

# *A Delectable Valentine*



*~ Nia Little*

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Fast food just didn't satisfy anymore. Deborah was tired of quick and easy. Sure, the drive-thru was fine for when she didn't want a complicated involvement, only immediate gratification, but "three-minutes and done" had become too much of a habit—and boring. Same old, same old every time. She wanted something substantial, something delicious—something meaty.

So when the ad for "Hot Home Cookin' by a personal chef who can cater to your eclectic tastes" caught her eye, she dialed the number, her heart racing.

"Yes, this is Peter Rhodd, sous chef par excellence. How may I be of service?"

Deborah was taken with his deep baritone. "I saw your ad for a personal chef. Could you tell me about your specialty?"

"Meat, Madame." His voice sounded as though it dripped butter, and Deborah licked her lips. "I have many wonderful ways to prepare and present my meat."

"Oh yes?"

"Oh yes. I am especially good with the all-day feast. Tidbit by tidbit, savoring each offering until you are completely and utterly sated."

Her legs wobbled. "When can you, uh, start?"

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They agreed upon Saturday afternoon, Valentine's Day, and she gave him the directions to her house.

He was a hunk, all right. Tall, dark, and handsome with buns to die for. He handed her a big, well-iced cinnamon one when she opened the door.

"Good buns are vital," he said and stepped across the threshold, "and other pastry, yes?"

Suddenly, his finger traced along the side of her mouth. "The cream icing," he murmured. "Sometimes it drips most... inconveniently." He slid his finger into her mouth. "I wouldn't want you to miss a drop, no?"

"Nuh-uh," Deborah stammered and staggered to the kitchen. "You can start right away, if you'd like."

He stopped in the arched entrance and gasped. "Oh! What a beautiful oven!"

"Why, thank you!" Deborah blushed. "I must confess, it's never really been used."

"Never?" He turned and stared into her eyes. His were rich pools of deep green decadence.

She blushed. "Well, I've played around with it, but I didn't really know what I was doing."

"I assure you, Madame," he purred and bent over her hand, "I know exactly what I'm doing, and I promise you pure ecstasy."

An anticipatory shiver ran up her spine and she nodded. "Please call me Deborah."

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"I do hope you enjoy tongue... Deborah," he said and slid a well-wrapped parcel from the cooler he had slung over his shoulder. "Always make sure it's firm. Here, feel."

"Oh my God, I've never seen one like that before," Deborah breathed. "It's huge."

He grinned and flashed his eyes at her. "Good meat requires a firm grip. Here, take it in your hand."

She had to use both. "Wow, it's so large and heavy."

"Yes. Quality tongue always is." He smiled and she couldn't breathe. He guided her hands. "There, yes, that's good. Rub it, get a feel for it. Soon we will place it in your oven. Hot and moist is best."

He melted butter and drizzled it over the thick slab of glistening meat, then slid the pan in. "Meat should roast slowly for all the flavors to be appreciated."

"My mouth is already watering," Deborah sighed.

"Anticipation is half the fun." He raised his brows and turned toward her. "I like firm melons," he said, holding a honeydew in one hand and a cantaloupe in the other. "Mind if I play with them?"

"Not at all. In fact, I prefer it," she murmured. "How soon will your meat be ready?"

"Let's not worry about me," he replied and stepped toward her. "I want to make sure you enjoy the entire experience until you beg me to stop."

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He popped a cool, firm ball into her mouth. "No, don't bite. Roll it around with your tongue first, then suck it gently and swallow."

"Mmm."

"Yes, that's it. Now try the other."

She opened her mouth.

"Just lick, use the tip of your tongue first, then the middle, like an ice cream. There, see? The taste lingers, grows in your mouth, yes?"

"Yes, oh yes. I never knew honeydew balls would last this long." Deborah slid to sit on the edge of the countertop. "How about you? Don't you want an... appetizer?"

A slow grin lifted the corners of his mouth. "I like to taste as I work, yes. Perhaps something wet and sweet?"

"I have just the thing," Deborah smiled. "Here, try some Sunny Delight."

He sipped slowly, licking his lips.

Soon they were dipping strawberries in chocolate, sucking all the sweet nectar and cocoa from the fruit.

Her taste buds teased to the brink, Deborah thought she might explode with want for the main course.

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"Ah, we rest for now," he said and handed her a glass of chardonnay before serving her long zucchini spears thrust into honey, rolled in curly coconut and toasted to a delicate crunch.

At last, at last it was time.

He was right. His meat was fabulous.

Deborah could not get enough. "More, more... yes, oh my God, yes, it's so good, I want the whole thing!" She never would have believed she'd be so greedy and gluttonous, but his tongue was incredible.

So was dessert: one enormous éclair filled with the richest, thickest cream that burst into her mouth and oozed into her tummy. She groaned with pleasure.

"I don't know when I've ever felt so... completely sated," Deborah sighed. "That was absolutely wonderful. When can we do it again?"

Green eyes smiled into hers. "You must allow me a chance to regroup, Madame. An artiste such as I expends all his energy in the performance, and a recovery period is only natural."

"But I need you," she whispered. "I want you. Could you be mine?"

He raised his brows. "An exclusive arrangement? I had always hoped... but we've only just met—"

"We cannot fight destiny. I must have you for myself," Deborah said. "At least for a time."



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He hesitated. "But am I truly all you want? I know you enjoyed my tongue, but what if you tire of my rump roast? I loved the way you gave yourself over so freely. I want to be the one to satisfy you completely. But what if you suddenly decide you crave egg salad and dump me for a deli?"

"Peter," she said and slowly slithered up to him. "I'm a full-course meat-lover through and through."

His eyes widened. "You mean it?"

"Yes." Deborah nodded. "My oven is all yours, and only yours, for as long as you want—as long as you promise never to wok out on me."

He wrapped his arms around her. "Never. I'm a slow cooker, Deborah."

Tenderly, he kissed her, then pulled away, blushing. "I'm sorry, that must have been uncomfortable."

"Oh," Deborah said as he set a long hard package on the counter, "that really was a salami in your pocket!"

He gathered his things, and left her with a flash of eyes, a luscious smile and a promise of a future of spicy hot sausage nights and creamy pastry mornings.

The End