

26. Divorce

In 2008, the chapter titled "Divorce" follows Justine as she navigates through the complexities of her marriage with Elon Musk, post the tragic death of their son Nevada. The couple's attempt to find solace through expanding their family, resulting in twins Griffin and Xavier, followed by triplets Kai, Saxon, and Damian, quickly transitions into a tale of escalating domestic tension amidst their opulent lifestyle shift from a cramped Silicon Valley apartment to a sprawling mansion in Bel Air.

Justine reflects on moments of genuine connection and contentment with Musk, contrasting these memories with the stark reality of their frequent, intense arguments that escalated to personal insults. These disputes mirrored Musk's combative nature, further highlighted by Justine's insight into Elon's upbringing and psychological makeup, directly linking his confrontational demeanor to his father's influence and his own neurological conditioning.

The marriage's strain is exacerbated by Musk's social awkwardness, juxtaposed with their participation in elite social circles, and his work-induced emotional detachment during the simultaneous crises at SpaceX and Tesla. Justine's rising discontent is underscored by Musk's lack of empathy, a trait she desperately sought from him, particularly after their shared loss and during Elon's professional turbulence, which he often kept from her. Despite Musk's acknowledgment of the importance of empathy, his rationalization of emotional detachment as a business asset echoes throughout their deteriorating relationship.

Justine's pursuit of psychotherapy to navigate her grief and understand Elon better starkly contrasts with Musk's dismissal of therapy, tied back to his challenging childhood and emotional reticence, further deepening their emotional divide. Their marriage's critical point arrives post Justine's car accident, when her demand for a more engaged and reciprocal partnership leads to a brief counseling attempt, ultimately culminating in their divorce. The chapter poignantly closes with contrasting narratives of the separation's initiation, reflecting the complexity and emotional weight of their marital breakdown.