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To my husband

Fame is my life. The life I knew I would have, the life I made sure to have. Was I prepared to be so successful? Of course I was. I always believed that what the future had in store for me wasn't just an existence—it was a destiny.

When people talk about fame, they think of glitz and glamour, money, devoted fans, prestige, everybody recognizing you. But they should also consider the constant feeling of superiority, the intoxicating wealth, the nonstop commentary, the vanity, the hypocrisy, the impunity. Fame is a hard drug—a ferocious monster. And I sought it out, fought tooth and nail in my pursuit of it.

Extreme notoriety unleashed in me a beast, merciless and cruel. I might as well admit it: I got my hands dirty. At my level, everyone has skeletons in the closet. Anyone who claims otherwise is a liar. Fame is a war trophy, and no one is ever ready to give it up.

At thirty-two, I'm on top of the pyramid, and I got there all by myself. I don't believe in luck. I don't believe in using connections. I don't believe in the glass ceiling. I owe my success to hard work, talent, and meritocracy. If I'd been able to be honest the last time I won an award, I would have thanked only one person during my long speech at the ceremony: myself.

Three weeks on a desert island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. A place without running water or electricity, cut off from all contact with the outside world. That's the kind of fantasy that fame can buy. When you already have everything, you have to put a little imagination into your summer vacation.

Yesterday I spent ten hours on a private jet. We landed near Tahiti, or Fiji, or maybe it was Hawaii. I climbed on board a second plane, and then a seaplane. An hour later, there it was: an atoll, nearly lost within the immensity of the ocean.

I'm walking in a postcard: ocean as far as the eye can see, white sand, a magnificent lagoon. Flocks of seabirds are resting on the rocks. The landscape is lush; it must rain often here—the cistern is full. Coconut palms, banana trees, orange trees: I won't die of hunger. I look out toward the sea, trying to spot some other land, anything to anchor my eyes on. There's nothing.

My only shelter for the next three weeks is a charming little hut on the beach. It's built on stilts, with a terrace that faces the ocean. The high, sloping wooden structure supports a roof covered with woven palm leaves. Inside is all one room, simply furnished with a twin bed, a dresser, a table, and two chairs. There is a large cupboard with groceries: rice, fruit, dried fish, root vegetables, canned

goods, twenty-five gallons of mineral water. I open the drawers, finishing my inventory, then arrange my meager spoils on the floor: a portable stove, two canisters of gas, flippers, a scuba mask, a flashlight, a machete, a box of matches, mosquito netting, a water purifier, a fishing net, a globe, a first aid kit, a Bible. There's nothing on the walls—no decorations whatsoever, no clock, no mirror. A bit rustic for a vacation that costs half a million dollars. But everyone knows that there's an inverse correlation between the price of your trip and the strength of your Wi-Fi. What I'm paying for is being in the middle of nowhere, inaccessible to prying eyes, cell phones, the paparazzi—and my team's incessant requests. This year I'm giving myself the best gift of all: for everyone to leave me the fuck alone.