

Chapter 29

You are being provided with a book chapter by chapter. I will request you to read the book for me after each chapter. After reading the chapter, 1. shorten the chapter to no less than 300 words and no more than 400 words. 2. Do not change the name, address, or any important nouns in the chapter. 3. Do not translate the original language. 4. Keep the same style as the original chapter, keep it consistent throughout the chapter. Your reply must comply with all four requirements, or it's invalid. I will provide the chapter now.

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Los Angeles is warm and sunny all year round. Driving through the city, sometimes it's hard to remember what season it is. Everywhere you look, people are wearing sunglasses and drinking cold drinks out of straws, smiling and laughing underneath the clear blue sky. But in January 2008, winter really felt like winter, even in California, because I felt alone and cold and I was hospitalized.

I probably shouldn't admit to this, but I was hell on wheels. I was taking a lot of Adderall.

I was horrible, and I will admit to doing wrong. I was so angry about what happened with Kevin. I'd tried so hard with him. I'd given my everything. And he'd turned on me.

I had started dating a photographer. I was completely infatuated with him. He'd been a paparazzo, and I understood that people thought he was up to no good, but all I could see at the time was that he was chivalrous and helped me out when the others got too aggressive.

Back then I would speak up if I didn't like something—I would certainly let you know. And I wouldn't think twice about it. (If I had been hit in the face in Vegas—as happened to me in July 2023—I would've hit the person back, 100 percent.)

I was fearless.

We were always being chased by the paparazzi. The chases were really insane—sometimes they were aggressive, and sometimes they were playful, too. Many of the paps were trying to make me look bad, to get the money shot to show “Oh, she's lost and she looks crazy right now.” But sometimes they wanted me to look good, too.

One day, the photographer and I were being chased, and this was one of those moments with him that I'll never forget. We were driving fast, near the edge of a cliff, and I don't know why, but I decided to pull a 360, right there on the edge. I

honestly didn't even know I could do a 360—it was completely beyond me, so I think it was God. But I stuck it; the back wheels of the car stopped on what seemed like the very edge, and if the wheels had rotated maybe three more times, we would have just gone off the cliff.

I looked at him; he looked at me.

"We could have just died," I said.

I felt so alive.

As parents we're always telling our children, "Stay safe. Don't do this; don't do that." But even though safety is the most important thing, I also think it's important to have awakenings and challenge ourselves to feel liberated, to be fearless and experience everything the world has to offer.

I didn't know then that the photographer was married; I had no clue that I was essentially his mistress. I only found that out after we'd broken up. I'd just thought he was a lot of fun and our time together was incredibly hot. He was ten years older than me.

Everywhere I went—and for a while I went out a lot—the paparazzi were there. And yet, for all the reports about my being out of control, I don't know that I was ever out of control in a way that warranted what came next. The truth is that I was sad, beyond sad, missing my kids when they were with Kevin.

The photographer helped me with my depression. I longed for attention, and he gave me the attention I needed. It was just a lustful relationship. My family didn't like him, but there was a lot about them I didn't like, either.

The photographer encouraged me to rebel. He let me sow my oats and he still loved me for it. He loved me unconditionally. It wasn't like my mom screaming at me for partying. He said, "Girl, go, you got it, do your thing!" He wasn't like my father, who set impossible conditions for his love.

And so, with the photographer's support, I 100 percent did my thing. And it felt radical to be that wild. That far from what everyone wanted me to be.

I talked as if I were out of my mind. I was so loud—everywhere I went, even at restaurants. People would go out to eat with me, and I would lie down on the table. It was a way of saying "Fuck you!" to any person who came my way.

I mean, I will say it: I was bad.

Or maybe I wasn't bad so much as very, very angry.

I wanted to escape. I didn't have my kids, and I needed to get away from the media and the paparazzi. I wanted to leave LA, so the photographer and I went on a trip to Mexico.

It was like I'd moved to a safe house. Everywhere else there'd be a million people outside my door. But when I left LA, even though it was for a short time, I felt far from everything. This worked—I felt better for a little while. I should have taken more advantage of it.

It seemed like my relationship with the photographer was getting more serious,

and as that happened, I sensed that my family was trying to get closer to me—in a way that made me uneasy.

My mom called me one day and said, “Britney, we feel like something’s going on. We hear that the cops are after you. Let’s go to the beach house.”

“The cops are after me?” I said. “For what?” I hadn’t done anything illegal. That I knew for sure. I’d had my moments. I’d had my wild spell. I’d been high on Adderall and acted crazy. But I didn’t do anything criminal. In fact, as she knew, I’d been with girlfriends the prior two days. My mom and I had had a sleepover with my cousin Alli and two other girlfriends.

“Just come to the house!” she said. “We want to talk to you.”

So I went to the house with them. The photographer met me there.

My mother was acting suspicious.

When the photographer got there, he said, “Something’s up, right?”

“Yeah,” I said. “Something’s really off.” All of a sudden, there were helicopters going around the house.

“Is that for me?” I asked my mom. “Is this a joke?”

It wasn’t a joke.

Suddenly there was a SWAT team of what seemed like twenty cops in my house.

“What the fuck did I do?” I kept shouting. “I didn’t do anything!”

I know I had been acting wild but there was nothing I’d done that justified their treating me like I was a bank robber. Nothing that justified upending my entire life.

I’d later come to believe something had changed that month, since the last time I was brought to the hospital for evaluation. My father had struck up a very close friendship with Louise “Lou” Taylor, who he worshipped. She was front and center during the implementation of the conservatorship that would later allow them to control and take over my career. Lou, who had just started a new company called Tri Star Sports & Entertainment Group, was directly involved in calling the shots right before the conservatorship. At the time, she had few real clients. She basically used my name and hard work to build her company. Conservatorships, also called guardianships, are usually reserved for people with no mental capacity, people who can’t do anything for themselves. But I was highly functional. I’d just done the best album of my career. I was making a lot of people a lot of money, especially my father, who I found out took a bigger salary than he paid me. He paid himself more than \$6 million while paying others close to him tens of millions more.

The thing is, you can have a conservatorship that lasts for two months and then the person gets on track and you let them control their life again, but that wasn’t what my father wanted. He wanted far more.

My dad was able to set up two forms of conservatorship: what’s called

“conservatorship of the person” and “conservatorship of the estate.” The conservator of the person is designated to control details of the conservatee’s life, like where they live, what they eat, whether they can drive a car, and what they do day-to-day. Even though I begged the court to appoint literally anyone else—and I mean, anyone ♦ the street would have been better—my father was given the job, the same man who’d made me cry if I had to get in the car with him