husband and wife - together.

This should have been the best time of her life. And it would have been - if Anthony hadn't tossed a torpedo into the middle of their world - and her dreams - thirteen months before.

It was such a cliché - the way he'd ruined their marriage. How she'd come home from a business trip - early to make up for the argument they'd had before she left. How she'd walked into her home. Her bedroom. And in her bed, her husband. But he was not alone.

Even now, Kendall could hear the screams. But she wasn't sure who the cries were from. She'd never figured out if they'd been from her. Or Anthony. Or Sabrina.

"Oh, my God!" She did remember squealing those words. She remembered wanting to run, but shock held her prisoner, sentencing her to stare at the sight.

"Kendall!"

She'd heard her husband's voice, but her eyes couldn't fix on him. Not even as he bolted toward her. Her eyes were trained on the woman who held the sheet over her bare chest.

"Kendall!" he'd yelled her name again.

It was his touch that freed her from her catatonic state. She'd stumbled down the stairs and out of their home. Even though thick tears clouded her eyes as she screeched out of the driveway, she could see where Anthony stood, at their front door, yelling, wrapped in his barely-closed bathrobe.

She'd had only one place to go, which was why Anthony found her.

"Kendall!" He'd sounded relieved as he rushed into her office.

She'd faced him with swollen eyes and a busted heart.

"How could you?" she'd cried.

His eyes were as puffed up as hers and she wondered why. He didn't have any reason to hurt.

"Kendall," he'd said softly. "I'm so sorry."

"How could you?" she'd asked again through tears that threatened to drown them both.

The sorrow in his eyes moved her to the brink of hysteria. "I'm sorry," he'd said over and over. "We can try...to work through this." He paused. "It was just this once."

Like that even mattered.

He'd said, "Please, let's try."

She'd said, "Why Sabrina? Why my sister?"

Kendall squeezed her eyes shut now, pushing back that memory. That had been more than a year ago, but just the thought of her husband and her sister could still stop her from breathing. She wished she could push all of that pain into the past. She would have been able to - if only her heartache had stopped right there.