Our Ocean - The Buyout

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Draft 02

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INT. ISLAND CAFE - DAY

A tucked-away table, mismatched chairs, menus nobody's touching.

MIRIAM THORNE (40s, old money, new money, all the money, all the entitlement; she's heard of the word "no", it's just no one's ever said it to her) sits like she owns the building (she might).

JENKINS (Miriam's skinny, aging, hunched and overworked assistant, clinging to his last nerve) sets a folder in front of DR FITZIMMONS (late 40s, frizzed of hair, scattered of mind, catastrophically passionate), who's clutching a coffee and looking upset.

JENKINS
Dr Fitzimmons. As you can see, you signed a standard non-compete. To say nothing of an NDA. Also a clause about disparaging remarks made within a hundred nautical miles of Miriam's good name.

DR FITZ
I never signed anything like that!

JENKINS
(smiles condescendingly)
Didn't you?

Miriam examines her nails. Bored. Devastatingly bored.

MIRIAM
Hubert. I'm going to be honest with you, which I almost never am. I don't need your permission to finish what I started.

DR FITZ
And I don't need yours to stop you. I'm going to do what's right for the reef, Miriam. Fake contracts or no.

Miriam's smile doesn't move. Somewhere behind her eyes, a storm is brewing.

MIRIAM
That's adorable.
(to Jenkins)
Isn't that adorable.

JENKINS
So adorable, ma'am. Like a baby panda licking a penguin.

She gives him a look, then leans in to Dr Fitz. The threat, when it lands, is almost gentle.

MIRIAM
I can make your life very, very nice, Hubert. Or I can make it truly, truly awful. Epically awful. Billionaire awful.

PUSH IN on Miriam's eye.

INT. MIRIAM'S IMAGINATION - CAFE - CONTINUOUS

Same cafe, lit like a soap commercial. Dr Fitz, weeping with gratitude, pen already in hand, is already signing a new waiver with pen in fist.

DR FITZ (DREAM)
I'm so sorry. I don't know what I was thinking! You're so scary and so wonderful, here! I've signed it. What was I thinking?

Dream Miriam, crowned, waves like royalty. Dream Jenkins weeps proud tears.

BACK TO:

INT. ISLAND CAFE - DAY

Fitz stands. Chair scrapes. He means it.

DR FITZ
Do your worst.

Miriam looks up at him. Blinks. Reconsiders. She stands, too.

MIRIAM
You know, on reflection, let's be friends instead!

She clicks her fingers. Jenkins produces a blank cheque, pen already poised like he's done this before. He has.

DR FITZ
Huh?

MIRIAM
What if I write a number. A big, generous, lovely number. And you slide it into, say, the charity of your choice.

DR FITZ
(wary)
You mean you'll fund my research?

MIRIAM
Sure. Research. Whatever.

She holds the pen out. Doesn't write anything yet. Just waits, utterly certain of how this ends. Dr Fitz smiles.

DR FITZ
You know my answer, of course.