## **Story 1**

growing up I believed marriage was a lifelong unbreakable Bond my parents had a seemingly perfect relationship full of

unwavering love and devotion this belief shaped my worldview and I carried it into my marriage with Laura we met in

college she was outgoing and I was quiet our differences complimented each other and we quickly fell in love and planned

our future we married right after graduation full of Dreams life was busy

but fulfilling with two beautiful daughters Beth and Janie at the center of our world Laura kept her maiden name

which I respected as a sign of her independence we built a comfortable life and I believed we were the perfect

family but life through an unexpected curveball that unraveled our seemingly perfect world tonight my wife is with

her lover she confessed her Affair after I found text messages between them initially I didn't realize this marked

DET turn point for our family since then our lives have been chaotic tonight she

left dressed elegantly with an overnight bag awkwardly attempting to kiss me on the cheek which I evaded it's still hard

to accept her infidelity what does that say about me despite living in a modern era I struggled with this harsh reality

after going through various stages of grief I realized I had to live with her decision though I'm far from pleased now

I must figure out how to cope with the consequences my name is Jason Fairburn and my wife's name is Laura Staples we

have two daughters Beth and Janie after discovering my wife's infidelity I saw a lawyer to explore my options I was

filled with indignation and after spilling my emotions the lawyer explained what divorce would mean for me

despite the prevalence of weapons in Texas shooting a cheating spouse is illegal as all states are now no fault

family courts tend to favor the mother in custody cases unless she's a danger in Texas mothers typically get custody

the house furniture car and financial support as a man initiating divorce I would lose the house and most custody

seeing my kids only one night a week every other weekend and two weeks in summer I'd end up paying for my wife to

enjoy time with another man while I live in a cramped space and hope my kids don't forget me I asked my lawyer if I

could kick my wife out she frowned that's a bad idea Jason she could get a

cord order to return home claiming a hostile environment harmful to the kids and you'd be forced out that's not a

good idea so I'm totally screwed my lawyer whom I love dearly despite her huge retainer

suggested a tactic I'd heard before but thought was just a ridiculous rumor Cheaper to Keep Her or look the other

way basically if I tolerate her Affair I get to keep my house money and time with

the kids I tried visualizing both options and the thought of losing my kids in home was a nightmare realizing

that living without them wasn't an option I had to figure out my next steps despite my marriage vows feeling

meaningless now a few weeks later after calming down and resisting the urge to

lash out at my cheating wife I sat down with Laura to talk about our marriage surprisingly she was calm I grabbed a

beer and we sat at the kitchen table I began how are we going to stay married if you want another guy Jason you don't

understand I'm still your wife I still love you and we'll be together for the rest of our lives what I do with Scott

is just once a week because I need something you can't give me right now I was frustrated so I'm not giving you

pleasure anymore great I said my voice dripping with frustration no that's not

what I mean she responded trying to calm the situation well that's what it sounds like I was already yelling my anger

escalating Jason I love you and would never deny you anything she said trying to reassure me oh thanks that makes it

all better I'm really happy to get pity entertainment now and then sarcasm dripped from my words I went to the

kitchen for another beer feeling the need to escape Laura put her hands on my shoulders trying to offer Comfort Jason

I did everything wrong let's go to the bedroom and I'll show you how much I love you she suggested her voice filled

with regret why would you want to do that you just said I don't satisfy you why don't you go to your boyfriend

instead I couldn't take it anymore and stormed to my basement office slamming the door behind me thus began my life

with an Unfaithful wife who showed no remorse While She Was Out I moved all her stuff to the basement bedroom when

she got home all hell broke loose Jason where are my clothes she screamed her

voice echoing through the house since you didn't want to be with me and we're thinking about your boyfriend I thought

it best we sleep in separate bedrooms your stuff is in the basement you're welcome I said walking away now you

won't have to worry about bad fun with me anymore after that the house got very

cold damn what am I going to do now I'm not sleeping in that basement

bedroom as soon as Jason left I rearranged everything the kids Beth and

Janie watched confused once done I started making Jason's favorite dinner

meatloaf mashed potatoes and peas when he got home the meal was nearly ready I

told him to get the kids washed and ready for dinner he did and we sat down to eat the girls chatted Jason talked to

them but didn't look at me or say a word after dinner Jason cleaned up as was our

routine he got the girls ready for bed read them a story and turned out the light

he then went to our home office typing away on the computer when he came upstairs I was already in bed he took a

shower brushed his teeth and got into bed silently I tried to snuggle up but

he pulled my hand away and tucked the sheet between us the next few weeks were the same the house felt icy I believe

Jason will come around eventually he'll realize my time with Scott means nothing to our marriage I just have to be

patient a few months later I still hadn't touched Laura my frustration was growing daily to relieve stress I

started running at 5:00 a.m. the first days were brutal but by the third week it got easier I started enjoying the

early mornings and gradually increased my distance eventually walking over 6 miles a day I lost some weight and felt

better physically though not emotionally I needed a change and thought about buying a trailer and truck for camping I

knew Laura would question it but I had a ready response why do you need a boyfriend I took the kids to an RV Show

and and they were thrilled they made plans for each trailer we saw wanting to go camping and traveling although I had

a budget I quickly realized that modern camping trailers and trucks are expensive after much deliberation I

decided to buy a used 2-year-old Grand Design transcend model with bunk beds for the girls and a double bed for me it

had all the amenities we needed including 1 and A2 bathrooms two TVs and air conditioning the trailer was nearly

37 ft long next I found a 2-year-old GMC 2500 HD Crew Cab Denali with low mileage

and a diesel engine sold by an elderly couple they had health issues and planned to spend time in Portugal

instead of camping I got a good deal and bought the truck in total I invested about $80,000 in the truck and trailer I

plan to take my kids on trips around the country I wanted to show Laura that this is an important time in our kids lives

and she could choose to be part of it or not if she declined it would ultimately be her loss a few months later with her

boyfriend Scott so Laura your husband and and kids went camping why didn't you

go he asked I'm mad at Jason for buying that trailer she

replied so you don't like camping Scott probed it's not that heun's trying to

control me because heun's mad about us she explained I told him it's my body and I can do what I want Scott laughed

didn't you say he agreed to this not exactly I told him I was going to do it

he found out when he saw my texts and found rubbers in my purse we had a big fight I told him he doesn't own me Scott

continued so you caught him by surprise how did he react he just shook his head and walked away are you going to leave

him Scott asked no I love him our kids and our life I don't want to change

anything you don't think Jason will object to you having another man he'll realize it doesn't mean anything Laura

insisted Scott warned he might not be happy playing second fiddle why would

you say that no man likes knowing his woman is cheating does he want to watch us no

heun's not like that Laura said so you haven't been with him not for a while

she admitted what can I do to get him to touch me again you're in a tough spot if

you want to keep him you need to act fast maybe we need to take a break so you can fix things with him Scott

suggested you think that's what I should do Laura pondered for a smart woman

you're clueless sometimes s just try to win him back Scott urged Laura fell

silent considering Scott's advice he continued do you like your life now of

course Laura replied then go home make up with your husband and hope it's not too late otherwise you might end up

alone Scott warned Laura left Scott thinking about his advice she wondered

if she had gone too far with Jason and whether he would take her back I loaded the trailer and the girls packed their

things for a week-long camping trip to a state park in the Eastern Carolinas the weather forecast promised perfect

temperatures and light rain expecting Laura wouldn't join us I planned accordingly once the girls were ready we

got in the truck and hit the road the week went wonderfully the weather was great and we enjoyed hiking and having

fun one day at the water park was a huge success surprisingly the girls weren't

as disappointed by Laura's absence as I expected they noticed their mom spending

less time at home and with them I reassured them that nothing their mom was doing was because of them it was all

about Laura damn it I'm late Jason and the girls went camping he left a note on

the kitchen table we're going south for a week back next Sunday that was it I

called Scott they're camping what am I supposed to do you blew it you better

hope your husband comes back with the kids if not you're totally screwed

there's nothing I can do to help you have to keep your your family together good

luck Scott hung up the week flew by and Sunday night the girls and I headed home

I had to work the next day and had planned summer activities for the girls hoping their mother could help with

driving and picking them up when we arrived home I was surprised to see Laura greet the girls they hugged her

and then went to their rooms with their dirty clothes I started cleaning the camper and Laura lingered around

pretending to be interested she said I'm glad you're home it's been quiet here all week I replied how was your week

with your boyfriend she didn't answer she asked about the campground and I told her it was in North Carolina near a

water park after finishing with the trailer I went inside started the laundry took a shower and began making

dinner Laura offered to cook but I said I'd handle it as we ate Laura acted unusually interested in our week I asked

if she was going out tonight and she said no adding that her family was her priority I found this hard to believe

but decided to talk about the week's plans a few months later my life had become strange I had an uneasy truce with Laura

despite her Affair I decided not to divorce her to avoid losing custody of the kids Texas Family Law seemed to

favor infidelity Laura and I both knew that separating would hurt the kids so I

stayed married to her until the kids were grown after learning about her Affair I went into defense mode I bought

a travel trailer and took the girls camping much to Laura's displeasure she saw it as Revenge but I didn't care I

needed to show her that actions have consequences since I started dating Scott my schedule hadn't changed much we

meet once or twice a week usually in the afternoon we have fun talk a little and

then go about our business I enjoyed being with Scott for a few hours it's

very different from being with Jason now that Jason knows about Scott he won't touch me or make love to me it's become

cold in the house and Jason is very secretive about what he does outside the house state law says is that infidelity

isn't a factor in divorce if we divorce Laura has an advantage because the courts don't care about Who's Cheating

so I started questioning my role in this situation if Laura could have a boyfriend and face no consequences why

couldn't I have a girlfriend it seemed fair I began doing activities I enjoyed and socializing more I avoided online

dating sites fearing meeting someone dangerous and focused on activities I liked I joined a bicycling Club started

running again learned an instrument and hiked with my kids over time I met some nice women who set

me up on dates that's how I met Diana Diana is 3 years younger Divorced with a

4-year-old daughter she's an orthodontist tall darkhaired blue-eyed pretty slim and has a great sense of

humor we got to know each other through the Cycling Club and went out a few times we both wanted fun not commitment

I invited Diana and her daughter to go luxury camping with my kids which Laura never liked doing I didn't tell Laura

about Diana thinking if the state courts didn't care why should I A year later I

reached my limit I needed to address long-standing issues I knew Laura wasn't ready to be a faithful wife and mother

and I wanted to have a serious talk with Diana one Friday night I bought wine for Laura and beer for myself I handed Laura

the glass and asked are you in love with him Laura took a big sip of wine avoiding eye contact come on Laura you

started this it's time to finish it I said the kids were in the TV room and it was a good time to talk so how do we

want to do this the easy way or the expensive way I asked trying to push the conversation

forward what are you talking about Jason she replied clearly confused how long

did you cheat while we were married I asked directly why does that matter she asked attempting to deflect why change

anything now I shook my head frustrated I know what you've been doing do you

know what I've been doing I hinted implying my own secrets well you and the girls go camping you bike a lot and

you've been busy she said listing my usual activities yes and I've done a few other things I responded suggesting

there was more she didn't know Laura looked at me with a mix of amusement and caution clearly not wanting to escalate

the situation she believed that in a divorce I would suffer most but the kids

would suffer more ensuring I would do everything to minimize their pain she relied on this to do whatever she wanted

knowing I would go to Great Lengths for our children however she didn't know I had my own

plans Laura you didn't answer my question do you love him are you planning to keep seeing him I pressed

Jason I don't really have a boyfriend she said denying it again for God's sake

Laura cut the crap how long have you been with Scott and how many others were there before him are our daughters even

mine you've been a lousy wife I'm not happy with you or our marriage it hasn't been a real marriage for the last two

years and tonight that changes I declared what what are you talking about she asked bewildered oh stop with the

sweetheart act to you I'm just a security blanket doing all the boring work while you have fun with your boyfriend we haven't touched each other

in ages and I don't see that changing I said laying out the reality Laura stayed

silent I continued it's time we do something about it what are you talking

about she asked again I'm talking about ending this sham you need to move out I'm tired of being used I said firmly

Laura looked up shocked I'm not moving out of our house Jason that's nonsense she said refusing to believe it it's

clear you'd rather be with your boyfriend than part of this family decide what you want Laura I said

finishing my beer I walked to the kitchen sink feeling my blood pressure Rising I needed to get out I had thrown

down the gauntlet and wanted to see how Laura would react damn it I need to get a lawyer to make sure Jason doesn't kick

me out why can't he just get over it I'm not denying him anything but he hasn't approached me in a long time he doesn't

want me if I can't make him want me we're screwed if we divorce I get the kids the house and part of his income

Jason won't move out and I have the advantage I just need to be patient and things will fall into place it would be

better if I could get Jason to make love to me again I love him but I need Scott

too I feel so good with Scott if I keep this up everything will be fine Jason

knows I'll eventually come back to him this thing with Scott won't last forever

after a while Jason and I will get back to our relationship but for now I need

Scott too if Laura thinks I'll put up with her behavior forever she's wrong it's time for

consequences I started managing our family finances online I set up a new account for myself and transferred half

of our cash reserves into it along with my paycheck and bonuses each month I transferred money to our house account

to cover half of the bills Laura needed to realize that the freebies were over and she had to pay her share of our

living expenses I didn't want to subsidize her spending on her boyfriend even though she wasn't using hotel rooms

I didn't want Jason to know I consulted a lawyer I found a family law attorney who explained the state's no fault

divorce laws stating that mothers usually get custody she asked you want

your children of course I replied she took notes and asked about our incomes child

support alimony and our mortgage she inquired if there were reasons I might not get custody I said no asserting that

I'm a good mother however I worried that my relationship with Scott over the past 2 years could affect the Court's view of

me as a mother leaving the lawyer's office doubts lingered about how messy a fight

with Jason could get Jason called and we planned a camping trip for the next weekend Matilda is excited she loves

Jason's trailer the three girls stay in the bunk bed at the back chatting and laughing for hours Jason and I occupy

the bedroom at the front keeping the door closed I can't understand why Jason's wife doesn't appreciate him he's

a great guy handsome smart talented energetic with a great smile and a wicked sense of humor he makes me and

the kids laugh and clearly cares about people Laura's loss is my gain I

divorced a idiot who didn't want to be a father and I have a wonderful daughter who is my world when I met Jason saw a

man who needed care I realized his wife was using him wanting it both ways

Marilyn introduced us and explained how Jason's wife mocks him knowing our state's divorce laws I understood he was

cornered divorcing her meant losing his kids so he endured it until they grew up

I wasn't looking for a serious relationship but needed a casual friend to relieve stress Jason turned out to be

perfect camping with him and his daughters was a bonus for Matilda and me we had fun and Matilda adores his girls

who treat her like a little sister the longest we camped was 9 days in Florida

near Disney we spent 2 Days in the park did some hiking and enjoyed the beach it

was a great vacation Jason enjoyed our time together and his girls loved it too we are planning more Adventures I

visited my lawyer while Jason took the girls camping in Florida he was gone for a week so I used the time to clarify my

custody rights if Jason tried to force me out my attorney Clare Barnett is in her early 50s with over two decades of

family law experience CLA I need to confirm my custody rights last time you said if

Jason divorced me I'd get the kids the house and monthly payments from him I said seeking

reassurance yes we discussed that Clare replied generally mothers get custody

but there are exceptions if your husband proves he's the more suitable parent he could get primary custody court don't

automatically favor the mother if she's deemed unsuitable are there any issues I should know about no well Jason does

spend a lot of time with the girls I admitted can you elaborate Clare asked

probing for details he takes them camping and attends their school events I don't enjoy outdoor activities and

miss some events due to my demanding job I explained Clare rolled her eyes

sensing my deceit she knew family courts could see through such excuses and prioritize the best parents

CLA understood that Jason's active involvement with the children put him ahead Laura unless you become a more

proactive mother your chances of getting custody are slim are you seeing another man Claire inquired cutting to the chase

yes a few times a week but not for long I confessed if you're not honest with yourself and me you'll lose custody how

much time do you really spend with your boyfriend CLA pressed I admitted how

much time I spent with Scott Clare frowned realizing this would portray me as neglecting my family for

my boyfriend crap Clare thought knowing this wouldn't bode well in court it was

time for the first round of consequences for my Unfaithful wife on Saturday night

after the kids had gone to bed I grabbed a beer and poured Laura a glass of wine she glanced at me knowing this meant I

wanted to talk it's a little late for a beer isn't it she asked it's only 9:00 I

want to talk about our marriage and our daily responsibilities what do you you mean we need to clarify what each of us

is responsible for I've made a list and I'm sure you'll have input let's start Laura took a large sip of wine I took

out a notebook and began we need to sort out our finances we need to decide who pays for what I'll cover the truck and

camper but household and kids expenses should be shared I paused to let that sink in I think we should create a

budget to clarify this Laura looked overwhelmed I laid out a reasonable

breakdown of expenses making it clear I wouldn't fund her relationship with her boyfriend I wanted her to see that I

wasn't going to keep paying for everything while she enjoyed other activities we talked until 1:00 a.m. I

yawned stretched and told Laura I was done for the day I left the paperwork and bills on the desk then headed for a

shower in bed what the hell Jason wants to split our finances making each of us

contribute half for the house and kids tuition he knows I don't make as much as he does when I told him he just said

maybe you should consider a higher paying job as if I could it's all about

the time I spend with Scott so Laura why did you want to see me so soon are you planning to file for divorce no but last

Saturday night Jason wanted to talk about our finances he wants each of us to contribute 50% to household expenses

cla's eyes widened and her eyebrows raised slightly tell me exactly what you

and he discussed Laura explained the long conversation with her husband I asked questions and took notes it became

clear that Laura was avoiding the consequences of her actions she had been seeing another man for almost 3 years

and her husband found out 2 years ago he realized that he would be paying for her infidelity and risk losing the kids and

money everything Laura said indicated that her husband was preparing for a separation agreement a Prelude to

divorce that divides responsibilities and signals the breakdown of the marriage the main issues were their two

daughters who would have primary custody and who would stay in the home Laura couldn't prove she was the best parent

since she spent time with her boyfriend while her husband was with the children family courts take this seriously Jason

was quietly building a strong case for custody I tried to tell Laura that things were not going well for her her

husband was preparing to show the court that they were living separately and each contributing to half of the expens

Jason made more money so he could afford to take care of the kids even after the separation I need to get Jason back in

my bed and acting like my husband again we haven't been physical engaged in months and he must be desperate if I can

get him back in bed he'll soon realize that Scott means nothing Scott just gets the

leftovers I'm Jason's wife and my time with Scott doesn't change that lately

Laura had been hinting that she wanted to get physically engaged again saying she wouldn't deny me anything a chill

ran down my spine at the idea I wasn't interested in being with someone Unfaithful after the girls went to bed

she gave me strange looks hinting she wanted to be close again I didn't care all I wanted was for her to take care of

the girls in the house when the girls grew up and went to University I planned to end this sham of a marriage Laura

could move on to her next husband and he could deal with her infidelities a few months later I had enough I've been

thinking about ending this marriage I can't tolerate our situation anymore I told Diane Diane and I are starting to

see a future together so I need to do something about Laura I decided to visit Scott for a heart-to-heart talk about

Laura and their future on Wednesday at 6:00 in the evening I waited by Scott's

car when he saw me he dropped his phone muttering duck you you better pick it up phones are expensive I said he retrieved

the phone clearly expecting a confrontation don't worry Scott I'm not here to hurt you we need to talk I

continued I nodded at my truck get in I'll buy you a beer and we'll settle some things we drove to an Irish pub and

I found a quiet corner I ordered an IPA and nodded for Scott to do the same his fear was palpable okay we need to work

something out I began relax just answer a few questions honestly how long have

you been with Laura uh for a while now he stammered Define a while more

precisely please I pressed a little over 3 years he ad I nodded inwardly relieved he wasn't the

father of my children why did you and Laura start this we met talked and she

said she was tired of her marriage routine it just happened he explained do you love her have you developed feelings

I asked it's complicated I have feelings but I don't want her to leave you I like

the no commitment relationship I'm not ready to settle down he confessed how

many women are you seeing I asked his a voice voidance told me everything you don't have an exclusive relationship

with her do you I pressed further he shook his head no I realized Laura might be counting on him as a backup but that

wasn't my problem be prepared for her to show up with a suitcase having fun with someone else's wife has consequences do

whatever you want but remember I won't tell Laura what to do nor will I stop doing what I need to I warned I stood up

tossed $40 on the table and cautioned be careful in Dark Places then walked away

I needed to get out of the house so I went to Scott's apartment he let me in

checking the hallway to ensure I was alone we spent a couple of hours together until he said he had a doctor's

appointment and needed to go as I got dressed he hurriedly pushed me out into the hallway a week after talking to

Scott I decided to take the next step my attorney had the divorce papers ready and I arranged for them to be delivered

to Laura at home I had all the evidence needed to seek full custody of the girls

Diana who had become very close to me waited quietly in the background when the divorce was finalized I planned to

ask her to move in with me in the evening after the girls were in bed I handed Laura a glass of wine she knew

something serious was coming you need to stay home tomorrow morning a package will arrive for you I said trying to

keep my voice steady what you know what it is she replied leaning back and

sighing I knew this could happen why do we have to go through with this can't we just do our own things for a while she

asked attempting to find an alternative you started this you knew I wouldn't tolerate your Affair but you also knew

divorce courts don't care about infidelity you counted on getting custody and making me pay all I wanted

was a faithful wife now it's time to face the consequences I responded

feeling a surge of emotion I stood up to control my emotions got a beer and returned to the table better to discuss

things now than pay lawyers later I suggested hoping to resolve things amicably Jace I'm going to fight the

divorce I love you and our family she said her voice pleading I held up my hand to stop her your actions show

otherwise you've shown your love for Scott not me she looked at me defiant

I'll get custody of the girls and you'll only see them once a week you'll be paying to keep us here stop this divorce

we can go back to normal 18 months ago I wanted that not now you've done too much

damage are you ready to give up Scott I asked knowing the answer already

silence let's make a deal I'll spend time with him and you do what you like I'll even go camping with you and the

girls she offered trying to bargain I was losing control why are you bargaining now I don't want you to

abandon the family for something meaningless my time with Scott doesn't affect you you're with the kids and they

love it don't lose them over a few hours a week with someone else she said desperate Laura I used to love you but

when you started loving another man there were consequences I replied trying to make her understand Jace I don't love

him it's just recreational I love you and our children if you come back to our bed I'll show you what you mean to me

she said pleading for reconciliation do you love me enough to give up Scott I asked needing to hear

her answer no answer Laura stared at her hands I thought I didn't I know what I'm

supposed to do don't go to work in the morning good night I said feeling defeated I went to bed

Jason got up early and got the girls ready for school we didn't speak before they left and the girls barely looked at

me as they walked out the door my mind was racing when I heard the doorbell I

answered it and found a middle-aged woman wearing jeans and a sports jacket with an ID badge good morning are you

Laura Staples yes I am ma'am may I see some identification to verify this

please I fetched my driver's license from my purse and she took a picture of it with her phone

then she handed me a large brown envelope ma'am you've been served she

stepped back took a photo of me holding the envelope and quickly left I stood

there realizing I had just been served divorce papers I walked inside placed the

envelope on the dining room table and stared at it maybe if I didn't open it

it wouldn't be real Jason wasn't really ending our marriage was he I started

questioning if spending time with Scott was a good idea what should I do now I

grabbed a glass of water sat at the table and slowly opened the envelope

inside were papers that would change my life why did Jason have to do this why

couldn't he just let me have my freedom eventually Scott and I would end and

Jason and I would be together as the girls grew up we'd travel and do all the things we talked about after marriage we

both work a lot leaving little time for closeness seeing scottt occasionally didn't interfere with my family or mean

anything to Jason so why did it become such a big deal when I came home after

being with Scott I felt better and was a better wife and mother Jason didn't need

to know admitting the affair was a mistake I should have kept it a

secret now everything was out of control I need to call Claire and see her when

Laura Staples came to my appointment panicked I realized her husband had had enough and was pursuing a divorce from

my perspective he had been too patient the divorce papers prepared by his attorney were thorough making a strong

case for him to get full custody of their two children and keep the family home he meticulously documented all the

times Laura neglected the family for her affair with Scott Williams including school events family vacations and daily

routines there were even photos of Laura and Scott taken by friends showing public displays of affection

Laura sat quietly as I reviewed the papers Imagining the questions a family court judge might ask it was clear she

had only told me part of the story trying to justify her actions with Scott

the courts are rarely bothered by infidelity but neglecting her children and husband for Scott would sink her

case I had to prepare her for the likely outcome Laura have you read this

petition I asked watching her closely she stammered I skimmed it how do I stop

this divorce I want to keep our family together I began to think she was delusional Jason

held most of the cards and it would be a tough battle to even things out Laura I

need to speak with your husband's attorney before advising you remember we've discussed what courts consider

when awarding custody from this it's clear you might not get the custody you want as for staying married to Jason

that's not going to happen I said firmly what do you mean he can't just walk away

from me and the kids she protested you've forgotten our discussions the law allows for divorce regardless of your

wishes Jason is determined to end the marriage and keep the children with him I explained Laura leaned back fidgeting

it's because of Scott isn't it Jason is jealous I thought he wouldn't care about my Affair how do I fix this she asked

desperation creeping into her voice there's no fix only damage control what

do you think should have happened I asked but got no response Jason asked asks that you move out of the marital

home by the time the divorce is finalized there's a 60-day cooling off period if you agree on terms the court

can grant the divorce after 60 days otherwise it will take 90 to 120 days I

continued laying out the facts can I ask for marriage counseling she inquired

clinging to a sliver of hope you can but it must start and finish within the cooling off period do you think Jason

would change his mind with counseling I asked Laura sighed realizing Jason was

done with her infidelity I noted that Jason had prepared well for a successful divorce with good legal advice I'll

arrange a meeting with Jason and his attorney this week to see what we can do I promised good what should I do now she

asked her voice shaky go home be with the kids and try to talk to Jason you're

both still at home right I asked Laura nodded try to talk to him otherwise

there's not much you can do she stirred and slowly walked out my assistant Jackie walked in that one looked like a

deer in headlights I guess it didn't go well Jackie remarked I handed her the papers and asked her to set up an

appointment with Jason's attorney as soon as possible my phone was strangely silent most of the day I assumed Laura

was calling me urging me to give up on the divorce as I was about to leave the office my attorney called to inform me

that Laura's attorney wanted to schedule a meeting as soon as possible I agreed wanting to get this over with she would

call back to set a date and time until then I had to be careful around Laura minimizing contact and avoiding any

perceived threats when I got home Laura's car was in the driveway inside she was with the kids pretending to be

interested in their homework they looked at me as if to say what is she doing I

chatted with Janie and Beth made dinner and Laura set the table dinner was

interrupted only by the girls chatter the rest of the week felt normal except Laura was home more Nots with work or

her boyfriend after the kids went to bed I went to our home office to handle some errands Laura appeared in the doorway

Jason can we talk she asked it's a little late for that isn't it I replied not looking up I don't want a divorce I

want us to be a family she said her voice wavering it's a little late for that isn't it I repeated my patience

wearing thin how can I show you that you're the one I love she insisted it's a little late isn't it I said again

unable to mask my frustration why won't you talk to me Jason I've tried so many times over the

last two years and you've ignored me and our children now I'm ready to ignore you

she said her tone turning accusatory I want us to go to marriage counseling she

proposed so you can do what spend time and money and then divorce I don't think so go to all the therapists you want

just not with me I retorted my voice cold Jason we can't get a divorce the kids would get hurt she argued the kids

will get hurt did you think about that while you were with Scott your narcissism is showing Laura I shot back

what she asked taking a back For Heaven's Sake go see a therapist better

yet pack a big bag and go stay with Scott get away from me I said squeezing past Laura and heading to the bedroom

I'd been using for months I decided a hot shower was what I needed as I stood under the Jets trying to collect my

thoughts Laura opened the door and tried to enter the shower what are you doing I asked startled please Jace let me in

we're family I need you she pleaded you need me I held up my hand stop it you

took me and the kids for granted and now you want to avoid the consequences of your Affair get

out Laura stared at me for a few seconds before walking away after finishing my shower I checked

on the kids an hour later Laura's car was gone the bell rang at my door crap

who Could That Be this was a bad time then my phone buzzed with a text Laura had sent me three texts in the last hour

crap Scott baby who's there Marie a friend called out from the bedroom I'll handle it you stay here I got out of bed

put on my box her briefs grabbed my phone and went into the kitchen crap I wasn't supposed to see Laura until

Thursday what did she need I answered the phone hello I said trying to keep my

voice steady it's me honey Laura's voice came through what what's going on I asked feeling the tension build open the

door I hesitated trying to figure out what to do i' been dating Marie for a few months and she was great Laura's

presence was a complication I didn't need I knew her marriage was falling apart and it was time to end things with

her but not now crap now's not a good time I'll call you in the morning I said

hoping to buy some time Scott I just need to talk to you I heard other people in the background then Laura said oh

thank you someone had let her in damn three minutes later there was a knock Scott it's me let me in please Marie

came out of the bedroom wearing a t-shirt and a curious look what's going on she asked confused it's an old

girlfriend maybe she had a bad breakup and wants to talk I said trying to sound nonchalant are you going to open the

door she pressed I walked to the door looked through the peephole then unlocked it maie stood in the kitchen

with a glass of water when I opened the door Laura walked in with a bag over her shoulder she saw Mar and stopped Marie

saw Laura put down her glass and hurried back to the bedroom 10 seconds later she

was dressed and leaving saying don't bother calling me it ended quickly Laura

watched Marie leave and asked who is she I shook my head what do you want Laura I

asked frustrated she set her bag on the couch and looked around she saw the dishes from my meal with Marie and

realized what was happening I went to the bedroom put on jeans and a shirt then grabbed a beer from the fridge

Laura said sat on the couch why are you here tonight we weren't going out until Thursday I said then figured it out your

husband kicked you out didn't he she nodded slowly and you thought you could stay here I asked crap what did you do

Laura she swallowed can I get a drink Scott she asked I brought her a glass of

wine she took a big sip heun's divorcing me she said quietly oh really he told me

he didn't want me to be his wife anymore I replied barely hiding my sarcasm can you blame him we've been having fun for

a long time I'm surprised he put up with it what happened to your plan to get him back into bed I asked genuinely curious

he didn't want to come near me said he didn't want sloppy seconds she admitted well you're totally screwed in more ways

than one I said shaking my head so why are you here Marie wasn't impressed I

think it's over with her I pointed out Laura spent the night with me since Marie left why not have fun with Laura

she was always up for a good time when I got up in the morning Laura was gone that was perfect once the divorce went

through she'd be working full-time after dropping the girls at school I received an email from my attorney Laura's lawyer

wanted a meeting later in the week things were moving in the right direction I needed to hire someone for

after school help with the kids there was already a woman in the neighborhood who helped three afternoons a week I

needed to arrange to work from home more 2 Days Later Laura still hadn't come home and more of her things were missing

I figured she was with her boyfriend but but I didn't care the girls didn't even ask about her surprisingly she hadn't

called to talk to them when I called her parents they were clueless about her situation and wondered why she wasn't

living with them I brushed them off saying Laura was busy and would explain soon the next evening Laura was still

gone but her mother Susan showed up after greeting the granddaughters she sat down and directly asked what the

hell is going on I spent two hours explaining the last three years of our marriage she had many questions and

eventually apologized for Laura I didn't need her apology I needed one from Laura 3 Days Later Laura was still missing so

I decided to visit Scott again I waited by his car when he saw me he flinched

I'm not here for you I guess Laura is staying with you I said yes she is he replied are you here to take her home

Scott asked his voice tense no I just wanted to know where she is and that she's safe I explained Scott admitted I

was hoping you'd take her home I don't want her living with me permanently what I thought you two were

lovers soulmates and all that I said incredulous we had fun but I told her to

go home and be nice to you if she wanted to keep her family together now I know she didn't he responded well shek all

yours now I said firmly but I don't want her Scott insisted why not you've enjoyed

entertaining her I pointed out I don't want her all the time he said sounding frustrated why not she likes being with

you I pressed Scott shouted I don't want her get her out of my apartment take your wife home I smiled no she's all

yours I walked away but Scott's tone turned desperate please take her I don't

need a woman with two kids he pleaded I ignored him getting into my car and driving away leaving him to deal with

the mess he had helped create you should have thought of this years ago I got in my car started the engine and backed up

tell her to come home her kids are wondering where she is and her mother wants to talk to her I drove away

leaving him standing there the day after talking to God I was working at home when I heard the door unlock it was

Laura I waited until she was in the kitchen back for more of your stuff I asked she looked shocked Jason I didn't

know you'd be here I haven't seen your car she said trying to sound casual it's in the garage getting fixed I'm working

from home today I replied Laura Stood Still seemingly unsure of her next move what are you here for I asked my

patients wearing thin uh I thought I might come home if that's okay with you she said hesitantly

well Janie and Beth are wondering where you disappeared to I figured you were with your boyfriend your mom is here to

see you she has something to tell you and probably a million questions I informed her watching her reaction her

head popped up my mother what did she want she asked clearly surprised she was

curious why you left us I said keeping my voice steady what what did you tell her she demanded Panic creeping into her

voice the truth I replied simply watching as the weight of my words settled on her my attorney and I were

set to meet with Laura and her lawyer my lawyer advised me to let her handle the talking to justify her fee we met in the

conference room of my attorney's office to discuss custody assets and financial details when I arrived Laura and her

attorney Clare were already there as my attorney started Clare interrupted saying Laura has something to say that

might simplify things Laura began jaas I don't want a divorce what would it take

for us to go back to being a good family you know I love you and the girls my time with him was just a way to relieve

stress it wasn't your fault and I always came home to you and the girls I wanted to scream but my lawyer squeezed my hand

keeping me calm Laura continued insisting that her Affair made her a better wife and mother she was

delusional thinking I would accept her behavior Laura pleaded with me but I looked at her with

disbelief my lawyer then refocused the meeting on the main issues the attorneys

began their negotiations I was ready to take the case to court if Laura refused my offer I wanted custody of the kids in

the house she could have the bank accounts her car and even my car the attorneys exchanged emails racking up

fees eventually my lawyer presented evidence of how little time Laura had spent with the family over the past 3

years this convinced Clare that going to court wouldn't end well for Laura reluctantly Laura agreed to my terms now

I just needed to ensure this affected my daughter's as little as possible at first I refused to sign Jason's divorce

agreement I wanted my family and wasn't willing to settle why did he have to be so pigheaded and want to destroy our

family what I did away from him and the kids didn't affect them Jason didn't lose anything when I was with Scott why

couldn't he let me have something for myself Clare warned me that if Jason took us to court the judge would likely

rule in his favor and give him custody of the girls I couldn't bear the thought of losing them Claire said she had

negotiated the best deal possible and dragging it out would accomplish nothing

the court would order a settlement after a year anyway if I wanted anything from the marriage I needed to decide now I

cried for hours unable to concentrate on the paperwork Claire pointed out where to

sign I felt like I was signing away my marriage my children my family and the

home I loved I was signing away my life I was somewhat surprised when my attorney called to say the signed

documents were on their way VIA Courier this afternoon Laura's attorney Claire

informed my attorney that Laura had agreed to the divorce Laura would have limited time with the children who would

live with me in our home she had until the final divorce date to move out we agreed on an equal division of our

financial assets and she would receive half The house's value by our youngest child's 18th birthday plus 6 months

Laura would contribute $100 a month per child for their their education totaling $2,400 a year we had an education fund

for the girls and I was already contributing $500 monthly since their birth to ensure they could afford any

college or university Laura kept her car and could take any furniture she wanted

to furnish her new home I even offered to pay for bunk beds for the girls at her place ultimately I wanted her out of

our Lives to reduce stress for the girls in me the uncertainty of having an Unfaithful wife and an inattentive

mother was wearing me down now I could manage our lives in a rational and organized way Laura could

move on and do whatever she wanted including spending time with the girls if the girls didn't want to be with

Laura I wouldn't force them and would renegotiate the agreement we'll see how things go oh crap Clare called to say

she received the divorce papers from the court I am now officially divorced from Jason it felt really strange everything

was changing too fast and I wanted things to stay the same the strangest part was needing to leave

the house I hadn't even looked for a place to live and hadn't told my family about the divorce Scott said he couldn't

take me in which was a blow I needed to talk to Jason I went to the home office

where he was Jason honey can we talk I asked trying to keep my voice steady

what do you want to talk about he replied not looking up from his work where am I supposed to go I don't have

anywhere do I have to go can I can I stay here a little longer I pleaded feeling desperate Jason looked at me

like I had two heads Laura you've had weeks to find a place where's your boyfriend go be with him he said bluntly

I swallowed hard he can't take me in I admitted why not you like having fun

with him he shot back shaking his head in disbelief he then walked

away I heard the coffee maker in the kitchen there was a stack of boxes in the living room things Jas had packed

for me I had no idea what to do it was clear Laura was ignoring the reality of our impending divorce she hadn't found a

place to move wasn't putting money into the kids tuition account and hadn't started packing her belongings I had to

call her lawyer to remind her that she had until midnight to move out knowing she wouldn't comply I went to her

bedroom and started dismantling the bed lamps and Furniture to move to the garage Laura do you need all this stuff

if you do fine if not I'm selling it either way it's leaving this house I said she looked at me in shock as I

moved everything out she sat crying in the living room come on get up and get to work if you need this do something

about it otherwise it's all gone I urged her after a while she made a few phone calls then my phone rang it was her

father Jason what the hell is going on Laura says you're making her move out George said his voice filled with

confusion and anger George did she tell you why I asked trying to stay calm who

cares why why are you making her leave he demanded it's a long story why don't

you and Susan come here and I'll tell you everything I suggested they agreed to come in an hour I found Laura and

asked are you going to tell your parents the truth or will I she looked terrified

it was clear she hadn't told them about the divorce she then stormed out likely heading to Scott's apartment an hour

later George and Susan arrived I told them about Laura's affair with Scott showed them the divorce papers and

explained the final agreement they were shocked and disappointed to say the least they asked what I planned to do

and I said my focus was on the kids and reorganizing the house Susan asked if there was any way to save the marriage I

explained I had tried multiple times over the past 3 years but Laura refused to end her Affair it was clear her

family came second to her Affair I asked if they would take her in George said she got herself into this shek get

herself out they offered to help with the kids and left I called Scott and

asked him to put Laura on the phone when she answered I said your parents are really mad don't call them for a day or

so what are you doing with your stuff I'm moving it to the garage if you don't get it by next week I'll give it away

your choice then I hung up if Laura doesn't accept the divorce she needs a dose of

reality her plan of ignoring issues and expecting others to give in won't work this time a week later I called a moving

company to pack up Laura's things and put them in storage hoping she'd eventually tell me where to send them

Laura stayed with Scott who calls me daily to ask if she can come home I always reply she doesn't live here

anymore the first time he hung up after muttering crap Scott even showed up at

my office desperate for me to take Laura back she was staying in his apartment not working and barely getting out of

bed you have to come and talk to her he pleaded that's not my problem anymore

you wanted her now she's yours deal with it I then called Laura's parents

suggesting they visit her and consider psychiatric help since she was in a rut after that I went home to make dinner

for my daughters the past few months have been challenging with a new schedule reorganizing the house and

eventually selling it we moved to a new place with a pool and a large driveway you'll remember I met a woman Diane

after my divorce we started spending more time together and decided to move in together Diane and her daughter

Matilda moved in with us and it's worked out well so far we have a good relationship and the girls get along

great Matilda treats me like her father and Beth and Janie treat her like a little sister we travel often in the

camper exploring new places the saddest part of this whole situation is that Laura only sees her daughters once a

month she moved into an apartment near work and communicates minimally mostly just to arrange visits with the girls

they spend a few hours with her and then come home I reassure them that their mother's absence isn't their fault I

might seek professional help for them if needed but for now Matilda keeps Beth and Janie happily distracted and they

all have a lot of fun together Jason the three girls and I are now a family he's

so easy and fun to be with and I look forward to every day with him the kids get along well so it just works we love

going on camper trips and visiting parks with lots to do the girls enjoy hiking

biking and running around the campground it's great to see them playing freely without being too organized when we're

glan we don't have to be helicopter parents the best part is spending time with Jason just the two of us I can't

believe Laura ignored him and let her ego get in the way she wanted it all but ended up losing her husband children and

home I hope she found what she was looking for I certainly did over the weekend I saw Jason and his girlfriend

with the girls including her daughter they were laughing and clearly having a good time eating ice cream as they

walked and Jason and his girlfriend were holding hands that should have been me

why does everything have to be so complicated I don't have an answer I probably made some bad decisions and

didn't realize Jason wouldn't like what I was doing Scott kicked me out and we don't see each other anymore I miss him

the kids and Jason I miss his touch his smile and lying next to him at night I

miss my home and my life [Music] [Applause]