Chapter 14

Ghosts

Cassandra Cooper's Cadillac Escalade was a mobile fortress, a rolling monument to her success and her boundless ego. The leather smelled of money, the tinted windows made the world outside look like a movie she was watching from a safe distance, and the sound system was tuned to a frequency that made the bass vibrate in her chest like a heartbeat. She was driving south on the Pacific Coast Highway, the ocean a blue blur to her left, the sun setting behind her in a riot of orange and purple that she didn't notice because she was too busy thinking about herself.

She was thinking about her new house in the Malibu Colony, the house that was being built on the lot she had purchased with the money she had earned from the movie that had made her the most bankable actress in Hollywood. She was thinking about the dinner she was going to host next month, the guest list she was compiling in her head, the people she was going to invite and the people she was going to pretend she had forgotten to invite because they were not quite high enough on the food chain to be worth the effort of a phone call. She was thinking about her next movie, the script that was sitting on her coffee table in a stack of other scripts that she had not read because she was too busy being Cassandra Cooper to read about someone else's fantasy of being Cassandra Cooper.

She was thinking about her husband, the man who was supposed to be her husband, the man who was supposed to be the father of her children if she could find a man who was worthy of being the father of her children, which was a problem that she was not thinking about because it was a problem that was not worth thinking about when there was so much else to think about and so little time to think about it in between the meetings and the calls and the photo shoots and the parties and the endless, exhausting, glorious, boring, terrible, wonderful life that was hers and hers alone and that she was not sharing with anyone because sharing was for people who had something to share and she was Cassandra Cooper and she had everything she needed and she was not lonely because she was never alone and she was never alone because she was never still and she was never still because she was never quiet and she was never quiet because she was never alone and the circle was perfect and she was perfect and everything was perfect and she was not lonely and she was not thinking about the fact that she was not thinking about the fact that