

Chapter 31

Chapter 31 represents a critical point in my struggle with the conservatorship, where I began to question the contradictions and the manipulation at play in my life. The reason given for the conservatorship was that I couldn't manage the basic aspects of my life—feeding myself, managing money, or even being a mother. Yet, after it was established, I was sent to work, appearing on *How I Met Your Mother* and embarking on a grueling world tour. This contradiction didn't make sense to me. On one hand, I was deemed too incapacitated to make any decisions for myself, yet on the other hand, I was expected to perform for the public, traveling the world, appearing on TV shows, and maintaining a career as though nothing had changed. The reality of being under constant surveillance while being pushed to work was maddening. My sense of self was being constantly undermined, and I began to feel like I was simply an object for others to control and use, with no regard for my well-being or personal freedom.

Over time, it became clear to me that the conservatorship was less about helping me and more about benefitting my family. I noticed how my mother and my brother's girlfriend were going out, living their lives without restrictions, getting short haircuts, and enjoying wine while paparazzi eagerly captured these moments. It seemed staged, like a carefully constructed narrative to present them as carefree, while I remained trapped. My father, who controlled every aspect of my life, went as far as taking away my personal relationships, even telling me who I could and couldn't date. I was even banned from driving, and my entire existence felt controlled by his decisions. I was stripped of my autonomy, and my very womanhood seemed to be taken away. The sense that my family was using the conservatorship to their own advantage, while I was left with no say in the matter, was crushing. I was constantly reminded that their desires and interests came before my own, and it felt like I was being punished for no reason other than to serve their needs.

What hurt the most was the realization that my father, a man with a history of addiction, bankruptcy, and failures in business, was given the authority to control my life. He had caused me fear and trauma as a child, and yet, the state of California had allowed him to take over my affairs. It was difficult for me to understand how, despite all his personal flaws and failures, my father was trusted with the power to make life-altering decisions for me. He wasn't the role model anyone would want in charge of their life, but somehow, he was the one deciding my fate. I thought about my own achievements, my own career, and I couldn't understand why the system had allowed him to overshadow all that. The fact that someone so flawed was in control while I was stripped of my rights and freedoms felt like a slap in the face. It was a betrayal that left me questioning my entire reality and the fairness of the situation.

As I reflected on the situation, it became increasingly clear that my father wasn't interested in helping me; he was using the conservatorship to control me. He framed it as a necessary step for my "comeback," but I knew it wasn't about helping me rebuild my life. The idea that I had just released my best album and yet was being forced into a system of control was a harsh contradiction. It felt as though my father was manipulating the situation to serve his own interests, making it seem like the conservatorship was a perfect arrangement for our family. But was it perfect for me? I was being asked to work under the assumption that I was too unwell to make decisions, but at the same time, I was expected to travel the world and perform for thousands. I was forced to maintain the facade of being healthy and in control, even as I was being denied basic rights, like the freedom to make personal decisions. The more I reflected on it, the more I realized how damaging this situation was to my mental and emotional well-being. It wasn't just about my career; it was about my very identity being controlled and dictated by others.

This entire period of my life felt like I was playing a role in a story that wasn't my own. The expectations were placed on me by others, and I was stuck in a cycle of performing for the benefit of my family and the people around me. Despite everything, I tried to maintain a sense of normalcy, but the deeper I got into the conservatorship, the more I felt like I was losing myself. The contradictions were too stark to ignore, and

I started to see the control over my life for what it really was—an attempt to keep me in a perpetual state of dependency, unable to make any real decisions. This stark realization further pushed me into a mental and emotional battle, where my personal desires and freedom were constantly sacrificed for the sake of others' agendas.

