

TUESDAY MORRIGAN

# SUGAR *Mama*

Loose Id

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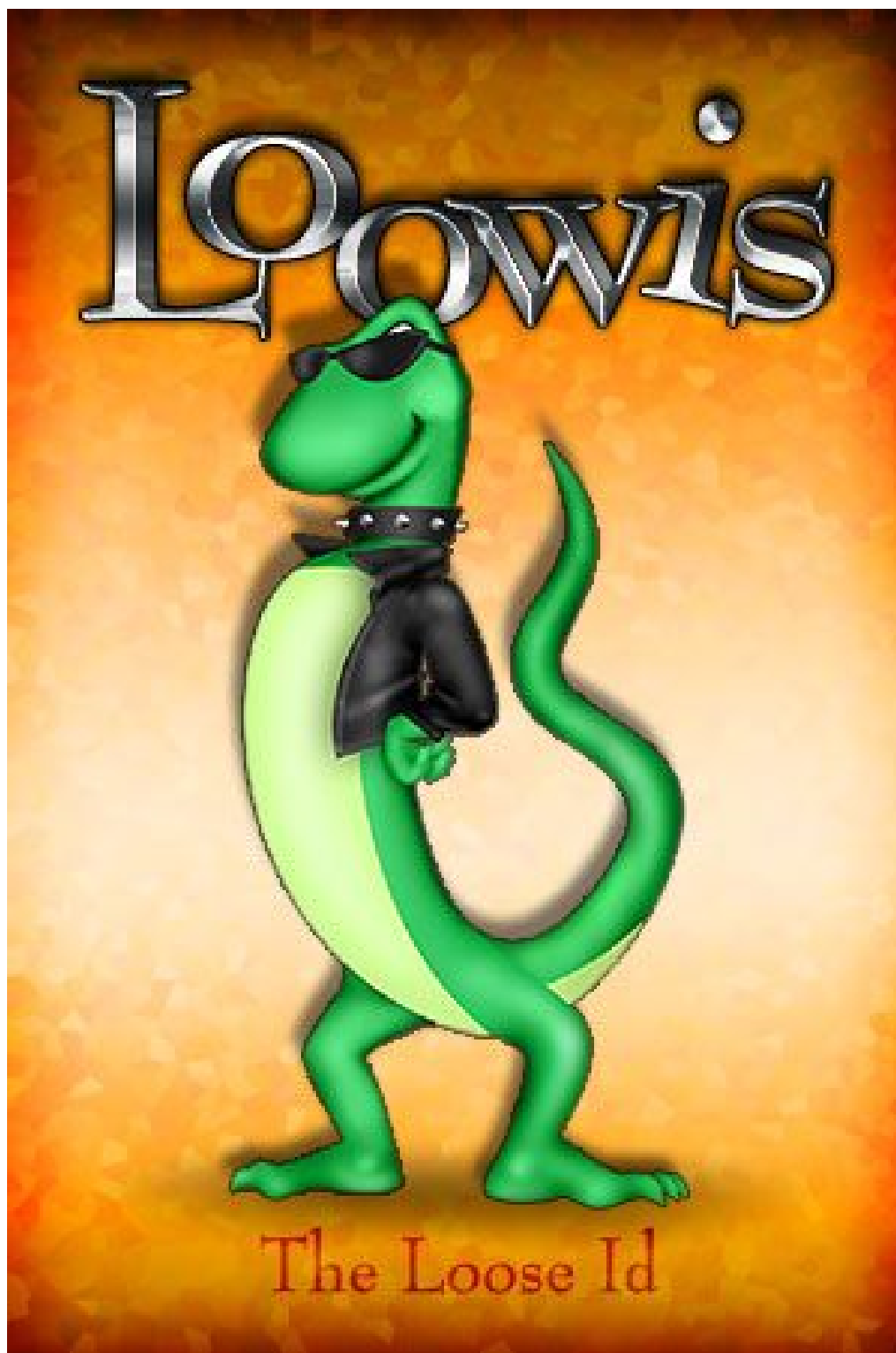
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## Chapter One

### *Sweet Temptation*

Theodora jumped at the sound of his rough baritone voice. It came from across the room, but it felt like it was sliding over her skin. Goose bumps broke out across her nape and a tingling sensation of pleasure shot through her. Her tongue glided across her plump bottom lip as she watched him interact with one of the waitresses.

He was good with people. It was one of the first things she'd noticed about him.

That and his hands.

He had great hands. Long, slightly thick fingers and wide, masculine palms.

She couldn't help but imagine those fingers on her flesh. Talented, blunt, golden fingers teasing her warm chocolate breasts. Theodora bit her bottom lip in sexual frustration as she watched him hand the waitress a dessert plate heaping with a slice of her infamous coconut chocolate three layer cake.

She was chagrined when she realized her nipples had instantly hardened and her palms were starting to sweat. She was a horny sixteen-year-old all over again.

Apparently her status in high school still haunted her. She would always feel like that overweight girl who couldn't attract the attention of the hot guy.

*Damn!*

*Once a chubby nerd, always a chubby nerd.* She wiped her sweaty palms down her jeans pant leg and flashed a smile at the customer asking her opinion of what was best at the Sweet Shoppe. She answered the young man without taking her eyes off of *him*. The customer turned to his date and asked her what she thought of the choices Theodora had mouthed off without thinking. The act gave her a little more time to watch Alejandro, give him her undivided attention.

She really had it bad!

He patted the shoulder of one of the waiters before turning in her direction. Theodora immediately felt her body come alive.

*Oh Lord*, she thought before bending low and scooping some of the strawberry cheesecake gelato into a medium container. She smiled at the customer as she handed him and his girlfriend the sweet confection.

“Evening, Theodora,” he said before grabbing one of the red aprons from the peg in the corner.

“Good evening,” she said without looking him in the eye. She started to turn and walk into the back room when he stepped in her way.

“Good evening, Theodora Adams.” The smirk on his handsome face told her he was enjoying her discomfort. She hated the fact that he was a) doing it on purpose and b) knew he could get a rise out of her.

*Bastard*, she thought as she stared at his sneakers. *I’m too old for this shit!*

Alejandro teased her and only her. He never once even looked at the other girls the way he looked at her. It should have made her feel special. It only made her feel more self-conscious.

Alejandro was young, sexy, and handsome. He could have any woman in the world and he chose to target his devastating comments at her.

Maybe he was deranged.

She couldn't help wondering if he teased her because she was safe. With the other female employees he would have to worry about following through with his innuendos. Or maybe he just got a kick out of torturing a woman who should know better.

Theodora looked him in the eye for a few seconds before responding. "Good evening, Alejandro Alba. Now will you get out of my way?" she said with one raised eyebrow.

"For you, boss, I'd do a lot more than that," he teased. His accent was strong, thick, and dark like molasses. Even though she was emotionless on the outside, her body was singing and humming to every syllable he had uttered. Her heart raced, her skin itched, her belly refused to stay still. If that wasn't enough, her panties were damp.

With one smug look the bastard had set her thong on fire.

When she didn't respond to his blatant sexual innuendo he shrugged one large muscular shoulder before leaving her path.

The moment Theodora closed the back room door behind her she breathed out a sigh of relief before sagging against the cool wood.

He was getting more brazen. The teasing, sexual comments were not only coming more frequently, they were getting more overt and steamier.

It was as though he was trying to punish her. She wasn't sure what she had done wrong, but she was definitely serving her time.

Either that or Alejandro was trying to break her down. Every time he said something that bordered on indecent she felt her resistance wither away.

If he kept it up, Theodora was going to throw her little five feet two body at his six feet three frame and take him for all he was worth.

She lifted her gaze to the sky before breathing out a sigh of relief. This was Alejandro's last quarter at school. Soon he would have his MBA and then he would be looking for a real job, something that could pay for more than his groceries.



And when that happened she wouldn't have anything to look forward to in the morning. As much as she hated to admit it, she woke up every morning hoping that Alejandro would be working on her shift.

"Damned if you do, damned if you don't," she muttered to herself before striding over to the back fridge.

"Damned if you do what?"

Theodora almost jumped out of her skin at the sound of Betsy's voice. "Jesus Christ," she said in a breathless gasp as she held one palm against her rapidly pounding heart. "Thanks for shaving ten years off my life. Unlike you I appreciated those years."

"Damned if you do what, Theo?" said the seventeen-year-old waitress.

Theodora eyed the perky brunette before continuing her steps to the refrigerator. At thirty-five, Theodora wasn't what one would consider old, but since she kept surrounding herself with pubescent teens, she felt like Old Mother Goose.

She might have to implement an age requirement just so she could start feeling her age.

"What are you talking about?" Theo called over her shoulder before bending low and pulling the freshly made Boston cream pie from the refrigerator.

"What are you talking about?"

"Betsy, what are you talking about?"

"I don't know anymore," Betsy said before turning and walking out of the back room.

The moment Betsy walked out, Theodora breathed a sigh of relief. Thank goodness teenagers had the attention spans of gnats.

*I am really going to have to stop becoming everyone's friend, especially my employees' friend,* she thought as she carried the large Boston cream pie to the storefront.

The moment she kicked open the back door, Alejandro was there, taking the pie from her hands. His hands brushed against hers and she immediately felt her body tighten with desire.

She gave him a brittle smile before turning away and rushing over to the ordering counter to help the next customer in line. But Theodora didn't turn around quick enough to miss Alejandro's flashing smile and the knowing look in his eyes.

He knew she wanted him.

The end of the semester couldn't come soon enough.

\* \* \* \* \*

She hated the nights when they closed together. Unfortunately those nights were occurring more often than ever since Alejandro had changed his schedule. She flipped down the clipboard hanging on the wall and felt a tiny spark of savage satisfaction rush through her when the board banged against the wall.

It wasn't her imagination.

She and Alejandro had closed the last three nights in a row. Tonight would make it number four. And the week before had been the same.

She was going to have to have a talk with her assistant, Eunice. Theodora had given her the task of scheduling the employees since she was no good at it. She made a mental note to ask Eunice not to schedule her and Alejandro together anymore.

The dark nights and the romantic dessert shop atmosphere made Theodora all the more anxious when she was alone with Alejandro. She always worried that she would do something inappropriate and live to regret it.

"Can I taste your pie?"

His words thundered through her mind. For a second she couldn't process anything but the tempting melody of his unusual accent, a heady mix of his Columbian and Korean heritage with just the tiniest hint of well-bred New Englander.

"Can I taste your pie?" he said again. This time he was closer to her, close enough that the sweet scent of his mint tinted breath wafted over her skin.

“What?” she asked once her mind started working. Ever since Alejandro began working at the Candy Drop Sweet Shoppe, her mind had gone from pristine to downright dirty. She couldn’t help but picture his head between her mocha thighs.

He couldn’t have meant what she thought he meant.

“Can I taste your pie?” he said for the third time. The glittering twinkle in his eyes told Theodora that Alejandro knew exactly what he was doing to her libido. What wicked thoughts his words conjured up.

She gave a throaty cough before glaring at him. “Excuse me?” she said in the most sugary voice she could manage. In her mind she drummed up the image of a second grade teacher scolding a student.

“Your Boston cream pie, can I have a slice?”

She stared at him for a moment, trying to think of a polite way of asking him if he’d purposely made that sexual innuendo. She’d prefer to know whether she was really losing it.

*I can’t wait to go home to my vibrator*, Theodora thought before turning and walking over to the back refrigerator. When she reached the desserts, he was there by her side, picking it up from the shelf. She didn’t even attempt to reach for it.

When Alejandro started working for her, Theodora found that she never even got the chance to pick up any of the larger desserts that Candy Drop specialized in, let alone lug around any of the heavy machinery she had gotten used to carrying. Alejandro was like a knight in tarnished armor.

Theodora went through her thoughts and realized that she was starting to characterize him. It was as if every day she fell deeper into his spell. If she didn’t do something soon, she would end up bruised when he left for greener and better pastures.

Tonight when she got home she was going to check her profile on LoversLane.com. Maybe she had been too hasty when she had turned down those requests to get to know her better.

With half of her mind on trying to decide which one of the men she had rejected could come out of her Lover's Lane trash bin, Theodora picked up a large, sharp, specialized pie knife and cut a slice of her infamous Boston cream pie for Alejandro. He held out a dessert plate for her and without looking she placed the triangle of pie in the center of the plate.

"You would think you had been doing this your whole life."

She gave a soft laugh before turning to him. "Yeah, you never would guess that I spent ten years in corporate America."

"No, but then again you are a talented woman," he said before flashing Theodora an intimate smile.

Theodora watched mesmerized as Alejandro forked off a piece of the cream pie and held it to his closed lips. She felt her breathing deepen and her eyes widen with peaking arousal when he slid it between his plump lips.

Her wet pink tongue slid against her bottom lip and she was suddenly hungry, ravenous to taste the cream that clung to the corner edge of his full Cupid's bow top lip. His tongue, wet and silky, snaked out and captured the cream before disappearing into his mouth.

"Sweet and filling," he said. The look in his glittering cognac eyes was intoxicating.

Theodora had to grind her back teeth to keep from groaning out loud. It was almost too much to ask to keep her hands to herself. It was certainly too much to ask to demand that she keep her mind out of the gutter.

*Hell, I might need to pick up a new vibrator,* she thought before taking a deep breath.

She gave him a brittle smile. "You really should stop with the teasing. A girl could get the idea that you were actually interested," she said flippantly before trying to walk past him.

She watched him swallow the piece of pie and take a step toward her. His voice was husky and thick. "Maybe a guy is trying to let a girl know that he really is interested."

Theodora quirked one eyebrow, gave him a harsh smile, and then turned to place the pie back on the shelf in the back room refrigerator.

He captured her shaking hands. Theodora groaned and closed her eyes. She could do without seeing the knowing look in his cognac eyes. She knew he had to have noticed her uneasiness. It rode on every inch of her skin. She felt like a caged animal with his breadth surrounding her. Her eyes opened but her nervous gaze darted away from his penetrating one.

“What makes you think I want to be your sugar mama?” she shot back impulsively.

Alejandro took a menacing step forward, further caging her. “The Internet,” he said slowly, drawing out the words.

Her head snapped up at his words. “What the hell are you talking about?” she asked in a harsh whisper. For some reason she didn’t dare raise her voice. Maybe because she was afraid that saying the words out loud would reveal her secret.

“I saw your page on LoversLane.com, Theodora.”

The moment the words were out of his mouth, Theodora closed her eyes and breathed deeply. She could feel her face heating up. She silently thanked God for melanin, because without it her face would be as red as a cherry. She felt herself dying in mortification under his hard, glittering glaze.

“I know that you’re looking for a younger man.”

Theo’s eyes snapped open and widened at his words. She took a cautious step away from him and found herself backed up against the cold brick wall.

“Just because I picked a large age bracket doesn’t mean I am looking for a younger man. I also checked the forty to fifty age bracket.”

He took another step forward. Theodora immediately took a calming deep breath. Too late she realized her mistake. Alejandro was so close that his scent was in the air, on her tongue, and in her lungs.

He was so close Theodora could count the individual hairs of the rough stubble that shadowed the lower half of his face. She could tell Alejandro did not shave that morning. He had more than a five o'clock shadow.

And she was dying to feel the scrape of his stubble against her palm, against the sensitive skin of her neck as he nuzzled her or better yet against the sensitive flesh of her inner thighs as he lapped at the desire that ran like a stream from her sheath whenever she thought of him.

"I know you want me," he whispered before reaching and running a hand through the black strands of her micro braids. "And I want you." His other arm snaked behind Theodora's back and pulled her to him.

She moved less than a foot but it felt like a chasm. The insecurity and embarrassment she had felt with her back against the wall felt like a campfire compared to the volcano of tumultuous emotions coursing through her as she clung to his broad, muscled chest.

Yes, she wanted him, like she had never wanted a man before. But there was a world of difference between the two of them. Lust could not bridge that gap.

Alejandro was twenty-six. She was thirty-five.

He was a graduate student. She had left the corporate world two years ago.

She wanted to get married and have children very, very soon. He was young and unsettled.

She was African American. He was half Korean, half Columbian.

Last, but certainly not least, she was his employer. She could not cross that line. She could already see herself in court denying charges of sexual harassment.

"Alejandro." The word was supposed to come out stern and firm. Instead, even to her own ears, she sounded breathless and needy. Her scolding had somehow turned into a begging supplication for something unknown somewhere between her mind and mouth.

As if to answer her plea, his hands lowered from the small of her back to settle against the full, rounded cheeks of her ass. And then he squeezed. He massaged and caressed her bottom.

Theodora had never been one for petting, but she suddenly realized he could pet her into an orgasm.

It was as if he had placed cayenne pepper in her veins. She was on fire, on fire for him.

“Good God,” she moaned a second before his firm lips pressed against hers.

## Chapter Two

### *Just Desserts*

Theodora stood on the curb outside of the restaurant and reconsidered Alejandro's sanity. It had suddenly become very clear to her that he was sorely lacking it. He had to be crazy if he thought she was about to enter the restaurant like it wasn't one of the most expensive, renowned eateries in the region.

"I...am...not going in there," she muttered before wrapping her shawl more tightly around her shoulders.

"Why not?"

She looked up to find him several feet away from her. Apparently he hadn't noticed her apprehension. He had just kept on moving.

He was totally oblivious to her discomfort. Just like a man. Her grandmother's words came to her. Even the good ones are rotten apples.

"I'm not properly dressed," she bit out between clenched teeth.

His warm brown gaze slowly swept over her body. Then he gave her a grin that was part mischief and fully sexual. "I think you're properly dressed. As matter of fact you're too properly dressed."



Theodora suddenly did feel overdressed. Her clothing was too restrictive and it irritated every inch of skin it touched. She was hot and agitated.

And she wanted nothing more than to strip to her bare skin.

Theodora drank in a deep breath and pushed aside the need Alejandro's softly growled words evoked. It took Theodora a second to regain her composure. The heat in his eyes had damn near singed the clothes right off her body. She felt heat rise in her cheeks as she thought of the things he had done to her, they had done together in the back room of her dessert shop. God, the man knew how to kiss. And then he'd touched her...

She shuddered under his gaze. He gave her a slow, heated smile that immediately increased her body temperature.

The look in his beautiful eyes told Theodora that he knew exactly what she was thinking.

The bastard was turning her into a harlot. Any second now she was going to jump him and take him, right there in the middle of the parking lot. In front of all those properly dressed upper-class people she was going to impale herself on his cock for all the world to see if he didn't stop looking at her like she was a canary and he was a very large hungry cat.

Hell! When did she turn into an exhibitionist?

*Oh yeah, when you saw him,* Theodora's mind answered for her.

"I can't go in there, Alejandro," she muttered when he broke their gaze.

It was about damn time her brain started working. It was irritating to find oneself a mindless sexual being.

She shuddered as she thought about how turned on Alejandro had made her the night before. If only his touch hadn't felt so good. His hands on her body made her feel things she'd never felt before. Things she'd only heard about.

Potent need.

Fiery desire.

If only he didn't set her on fire with one look, she thought as she eyed his tall, dark frame.

One kiss...and some heavy petting and she was a nymphomaniac. Lord knew what sex with Alejandro would turn her into.

She gazed at the man before her. Alejandro in a pair of tight jeans and a T-shirt was intoxicating. Alejandro in a suit was devastating.

The black jacket was cut to fit his wide muscular shoulders and emphasize his lean waist. The soft yellow shirt he wore underneath brought out the deep tones of his warm brown eyes and soft caramel skin. Every time Theodora looked at him she felt the muscles in her belly contract with arousal. She was quickly finding out that she had a thing for attractive men in suits.

Theodora had barely kept her mouth from dropping open when she saw how great Alejandro looked standing on her doorstep with a small, but beautiful bouquet of flowers in his hands.

Cream roses. Her favorite.

"Tell me why you can't go in there," he said, drawing her attention away from her own thoughts.

Theodora blinked hard at him. It took her a moment to figure out what he was talking about. It took her several more seconds to come up with a statement that wasn't the truth, but could keep her from having to go into the restaurant.

Her lips opened and closed. Nothing came out. The lie she'd come up with wouldn't come out.

He looked down at her, his honey brown eyes warm with understanding. "I can afford it," he said softly.

She started to deny that was what she was thinking, but decided it was would be best to admit the truth.

"I can barely afford it," she said in an admonishing tone.

"Theodora, let me do this for you."

"Why?" she asked baldly.

"Because you're worth it."

It took her some time to get any thoughts into her head. He had simply wiped her mind clean with his honest statement. She stared at him for several seconds.

And then pleasure like she'd never felt before surged through her. She'd been sweet-talked by her fair share of men, but none of them ever said something so simple just because he felt it. And she knew from the soft no-nonsense tone Alejandro spoke in that he meant every word.

Despite her best intentions to keep things as emotionless as possible, Theodora felt something sweet and hot travel through her. She pushed it aside almost immediately.

"I'm not a goddamn L'Oréal commercial," she grumbled as she strode toward him.

His rumbling laughter drifted over her seconds before he claimed her arm. "That doesn't mean it's not true, Theodora. You are worth it. You're worth this and much, much more," he said softly as he looked into her eyes.

The moment they broke off their gaze, she turned. She suddenly felt the need to run away, somewhere far away from the emotions he woke in her, emotions she had long considered dead.

It had been almost four years since she'd had a real relationship. And the last one had ended with her brokenhearted. She had decided then and there not to fall in love with another man she could never hope to call her own.

If Theodora wasn't careful, Alejandro would make her break her promise.

She instead allowed him to lead her into the warm atmosphere of the town's trendiest restaurant. Alejandro clasped her to his side and together they walked up to the maitre d's

table. The small man looked up when they stepped in front of him. His beautiful artistically feminine face broke into an honest smile the moment he set eyes on them.

“Mr. Alba, it is nice to see you again. It has been some time now, yeah?” he asked, his accent soft and thick. The man was French, most likely Parisian. Once when she was still in corporate America she had to finalize a business deal with a Parisian company. She had been there long enough to make friends with a nice woman there. She had never forgotten the accent.

“It has been a long time, Dubois.”

Dubois darted a glance at Theodora before turning to Alejandro. “I see you brought a new girl. I am glad. I did not like that other girl. She was not right for you.”

“No, she wasn’t.” Alejandro reached out and pulled Theodora closer to his side, draping one arm around her shoulder.

Theodora’s mouth opened in blatant shock at Alejandro’s words and actions. Almost as disconcerting was the fact that her body lined up perfectly with his. Her head lay right at his chest. Her breasts met the lower half of his pectorals, and naturally her arms draped around his waist.

Damn!

Dubois took one look at her face and broke into a soft titillating laugh. “Maybe you should tell Mademoiselle?” he said before stepping from behind his greeter’s table.

Alejandro glanced down at Theodora, grasped her hand and ran his callused fingers over her upturned palm. She immediately broke out in shivers as his fingers danced up her hand and onto the tender skin of her wrist.

His voice was rough and thick with sensual awareness. “I do tell her, just not in words.”

Dubois glanced back at the couple. The smile that spread over his face told Theodora that although he hadn’t seen Alejandro’s actions, he knew something had passed between the two of them. And that something had reinforced Alejandro’s words.

There was no doubt about his intentions.

Theodora knew exactly how Alejandro felt.

Dubois turned and led them through the restaurant until they reached a small, enclosed booth. "Will this do, Mr. Alba?" he turned and asked with an outstretched arm.

Alejandro glanced at Theodora, heat in his beautiful eyes. "Yes," he said never breaking their gaze. "It's dark and secluded. It's perfect."

Dubois walked away with a smile on his beautiful face.

Theodora's soft gasp of shock and arousal was her only response. She felt her face heat up as naughty, exhibitionist thoughts entered her mind. She immediately glanced away. She knew her thoughts were clearly written on her face.

"I saw that," Alejandro said with a rumbling laugh. "I'm more than happy to act out some of those thoughts," he whispered against her ear before licking the rim.

Theodora quickly shuffled into her seat, trying to pretend that the heat from Alejandro's body wasn't scalding her every sense. He was so close she could breathe in his taste.

She licked her lips twice when the memories of their heated kiss seared through her brain.

She glanced up and caught his gaze. His cognac eyes glittered down at her. He bent low until his warm peppermint breath misted over her parted lips. "Unless you want to give the whole restaurant a triple X rated show, I suggest you keep your naughty thoughts off your face, *querida*."

"Alejandro," she whispered outraged as she darted a glance around the restaurant. She could feel everyone's eyes on her although she didn't see anyone glancing their way in moral outrage. Still, she felt like a very naughty girl.

She took a deep breath and let it out in a sigh. She looked up at Alejandro. He had just taken his seat across from her and suddenly the table didn't seem large enough. The booth was indeed dark and secluded.

It was very intimate. Too intimate. Alejandro was too close...too near. And she was feeling too...much.

"I'm not going to ask you to stop again Alejandro," she said as she stared into his warm cognac eyes.

"Good, because I'm tired of having to tell you I mean what I say. And I do mean what I say, Theodora."

Theodora grabbed her napkin and forcefully shook it out. "Let me get this straight," she gritted through her teeth. "You are attracted to me."

"Yes," he said with a slow amused smile as his eyes followed the jerky movements of her napkin.

"And you want to sleep with me?"

His gaze met hers. "Hell, yes."

"Uh-huh," she muttered. "You are either sick, deranged, or delusional."

He leaned forward, bracing his arms on the table. His soft brown eyes bored into hers. "No, sweetheart. I'm tempted, dirty, and hungry."

She stared at him open mouthed for several seconds. The determination swimming in his gaze made her more than a little nervous.

"Theodora, if you don't close your mouth, I'm going to be forced to put something large and thick inside of it."

Her teeth clicked when she snapped her mouth shut. She blistered for a second before glaring at him. She opened her mouth to tear into him.

And then he laughed. He laughed right in front of her face as if what he said wasn't the most offensive thing in the world.

“What the hell is wrong with you?” she growled through her clenched teeth.

“I could answer that in so many ways,” he said between gasps for breath. “And you wouldn’t appreciate a single dirty one.”

The waiter came at that moment and took their orders. Since Theodora had never been to the restaurant before, Alejandro helped her make her decision. He was kind and attentive, even going so far as to ask her what she usually ate and why. The waiter walked away, order in hand, with a smirk on his face.

“Thank you,” she said with a shy smile. She wasn’t used to men who actually listened to her. Her hardest obstacle as the only woman at the higher manager level of her Fortune 500 Company had been men who didn’t listen to what she was saying.

She looked at the man across from her and couldn’t help but wonder if the younger generation was masculine enough to listen to a woman.

Or was it just Alejandro?

“You’re welcome,” he said with a nod and a slow, mischievous smile. After several seconds of comfortable silence, he spoke. “You look beautiful tonight.”

“Thank you,” Theodora murmured automatically, never taking his words to heart.

He must have realized it because a dark cloud flashed across his face.

“So are you excited about graduation?” She spoke before he could say anything.

“Yes, and no,” he said as he stared into her eyes. “I’m happy to be finished with school, but I feel as though I haven’t accomplished my goals.”

“You’re only twenty-six. You have plenty of time to accomplish your goals.”

He shook his head and gave her a slow, sad smile. “No, I’ve been working on this goal for a year now and I still haven’t gotten anywhere. Now I’ve only got three months to close the deal.”

Her tongue darted out to lick her bottom lip as she pondered his words. “So you’re feeling the pressure now, wondering if you can do what you couldn’t do in a year, in three months.”

He stared into her eyes, his gaze stark and hot. “Sometimes I lay in bed wondering what...it would taste like...how it would feel to have it in my hands. Sometimes I lay awake for hours thinking of all the things I could do with...it.”

Theodora took a deep breath as heat rushed into her system. She felt like someone had just thrown her into an oven. She couldn’t help the fact that her fertile mind pictured herself on Alejandro’s tongue, in his grasp, spending endless hours in his hands.

Fortunately the waiter came at that moment and dropped off their dinners. They ate in silence for several minutes. Just when Theodora was beginning to get comfortable with the silence, Alejandro signaled to the waiter. She quirked one eyebrow at him and started to say something. At that moment a second waiter came and placed a small platter of desserts on the table.

Alejandro leaned over and thrust his fork into one of the moist cakes and lifted the fork toward her.

“What is it?”

He smirked at her. “It’s decadence. I promise it’s worth it.”

She attempted to lean over the table, but was unable to make it to his fork. She started to get to her feet when Alejandro shook his head no.

He moved the dessert plate and slid further into the booth, closer to her. His body was more than two feet away from her, but he was close enough that she could drink in the rich scent of his cologne, close enough that she could feel the tempting heat of his body.

And then he moved just a little closer to her.



She watched his long fingers, wrapped around the silver fork, attack the rich dessert and cut off a second piece. His fork sliced through the moist cake easily. Alejandro lifted the dessert to her lips and like an obedient child Theodora opened her mouth.

Their eyes caught seconds before the fork slid past her parted lips. Warmth infused her body as the heat in his eyes seeped into her system. She mechanically chewed the slice of cake as they watched one another.

“So?” he said with one ebony eyebrow quirked. “What do you think?”

“I think you’re right. It is delicious.”

Alejandro cut off another piece of the cheesecake and held the fork to her mouth. Holding his gaze she lowered her head and wrapped her lips around the fork. A dark rumble of need vibrated between them. She paused at the soft sound of Alejandro’s growl. It cost her. Not all of the cake made it into her mouth. Little pieces of the cream dessert clung to the sides of her lips. Theodora immediately grabbed her napkin.

“Let me,” Alejandro whispered seconds before his lips pressed against her mouth.

A current of lightning shot through Theodora the moment he touched her. Her fingers dug into the silky tablecloth as he molded his lips to the soft contours of her mouth, sliding, gliding, and rubbing against the soft flesh until she moaned against his lips. Then his tongue, hot and insistent, took advantage of her parted lips to stroke into the wet, hot cavern of her mouth.

Theodora’s fingers clung harder to the tablecloth and she tried to keep her wits about her as Alejandro kissed her deeply.

The wet rasp of his tongue touched every corner of her mouth. Alejandro left no part of Theodora unexplored. His tongue stroked over her tongue, rubbing against the moist, rough surface before thrusting into the depths of her mouth. Heat bloomed inside her veins as his tongue journeyed around her mouth. Then his tongue darted back out and glided atop her lips.

Theodora gave a second breathless moan when he sucked her bottom lip into his mouth. Instant burning heat streaked through her body at the feel of his amorous touch. Her already hard nipples began to ache with their need for attention. She shifted in her seat as her sex throbbed and pulsed with desire. Her body shivered beneath the weight of both their desires.

She wanted and needed to feel their bodies moving across one another. As if he heard her unspoken plea, he tangled her hair in his large palms and pulled her hard against his chest, closer to his deep kiss.

Theodora felt herself lose all thoughts, inhibitions, and worries as Alejandro kissed her until her lungs burned. She clutched him to her and allowed herself to drown in his intoxicating kiss.

\* \* \* \* \*

*“I think you need an orgasm and I’m just the man to give it to you. As a matter of fact I could give you several all...night...long.”*

Theodora bumped her head against the steering wheel for the third time that night as she considered Alejandro’s words. Belatedly, she wondered if science was sure human beings couldn’t spontaneously combust because she was on her way to disproving that fact.

She’d thought the overwhelming need to strip would have been calmed when she was away from Alejandro, the fire starter, but it didn’t. No, it just stuck around like a dull toothache.

It dared her into action.

She’d only left him thirty minutes ago and she’d already forced herself not to call him three times.

With one kiss and one sentence, Alejandro had made her hotter than a furnace. Okay, so it had been one long...very long kiss and a few sentences, but still...

Hell, she felt like she was in heat. Better yet, she felt like she was experiencing a hot flash whenever he put his hands on her. She couldn't wait to get naked...and nasty...with Alejandro.

*That bastard*, she thought as she stepped from her car. Trust a man to mess up a perfectly good, precariously balanced relationship.

Everything had been great, at least as far as she was concerned. Theodora had been more than satisfied fine with her nightly fantasies filled with every inch of Alejandro's hard, muscular body.

Now she had to consider reality. And to be perfectly honest, she didn't much care for reality. In reality she lived for carbs, pastries, and cakes. In reality she was thirty-five, knocking on thirty-six. In reality she was a size fourteen with huge breasts and hips. In reality she had cellulite.

She jammed her key into her front door lock when she thought of that last fact. She doubted Alejandro wanted to see that.

The man was absolutely devastating with his shoulder length midnight hair, large slanted eyes, and kissable lips. Add to all of that his tall, muscular frame and he was a wet dream come true. Hell, she doubted he even knew what cellulite was.

She let forth a harsh giggle. *He would probably run in fear the moment I got naked.*

Not that she was getting naked for him. Hell no. That was not going to happen. They had already crossed the line with that inflaming kiss, necking in the back of the restaurant like a couple of teenagers.

But actually doing the nasty?

*Oh Lord.* She'd be so far over the line it would be as if she was in another state.

*No, you're definitely keeping your clothes on!*

She stood in her darkened doorway thinking of the new problem that could only be titled Alejandro. There was no way she could go into Candy Drop Sweet Shoppe tomorrow

and pretend tonight hadn't happened. The bastard probably wouldn't let her. All he had to do was say something sexy and dirty and she would combust immediately.

Goddamn hormones!

She ground her fist against one closed eye as she thought of the week's schedule. She was closing every night this week with Alejandro. Tonight was only Wednesday. That meant she still had Thursday, Friday, and Saturday to go. She would never survive.

At least not without doing something she would still be regretting when they put her in the ground.

"Not much I can do about it," she said with a resigned sigh. Then she let all thoughts of the night float out of her mind. It was a part of her nightly ritual. No matter what she didn't bring work home. She hadn't since she had opened the sweet shop. When she was still a financial analyst, work was the only thing she brought home.

Theodora strode through her front door and immediately felt all the insecurities and fear she had drain out of her body. The combination of coming home after an emotionally and physically draining day coupled with the cool darkness of the unlit house was like a balm for her soul.

She walked over to the small table that stood in the left corner of the room and pressed the play button on the answering machine. With half a mind, Theodora toed off her flats, picked them up from the floor and strode to her bedroom. She placed her shoes in the closet with her mind on the messages playing on the machine. Her sister had called just to say hello. Apparently she had not picked up her cellular phone when Ophelia had called. The second message was her accountant calling to confirm their meeting Friday. It was the third message that got her attention.

It was from her gynecologist.

Dr. Starr's soft, monotone voice seemed to boom through the quiet house.

“Ms. Adams, Theodora. I just received the results of your tests today. I’ve been trying to call you, but you didn’t pick up your cell phone. But I have here in your file that I should leave any information having to do with these tests in a message in the event I cannot contact you personally. Well, Theodora, I’m happy to tell you that your eggs are still very healthy and very fertile. But, like we discussed, you have maybe five good years ahead of you. Following those couple of years, childbearing will become a difficult, if not impossible goal. And if you do conceive your increased age heightens the chance for developing issues during your gestation period. Please call me at my office as soon as possible. If so, we can start the process of selecting a sperm donor as soon as you are ready.”

Theodora sighed. A sperm donor. That was the part of the process that she kept tripping over. She wanted a child. Desperately.

She didn’t want to ever explain to her baby that his or her daddy came from a test tube.

She placed her hands over her face in frustration. “Lord, what happened to the days when one could easily find a man who was ready and willing to...” She trailed off as the image of Alejandro’s face popped into her mind. Theodora slowly lowered her hands.

Alejandro had tortured her enough over the past year. She’d been craving his touch for months now, thinking of him when she masturbated and dreaming of him as she slept.

And he had made it pretty clear that he wanted her.

Her mother had always warned Theodora about looking gift horses in the mouth and maybe just this once she wouldn’t.

She wasn’t going to question Alejandro’s motives anymore.

Maybe it was time for her to get her just desserts.

She had always wanted Alejandro. From the moment he’d walked into her store and asked for a job, she’d craved the feel of his lips against hers, the hard thrust of his cock sliding into her sheath, and if he accepted her proposal she could finally appease that hunger.

But his physical attributes weren't the only things that attracted her to him. He was smart, sharp as a whip, and not afraid to let others know it.

He was always incredibly perceptive. He saw things others didn't want to see.

Attractive, charming, and intelligent, Alejandro was the kind of man she dreamed about.

And if she could capture him for a few nights, Theodora would be able to have her cake and eat it too!

## Chapter Three

### *Candy Man*

Alejandro stared at Theodora for long seconds wondering if his mind was playing tricks on him. If so, it was a very cruel, dirty trick.

Alejandro had wanted Theodora from the first moment he saw her. He hadn't stopped aching for her once in all the three hundred and sixty-five days he'd been her employee. And now he was about to have her. But on her terms.

And he didn't like her terms one bit.

"Alejandro? Do you understand what I'm asking you?"

"You want me to father your child?" he said slowly. The words were supposed to come out a statement, but because of his shock, they came out more like a question. He'd never been more surprised by a proposition in his life.

She shook her head up and down, her curly black and brown braids jumping with her movement. Suddenly, her hot chocolate eyes widened. "But not in the way you're thinking. You would have no legal obligation to the child or me. You wouldn't have to worry about child support."

"Or my parental rights?"

He grimaced when he saw her eyes widen further. He hadn't meant to growl the words at her, but for reasons he couldn't explain it nicked at his consciousness that he wouldn't even be able to claim the child.

His child.

Their child.

A child that would be a mixture of both their genes...and needs.

He suddenly wondered if he'd had Theodora wrong all along. Because she certainly had him confused with someone else if she thought he was about to sign some paper and walk away from his child.

"Or your parental rights," she responded slowly.

"So pretty much I'm a sperm donor, except I get to deposit my sperm right in your bank."

He heard her exhale and inhale. Alejandro knew his words were crude and coarse, but he needed to know exactly where he stood.

"Did you have to put it so harshly?" she said before striding from the small corner table.

He stared at her mutinously.

"I'll, of course, pay you for your services."

Alejandro gritted his teeth as he felt the Alba anger flare in him at her words. He slowly lifted his gaze to hold hers as he clenched his fingers into fists. She knew she had said the wrong thing. The shock and regret was there in her face.

"Will you be paying me by the hour or by the orgasm?"

The question thundered through the room and even to his ears he sounded angry and bruised. And the truth was he was just that. He had fallen for those mournful eyes of hers and now he knew that to her he was just a man with good genes and a hard cock.



"I'm sorry I didn't mean that the way it came out. I didn't mean to imply that you were..."

"I would just like to know exactly what my duties are, boss."

Her body tightened at his words. "Don't you dare call me that! Not now, not while we're having this conversation. I came to you as a woman. I would appreciate it if you saw me as a woman."

"I would just like to know what the limits are. I wouldn't want to find myself in a position I never should have put myself in."

"What exactly are you talking about?" she said, confusion evident in the lines marking her face.

*I'm talking about finding out that the woman I've been fantasizing about only wants me to provide the other half of the gene pool for her child, because I'm less anonymous than a vial of sperm.*

"Forget it," he said as he shrugged one large, muscular shoulder. He would take her offer, but on his terms.

Theodora turned on her heel and walked over to the kitchen sink and rinsed the remaining dirty dishes before unlatching the dishwasher and pulling the tray of clean plates out.

The sight of her bent over at the waist shot through his system like an alluring drug. His mind was instantly drawn back to the night before when he had placed his lips against hers.

The kiss had ignited him like nothing else had. After that kiss, Alejandro knew he had to have Theodora in his bed, in his life, by any means possible. Their second kiss, the one they had shared in the restaurant had confirmed his decision.

Her proposal changed nothing. He still wanted Theodora and he planned to have her.

The baby would just have to come before the marriage, because no matter what, Alejandro wanted to spend the rest of his life with Theodora.

“I have a few conditions,” he said. He saw her flinch at his words before turning to pull one of the plates from dishwasher. “Okay,” she said slowly before reaching up to put the plate away.

Alejandro stood, grasped the dish from her small fingers and calmly placed it on the shelf. “We have sex as often as I want until we’re both satisfied.”

This close to her, he couldn’t help but notice the shiver that went through Theodora’s body. He stifled the groan that threatened to escape from his lips. Her body had moved in the most delicious way when she quaked. Her breasts gave a subtle bounce and her ass jiggled.

He heard her breath hitch and falter. Then as she stared down at the scuffed toes of his sneakers, she mumbled out the word, “Okay.”

One long, blunt finger pressed against her chin lifting her face until her gaze collided with his.

“As many times as we want until we’re both satisfied, even when you’re not ovulating?”

“Okay,” she said a little more steadily. Then she promptly turned her back on him and grabbed another sparkling plate from the dishwasher.

“Shouldn’t we sign something?”

She looked over her shoulder. “I had my attorney draw up contracts.”

By the way Theodora held herself, Alejandro knew she was already starting to reconsider her offer. He wasn’t about to let her change her mind. “Did you bring the contracts?”

She tilted her head in the direction of the deep-seated counters. “It’s in the bottom drawer.”

Alejandro strode across the room and retrieved the papers in questions. Theodora quietly handled the dishes behind him as he read through the contract. When he was satisfied he signed it and walked back to her. He held out the sheets.

She stepped from the dishwasher and swallowed thickly. Fingers shaking she took the contract. He understood the source of her nerves.

They had just agreed to create a life.

Alejandro was both nervous and excited about the fact that they were tying themselves together for the term of the child's existence.

A very long time.

He quietly stood beside Theodora as she signed the contract. "I'll make sure you receive a copy of the contract." He nodded his head in agreement. She went and placed the contract back in the drawer before returning to the dishes.

"When exactly do you want to start making the baby?"

Her soft, audible gasp floated through the air. Alejandro bent and caught the plate that had fallen from her limp fingers seconds before it would have shattered against the recently mopped linoleum floor. He thanked the reflexes honed from years of playing the quarterback in high school and college.

Alejandro reached across the top of Theodora's head and placed the dish on the shelf. His body brushed against hers and he couldn't help but take a deep breath and breathe in her scent, a mixture of sweet innocence and decadent sexuality. He immediately felt his hunger rise.

He grinned down at her. He felt her spine stiffen when his arms caressed hers. She seemed uncomfortable with his proximity and Alejandro knew why. He had seen it in her bottomless brown eyes countless times. Theodora was afraid of what she would do if he touched her.

She was afraid his touch would let the inner vixen she buried free.

“Theodora?” he said softly, his voice rich and husky with desire. He couldn’t wait to let that gorgeous woman free.

“I suppose we can start...we can start as soon as you’re ready,” she said so softly he wasn’t sure he’d actually heard the words. But he felt them. They went through his body like lightning.

“Then we’ll be starting now,” he growled down at her a second before wrapping his large palms around her waist and lifting her.

“Alejandro!” she shrieked as her fingernails dug into the tense muscles of his biceps.

He grinned down at her before laying her on the long rectangle island that stood to the corner of the back room.

“Alejandro, you’re not funny,” she said as she tried to wiggle out of his grasp.

“Good, because I’m not kidding,” he said before pushing at her shoulders until she fell back against the table. When he was satisfied he walked to the other side of the room.

Theodora stared up at the ceiling and blinked once, twice before popping back up. “Alejandro! Stop it!” she said in a voice that reminded him of his sixth grade teacher. He’d a thing for Ms. Roberts too.

“Don’t make me come over there,” Alejandro growled in a deep voice that made Theodora’s eyes widen with shock.

“Alejandro, we can’t do this, at least not here.”

“Down, Theodora,” he said in a voice so rough, he wondered why she didn’t run screaming in fear. He was so aroused he could already feel his cock lengthening and thickening against his thigh. He quickly rearranged himself with deft hands.

*You, big boy, are going to have to wait,* he thought to himself before turning to Theodora. She came first.

He grinned when he found that Theodora was indeed lying down. She was a born leader. She didn't take advice or orders well, but there she was laid out for him like a sexual platter from the gods.

And he planned to take his time tasting every inch of her.

The soft squeal of his booted feet on the linoleum floor echoed through the silent room as he made his way to her. He saw her flinch when he placed the bowl he held down onto the table above her head. No doubt the sound of the contact vibrated through her system.

"Open your eyes, Theodora."

"I don't think I can," she muttered.

"Theodora, open your eyes," he said his voice stern and unyielding.

He watched as she slowly opened her eyes and then her gaze collided with his. "I'd prefer not to see it. I'd prefer not to see it coming."

"See what?" he said without really paying attention to what Theodora was saying. Alejandro's long fingers were already unbuttoned the simple cotton blouse Theodora wore.

"I'd prefer not to see the disgust."

Alejandro was one button away from having her topless when every molecule in his body stilled. He slowly lifted his head until his eyes met hers.

"What did you say?"

"I know you're doing this as a favor so I would prefer to keep my eyes closed and can we turn off the lights?" she said in a ramble.

He grabbed her wrist in a tight grip and pulled her arm until her palm settled over him. "Does this feel like a favor?" he said through clenched teeth.

She jerked against him trying to pull her hand away. He tightened his grip and then with his other hand he molded her fingers until she was cupping him. He groaned at the feel of her touch.

“Answer me. Does this feel like a favor?”

“No,” she said her voice soft and unsure.

“What does it feel like, Theo?” he prodded.

“It feels like an erection.”

“Wrong,” he said. “It’s a hard-on. I’m hard for you. Just the thought of seeing you naked and my cock is so hard I’m ready to burst out of my jeans,” he growled as he moved her palm up and down his thick length.

He closed his eyes and savored the feeling of her fingers on him, even if his clothing hindered them.

“What does it feel like, Theo?”

“Hard cock,” she said softly.

“Good girl,” he said seconds before his mouth descended on hers. His lips pressed against hers. At first touch his taste buds exploded with the decadent flavor of Theodora’s lips. His tongue glided along the seam of her closed lips before flicking against it. Theodora moaned into his mouth and Alejandro took the chance to storm her parted gates. His tongue thrust past her lips to caress the inside of her mouth.

He nipped at the tender flesh of her bottom lip and groaned when he heard her answering moan. Theodora had so much passion in her. Alejandro could feel it washing over him in waves.

He tilted her head back until her passion glazed eyes connected with his. Then he reached into his pocket and pulled the small piece of candy from his back pocket. Even, with one hand tangled in the dark strands of her hair, Alejandro deftly opened the sour apple JOLLY RANCHER and threw away the clear plastic wrapper.

“Open your mouth,” he said. His voice was husky and thick with arousal.

The thick haze in Theodora’s deep hot chocolate eyes started to clear only to be replaced by confusion.

“Open...your...mouth.”

Theodora slowly parted her lips. Alejandro held her gaze as he placed the candy on his tongue. He grinned at her as he closed his mouth and savored the sweet sour taste of the candy. Theodora’s eyes widened with shock when Alejandro gave her a grin he knew must have appeared harsh.

The moment the truth registered in Theodora’s eyes, Alejandro swooped down and captured her lips in crushing kiss. She gasped into his mouth the moment his tongue thrust into her mouth and stroked against the moist heat of Theodora’s slick tongue. Alejandro rolled the cube of candy over her tongue before sucking it back into his mouth.

The taste of Theodora and the JOLLY RANCHER burst on his tongue like a lit firecracker. He groaned against her lips as the fingers of both hands clenched in her hair. Alejandro held her head as his lips plundered her mouth, stroking in and out of the wet recesses of Theodora’s succulent mouth, spreading the sugary taste of the sweet.

His fingers drifted down to her neck to glide against the heavy curves of her breasts. Alejandro’s large, callused hands cupped the mounds of Theodora’s breasts before giving them a tentative squeeze. Theodora’s sigh of submission was muffled by his bruising kiss.

Alejandro slid his palms down her body until they settled at the hem of her blouse. Then they gripped the hem as he deepened the kiss.

His plump lips drifted from her lips to brush against the line of her jaw before settling along the sweet flesh of her tender neck. He placed nipping kisses along the length of her neck until he reached the beating pulse at her collar. Then he scraped his teeth along the sensitive skin.

“Oh...my...goodness,” Theodora whispered above his head.

His hands drifted under her shirt to settle palm down against her soft skin. He felt the soft curve of her belly dip as she sucked in her breath and gasped at the feel of his hands against her skin.

She was so hot to the touch, he wondered if this was how on fire she felt from their kiss, how his own flesh must feel against her palms. Because he felt like he was burning up.

His eyes fluttered shut as he slid his callused hands against the soft flesh of her stomach until they settled on the mounds of her full breasts. He groaned when he felt the lace of her bra brush against his skin. His fingers slowly traced the outline of her lingerie as her breathing deepened and rasped above his head.

Alejandro knew he was torturing them both with his devastating slow touch, but it felt so good to be cruel. He was more aroused than he had ever been and judging by the rough sound of Theodora's breathing, she was just as sexually excited.

His palms covered her breasts before squeezing. The sound of her gasp floated through the pungent air.

Alejandro's eyes suddenly popped open as a thought entered his mind. He slowly slid his hands down Theodora's torso and stood.

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing." He leaned forward and pressed a hard, possessory kiss on her mouth before turning and walking across the room. He stopped in front of one of the back room's counters. "Do you know how long I've dreamed of the moment I would have you here, with me, like this?"

"No," she said softly, her voice full of uncertainty.

"Since my first week here."

"Oh."

He smiled at himself as the shock and incredibility in her voice drifted through the solitary word.

"I've wanted you since I saw you tasting that week's batch of Candy Drop drops."

He turned just in time to see her eyes widen with shock and something close to comprehension. "Do you know what was going through my mind then, Theo?"



“No.”

“Take a guess,” he said as he palmed the small package in his hand.

She shook her head from side to side.

“I couldn’t help but think what if she tasted me that way? What if a woman savored me the way you savored those candies? Do you think you could learn to savor me that way?” he asked as he took slow steps to where she laid on the large countertop styled table. “Because I know I want to savor you that way.”

She closed her eyes at his words and Alejandro immediately felt his body tighten. Had he said too much? Had he revealed his true reason for agreeing to her ridiculous plan?

Then her eyes opened and they were filled lust and need, the same desire and needs that ran molten through his veins.

Her dark eyes followed him as he made his way back to her supine form.

“Undress for me,” he said slowly as he stood at the foot of the table, cushioned on either side by her thighs.

Theodora propped herself on her elbows and stared up at him with wide eyes. “What?” she croaked out.

He flashed Theodora a smile before repeating his demand. “Undress for me. I want to see you strip for me.”

Her full lips parted and closed twice before she finally spoke. “No.”

Alejandro tossed the bag in his hand and caught it in the air. “Now...Theo,” he said, his voice gruff and thick.

His erection was hard enough and thick enough to choke a horse. He was so aroused he had to grit his teeth to keep the sexual energy he felt riding his spine from overtaking him. Alejandro had every intention of making his fantasy with Theodora come true and that included watching her strip out of her clothing.

For him.

“Now,” he growled.

Her eyes widened at this tone before her small fingers tightened at the edge of her shirt.

He strode across the room and flicked the button on the little black box that sat in the corner of the room. The melodic sound of Prince’s voice floated on the air when the CD started playing.

Perfect stripping music, he thought before turning to her.

Alejandro grinned when he heard Theodora’s thick groan of dismay.

“Please tell me you’re kidding,” she said, fingers still clutching the hem of her T-shirt.

Alejandro shook his head ‘no’ slowly before propping one hip on the counter right across from Theodora. He didn’t want to miss a single moment of her dance.

“Alejandro...”

“Don’t make me beg.”

Something in his voice must have given away the need simmering in his veins because Theodora’s body language changed. She was suddenly once again the confident woman he had come to know over the last year.

The resonating sound of Prince’s vocals hitting a high note vibrated through the thick atmosphere in the back room when Theodora slid off the countertop table to stand several feet away from Alejandro.

He glanced at her feet and watched as she toed off her sneakers. When she peeled off her socks and revealed her dainty manicured feet, his mind conjured up images of him sucking on her toes.

He had never once considered the act before. Alejandro was quickly discovering Theodora made him want to explore things he’d never even envisioned.

He grinned at her.

She gave him a shy smile before turning and giving him her back. She slowly rolled her hips from side to side. Then she dipped low to the floor and Alejandro felt all the blood in his body rush south as she widened her stance and gyrated her hips so that her ass was a beacon he had to follow. Alejandro's fingers gripped the marble counter behind him as he watched the tantalizing swing of Theodora's backside.

Son of a bitch, he thought as he watched her move. Five seconds into her dance and he was already regretting his request. He wanted to take his time with Theodora, especially since there was only one first time with a lover.

But the way she was moving made him want to rip off her clothing with haste and dive right into her luscious sexuality.

Alejandro's nails scraped against the marble countertop when his grip tightened further at the sight of Theodora's body snaking down to the floor. The way she moved her body, alternately between sinuously rolling her hips and her breasts had him panting.

Then she slowly raised her shirt as she moved her upper body in a circular pattern that perfectly highlighted the dips and contours of her plus sized hourglass figure.

The sound of his thick, husky groan cut through the thick air at the sight of her cherry red lace bra.

Alejandro had fingered the cups of the delicate piece of lingerie when he had held her breasts earlier, so he had an idea of what to expect when she turned to him but he wasn't really prepared for Theodora's next move. Instead of turning to him, she lowered the waist of the boot cut jeans she wore so that the small of her back was visible.

*"Puñeta!"*

Theodora had a small, delicate, and devastatingly sexy tattoo of an African cherub on the small of her back, right above her ass.

As she gyrated her hips, she lowered her jeans until Alejandro was gifted with the full view of her red lace encased ass cheeks.

And nothing had ever looked so good to him.

Then she bent over to move her pants from the puddle around her feet.

Alejandro promptly forgot to breathe.

He sprung from the counter to stand behind her. She seemed to have heard the rush of his quick movements because she turned around slowly, eyes wide with apprehension.

“You’re dangerous, querida,” he said before wrapping his fingers around her waist and placing her on the countertop table. He lightly pressed his fingertips against the flesh beneath her collarbone until she was once again laying on the table.

The angry look in her eyes told him she was expecting something different, something more, but he had a plan and he wasn’t going to let her tantalizing body or his raging hard-on interrupt it.

Alejandro wanted Theodora on his terms.

He took a step closer to her spread thighs, filled his lungs and breathed in her alluring scent. He stared down at the small package in his hands for a second as the sound of Theodora’s rasping breath drifted through the air.

He quickly tore the small paper bag open with his bared teeth and dumped the small hard shell covered chocolates in his palm. Then he bent low until he was squatting on her level, his face inches away from her lace covered pussy.

Alejandro knew the exact moment Theodora realized where he was looking. Her sharp gasp cut through the air.

“Beautiful,” he said as one blunt index finger ran down the slick length of her slit. His eyes connected with hers. “Absolutely beautiful,” he said and then grinned when her eyes fluttered with embarrassment.

With his eyes still on hers, he placed the candies on her belly one by one until half the package was strewn across her tummy.

“What the hell are you doing?” she croaked before sitting up on her elbows.

“Down,” Alejandro growled. The urgency in his tone made her plop back down.

“I’ve had fantasies, so many fantasies about you, and this...is...just...one,” he said before placing the last candy in her belly button.

Theodora gasped at the feel of Alejandro’s callused fingers skimming across the soft skin of her belly. Then as she watched he lowered his head and placed a soft kiss against her flesh.

She groaned through parted lips when she felt his tongue flick against her hot skin. Then he slowly scraped his teeth against her flesh.

The back of her head slammed against wood countertop table in reaction. Theodora had never felt heat like she felt when Alejandro tasted her skin. It was as if she was burning up from the inside.

Alejandro licked a path from her lower abdomen up to the skin cut off by her bra and back down again.

The sound of her yelp cut through the air when he bit the sensitive flesh above her pelvis.

“I could spend hours,” he growled against her skin before Theodora felt the touch of his fingers against the mound of her sex.

She was suddenly breathless as his fingertips waited on her lace covered skin. Then the wet, hot velvet texture of his tongue was on her again as he licked his way to one of the hard candy covered chocolates that were melting on her scorched skin.

He groaned as he nibbled on the first melted candy. The sound of his rumbling groans aroused Theodora almost as much as the feel of his lips and teeth against her suddenly sensitive flesh. Then the fingers pressed against her pussy moved and all thought flew out of Theodora’s mind.

“Oh my goodness,” she moaned when his large hand snaked into her panties to caress her naked skin.

Two fingers slid down the length of her slit and she felt herself blush with embarrassment. There was no hiding her arousal. She was drenching him with her desire. She was slick, hot, and moist. Her pussy was crying out.

“Please,” she groaned before widening her thighs and lifting her pelvis, and pressing herself into his palm.

Belatedly, she realized that the soft sound she heard was one of the chocolates falling.

“Bad girl,” Alejandro whispered. His voice was as thick as molasses and just as enticing to her senses. “Somebody needs to get punished,” he said before pressing one blunt finger against the swollen head of her clitoris at the same time that he sucked at the melted chocolate on her stomach.

That was all it took.

Theodora exploded like a fireworks at a Fourth of July parade. She felt hot, wild, and beautiful as her body bowed under the pressure of her pleasure.

The soft rasp of Alejandro’s wet tongue was there when she came down from her high as he ran his tongue up her belly, licking off every molecule of the candies that had long ago melted under the heat of their desires.

Her eyes widened when she felt Alejandro pulling at the sides of her panties.

Then she was naked to his hungry gaze.

Their eyes connected for a second and Theodora felt Alejandro’s desire for her shoot through her soul.

He wanted her.

He wanted her in the same way she had always dreamed a man would one day want her.

He wanted to consume her.

She watched as he slowly lowered his head to the aching lips of her pussy.

Theodora sucked in her breath when Alejandro pressed his lips against her and kissed the swollen lips of her drenched sheath. Then he spread the lips of her sex and bared the moist flesh of her pussy.

Theodora could feel herself getting wetter, hotter, as she watched Alejandro's cognac eyes darken as he stared at her.

It was hypnotizing.

It was alluring.

It made her feel beautiful.

"Alejandro," she said in a hoarse whisper.

He seemed to hear the unspoken plea in the one word, because he lowered his head and swiped his tongue across her clit. Then he flicked it.

He groaned against her flesh before licking a hot path around the rim of her opening. Then he thrust his tongue inside of her.

Theodora cursed out loud when she felt the wet rasp of his tongue as he licked her turgid clit over and over again, laving her pussy repeatedly. Then she was gasping for air, unable to breathe as her body shook with the overwhelming pleasure.

She licked her parched lips and turned her head sideways as molten heat streaked through her body from his touch. When the pleasure became too much she shoved her fist inside of her mouth.

"Dear God," she groaned when she felt Alejandro rub his knuckles against the length of her slit, from hole to clit and back. As she shuddered beneath his touch, he slid one large finger into her moist sheath.

Her breath rasped in and out of her lungs.

A fine sheet of sweat filmed over her skin.

She was hot, sweltering, and on fire.

Theodora groaned when Alejandro slid two, blunt fingers inside of her. Then he stroked her from the inside and pressed his fingers against her flesh.

Theodora couldn't help the shudder that ran through her body.

He pulled his fingers out of her body until they were only one knuckle deep before thrusting them back in.

Theodora slid down the countertop as fire streaked through her body when Alejandro's touch lit something deep inside of her. She felt her legs tremble and shake as he stroked his fingers in and out of her burning sheath.

"Dear God," she panted as he pleased her.

"That's it, querida. Come on my fingers. Come for me," he purred, his voice husky and low.

She spread her legs wider, allowing him more access to the depths of her body. He slid three fingers into her tight sheath.

She immediately felt her pussy spasm around his fingers.

*I'm coming*, she thought before letting forth a scream. Theodora's fingers fisted in her hair as her body curved into a beautiful bow.

She opened her eyes when she felt something very big and very thick pressing against her flesh.

He was entering the slick heat of her pussy. Chest heavy, she was still gasping for breath when she propped herself on her elbows.

Alejandro wrapped the fingers of one large hand around her neck before lowering his head until their foreheads touched.

The sound of their harsh breathing echoed one another.



He stroked in another inch and Theodora couldn't help the groan that seeped through her lips.

He was large, almost too large. It had been some time now since she had been with a man and Alejandro was a large man. He didn't even begin to compare to her vibrator.

He pressed his lips against hers and thrust his tongue into her mouth.

She could taste herself in his kiss.

"Shit," he groaned as he slid another hard inch inside of her.

He was so thick, so hard and long, that Theodora couldn't help the groan that slipped from her lips when he was fully seated to the hilt.

Alejandro felt wonderful.

He withdrew and Theodora whimpered a wordless protest as her hips followed him, moving with his withdrawal, following his touch. Her toes hooked over the edge of the counter as she lifted her hips, seeking Alejandro.

"Oh my God," she screamed when Alejandro thrust back into her with titillating force, stroking the bulbous head of his cock against the inner walls of her pussy. He ground his hips against her pelvis, sending streaking fire through her body. Then he began to move with deep, powerful strokes that sent her shuddering in ecstasy.

His deep airy breath rasped in and out of his lungs. It was the only sound that came from Alejandro as he plundered Theodora's pussy. Her mewling cries for more sang through the air as Alejandro teased the deepest recesses of her body.

Alejandro pressed his firm lips to hers and took her mouth in a bruising kiss as he lowered her body to the countertop. Lips still fused together, he captured her cries of ecstasy as he stroked in and out of her flaming body.

The pleasure was too much for Theodora. She broke off their kiss and let forth a shrieking cry as her body erupted in a mind shattering orgasm. The surging rush of desire swept through her, overtaking her in its intensity as her body imploded on itself.

Alejandro grasped one thigh and opened her up as he hammered in and out of her body. His pace had changed. He was coarser, rougher, and more determined. The glittering light in his cognac eyes told her that he was nearing the edge of his line. Her mouth opened on a breathless scream as her body convulsed through another orgasm.

Alejandro let forth a harsh expletive before capturing her lips in a hot, wet kiss. Theodora's plump lips muffled the sounds of his groan of completion as he crushed her beneath him, and his body shuddered through his release.

## Chapter Four

### *Fruits of Passion*

Alejandro stared at the picture of the young family as he contemplated his situation. After a year, a lot of hard work, luck, and cold showers, he had Theodora right where he wanted her.

Kind of.

They weren't exactly in the secure relationship he had planned, but they were in a relationship.

*Kind of*, the sarcastic voice in his head chimed.

The creak of the heavy wooden door opening behind him alerted him to the fact that his father had stepped into the room.

"It's about time, Papa," he threw over his shoulder. He did not bother to turn around. He continued to stare at the picture of his family, a picture taken when he was but a child.

Five kids! His mother, Rosetta, and his father, Alberto, stood on the ends of the "Alba Train Wreck" that was their five children. One long, gracefully masculine finger traced the smile that his younger self wore. He put the picture back on the table that was almost as old as the ancient house and turned to his father.

“How did you do it, Papa? How did you raise us all to be, well...” He shrugged one muscular shoulder. “...normal,” he finished.

Alberto made his way across the room to stand beside him. He stared at the picture frame Alejandro had returned. He clasped his son on the shoulder and looked him in the eyes.

The sight in Alberto’s topaz eyes, eyes that looked so much like his, let Alejandro know that his father was thinking of a time long gone. “I didn’t have a choice. Your mother wouldn’t have it any other way. She wanted her children to be happy and well adjusted. I didn’t know much about being a decent human being let alone being a good parent so I let her lead the way.” His father grasped his face in both hands. “And she did a fine job raising you children, especially you,” Alberto said softly as he gazed into his son’s eyes.

He smiled at Alejandro. “Something tells me you found her.”

“Found who?” Alejandro asked softly.

His father’s grin got wider. “Playing dumb, eh? You definitely found her. When do I get to meet her? When is the wedding?”

Alejandro stepped back, breaking his father’s grasp. He took several steps away from where the old man stood and gave him his back as he feigned interest in an ancient copy of *Don Quixote* in its original language.

“There’s no her,” Alejandro murmured.

He could hear his father moving around the room. Then there was the soft groan of the old leather chair under pressure. His father had taken his seat at his desk.

Alejandro turned to find the old man watching him from his seat. “There are only two reasons a man worries about raising children. Number one: There is a her, the HER, to be specific. Or number two: there’s a her, who is pregnant. And I know you well enough to know it’s not number two.”

“I didn’t know you called me all the way over here to talk about my nonexistent love life.”

“Defensive. Oh, there’s a her, and she’s giving you a run for your money. Now I really can’t wait to meet her.”

Alejandro’s father must have seen something in his face that told him the conversation was closed because he sighed and leaned forward on his desk. “When are you going to quit this ridiculous job at that candy store and come work for your father?”

Alejandro regarded him for a few seconds before he replied. “When I get what I went there for.”

“Is there anything I can do to speed this process along? I’m getting tired of going through CEOs.”

Alejandro’s harsh laugh bounced off the old mahogany walls. “Trust me, at this point, if there was something I thought you could do, I would ask.” One large hand ran through his hair and caressed the skin at the back of his neck. “I’m getting damned tired of waiting.”

His father’s eyes searched his face for several moments before he folded both arms over his broad chest and smirked at Alejandro. “She’d better be worth losing millions of dollars as my CEO.”

Alejandro leaned back against the built-in bookshelf and crossed his arms over his chest. He regarded his father. “Was Mom worth it?”

Alberto’s laugh resounded through the air. “Hell, yeah, your mom was worth it.” He stopped laughing and stared at Alejandro. “Are we honestly talking about the serious stuff? Marriage?”

“No,” Alejandro said with a shake of his head. “Right now we’re just talking about a kid. I’m trying to work my way up to marriage and multiple kids.”

## Chapter Five

### *Crème de la Crème*

Alejandro knocked three sharp raps against the hard wooden door before striding into the room. The loud squeak of Theodora's outraged cry greeted him as he entered her bedroom.

She fidgeted as she held the large blood red towel to her naked body in a death grip. "What the hell..." she screamed as she attempted to cover every inch of her body with the oversized towel.

Fortunately for him it was not working.

Alejandro gave Theodora a once-over before smirking at her outraged face.

Granted, she had a right to be angry. He had gone out this morning for some fresh fruits and juice for breakfast. Then he realized there were a few items he wanted to pick up at his place, so he ended up taking a little detour.

No doubt Theodora had been surprised and angry to find herself alone when she had awakened. He didn't even want to think of the thoughts that had gone through her pretty little head.

He had witnessed her anger from afar on a few occasions. His gorgeous minx had a vivacious temper on her. It took much to spark it, but when her flame was lit, she was an atomic bomb.

And the side-glance she was giving him as she tied her robe around her naked body told Alejandro he had sparked her fuse.

He gave her a mischievous grin that widened when her eyes narrowed in anger. Alejandro couldn't help himself. He winked at her.

She sputtered for a few seconds before finally finding the words. "What the hell do you think you're doing? How the hell did you get in?"

He carefully set down his package of food and drinks before turning to Theodora. "Number one," he said with a pointed index finger, "I've brought you breakfast. You were out of breakfast food. Number two: I borrowed your spare keys." Between his long fingers he jingled the keys in question.

Alejandro watched Theodora's reaction and wasn't disappointed. It took her approximately two seconds to light. She threw the small container of scented lotion she had been holding to the floor and stood from the bed. The sound of her marching steps echoed through the room as she stormed her way to him.

Alejandro leaned one slim hip against her dresser and crossed his arms across his broad chest. He was waiting for her with a smirk.

She struck out the moment she reached him. He caught her small palm inches from his face and dragged her body across the few feet that separated them. Theodora landed with an outraged gasp against his chest.

He felt the hunger rise within him the moment she touched his body. The last couple of days had been tortuous hell for him. It was part of the reason Theodora was angry. He hadn't touched her since that night in the sweet shop. Instead he had spent the last couple of days courting her. And Theodora didn't like it. By her own words and actions, he knew she

wanted to keep things based purely on sex. According to Theodora, “they were supposed to make a baby, not a relationship.”

He almost snorted out loud at the thought.

“Let me go,” she growled against his chest.

Alejandro stared down at her with a quirked eyebrow. “Why do I get the feeling that you’re mad at me, boss?”

“Maybe that’s because I am mad at you,” she said as she struggled to escape his grasp.

“Can I ask why, boss?” he said slowly, his voice thick and sweet. He had an idea of what she was really mad about, but he wanted to hear her admit it. At the very least, he wanted his little minx to squirm.

She stilled in his arms, took a deep breath and then looked up at him. “Excuse me?”

“Why are you mad at me?”

“You slept on my couch. You took my spare keys. And then when you came back you burst into my apartment as if you own it.”

“I don’t think that’s why you’re mad at me, boss,” he drawled.

“Why the hell are you calling me that?” she snapped with an elbow in his gut.

He sucked in a deep breath and smiled down at her. She glared back at him. Alejandro couldn’t help but laugh at her reactionary growl. “I seem to recall that you are the owner of the Candy Drop Sweet Shoppe and I work mostly nights there. I’m an employee and you’re the employer. That makes you my boss.”

Mute, Theodora stared up at Alejandro with angry eyes. He nudged her voluptuous body back a few steps.

“Boss, tell me why you’re mad at me.”

“I already told you,” she said. Then her hands flew out and gripped his shoulders as she fell back. Theodora landed with a bounce atop the mattress.



“I don’t think that’s why you’re mad at me,” he growled.

Alejandro nudged her legs apart and fitted himself between Theodora’s sprawled thighs. He leaned over her. Their bodies barely touched one another, but he could feel the heat from her skin.

Alejandro lowered his face until his lips were a breath from hers. He held her gaze for long moments. “Are you ovulating yet?”

He knew his question threw her for a loop by the way her eyes widened in surprise. She didn’t even have enough time to lie. Her wet pink tongue nervously darted out to lick her bottom lip. Alejandro immediately felt his cock stir. “I began...today is the first day of my fertility period.”

“Good,” he growled before crossing the miniscule space that separated them and kissing her.

Alejandro crushed Theodora into the bed as he pressed his body against hers and consumed her lips. The last couple of days had felt like a form of ancient Chinese torture as he watched, but didn’t touch, Theodora. He had courted her, spending long hours in her presence without once initiating anything. Courting a woman had never been so hard.

Neither had his cock.

Now he took his time to feast from her sweet mouth.

Theodora’s lips softened beneath his. She gasped into his mouth. Alejandro’s tongue, hot and wet, slowly parted her lips and leisurely explored the sweet recesses of her mouth. The hunger that had been rising in Alejandro took over.

He grasped Theodora’s head in his large, rough palms, slanted his lips over hers, and increased the hungry pressure of his kiss. He groaned when he felt Theodora’s fingernails dig into the flesh of his thick shoulders. Her tongue tentatively forayed into his mouth to slide against his own.

“Goddamn,” Alejandro growled against her lips. He ground his hips against hers, rubbing his growing bulge against Theodora’s moistening cleft.

With deft hands, Alejandro parted Theodora’s terry cloth robe to reveal the mounds of her bountiful breasts. He breathed against one ripe breast and watched as her nipple tightened with arousal. The sound of her moan vibrated through the air. His tongue darted out and rasped against the distended tip.

“Oh...my...goodness,” she whispered on a breathless gasp.

Alejandro encased Theodora’s breast with the wet, hot heat of his mouth. He wrapped his lips around her nipple and sucked hard, pulling at it and eliciting groans from her lips. He flicked his tongue against the turgid bud. One long fingered hand drifted across her body to pluck at Theodora’s neglected nipple.

Alejandro pulled, pinched, and tugged one nipple as he suckled the other.

“Alejandro,” she moaned.

His hand left her breast to drift down her body, slip through the part in her robe, to touch the soft mound of her moistening pussy. His fingers parted the thick lips of her sex to stroke the moist inner flesh. His thumb flicked the engorged head of her clitoris.

Theodora gasped and shuddered against him.

Then one finger slipped into the slick warmth of her mound, sliding past her tight, contracting muscles to stroke her inner depths.

She groaned above him when his lips ground against the swollen nub of her nipple at the same time that his thumb ground against her clit. His finger caressed the inner walls of her pussy.

She was so hot to the touch, hotter than any other woman, hotter than even a flame to his skin. He felt like he was dying as he listened to the sounds of her lusty moans as his finger slid in and out of her pussy.

He thrust a second finger inside of her at the same time that he bit her nipple. Alejandro watched fascinated as her body bowed, her muscles tightened and contracted, and her eyes fluttered shut. Theodora's lips parted on an airy moan as her body shuddered through a climax that singed his fingers as he pumped in and out of her pussy as her cunt muscles rippled around him.

He pulled his fingers from the wet heat of her body and swiped his fingers across Theodora's gasping lips before capturing her lips in a heated kiss. Alejandro's tongue slipped past her parted lips to sweep across her tongue to touch the inner cavern of her mouth. The flavor that was Theodora burst on his tongue almost immediately. He could taste her on two levels. He could taste the sweet heat of her desire, of her sex, and he could taste the succulent concoction of her alluring lips.

Alejandro slanted his lips and scraped his teeth against the soft, sensitive flesh of her lips. Theodora groaned against his lips before tangling her fingers in the strands of his hair. She clung to him and pulled his body close to hers. Then she gave a sweet sigh of relief when Alejandro planted his body atop hers.

Alejandro ground his jean clad hips against the tender flesh between Theodora's thighs until her head fell back against the plush red comforter.

Her eyes were closed tightly. Her fingers dug into the muscles of his shoulders. Her lips were parted and wet. Alejandro stifled a harsh groan as the sight of her climbing higher toward her climax slammed through his system.

She was beautiful with her sensuality.

But he wanted to be inside her the next time she found her release.

"I've got something for you, boss," he growled before dragging his reluctant body away from her. He knelt on the bed and tried to take deep breaths to steady his system.

He had been close to following her over the edge. The one and only time he had come in his pants, he was fifteen.

Theodora made him feel insecure, desperate, and rejuvenated.

She was intoxicating.

Her deep, chocolate eyes slowly drifted open. Then it took them a moment to focus on him. She stared at him with confusion in her gaze. "What's wrong?"

"I've got something special for you, boss."

Her eyes darkened with anger. "I told you not to call me that."

He jumped from the bed and strode to her cherry wood dresser. "Why not?" he called over his shoulder as he rummaged through the small leather travel bag he had picked up at his apartment.

"Because," she said halfheartedly.

He turned in time to catch her shrug. His eyes darted down to her hands and took in the sight of her small fists.

He pulled a few items from the bag, stuffed them in the front pockets of his worn jeans, and slugged the leather strap onto his shoulder.

"You're going to have to do better than that, boss," he said emphasizing the last word.

"Do not call me that," she spat. She was now sitting on the bed with her legs curled beneath her.

"Why?"

"Because it makes it seem as though I'm a job. It makes it seem as though I'm ordering you to do...stuff."

He smiled at her uncomfortable statement. "You could ask me to do stuff."

"I think I've asked enough," she said before moving across the bed.

He staved her off and with his quick, long legged stride he made it to Theodora before she reached the edge of the large bed. One large palm pushed at her shoulder and she fell back against the mattress.

Then he was leaning over her, just a breath away from her lips. “We are in this together. You can demand anything of me and I will do it.”

She stared at him for long seconds before nervously licking her lips. “Anything?” she asked softly.

“Anything. And I can demand anything of you and you will do it.”

It wasn’t a question. It was a statement. Alejandro wanted Theodora to know that she would all he asked of her. She was his in totality.

“Anything?”

“Anything.”

“What if I’m not...”

“I’ll make you comfortable with it and I’ll make you enjoy it.”

She stared into his eyes for long seconds. Alejandro could almost see her complex mind working. He waited with bated breath as she decided whether or not to trust and believe in him. “Okay,” she said finally.

“Good. My first demand comes now.”

Alejandro pulled out the wisps of fabric he had shoved into his pockets. “Take off your robe,” he said before moving from on top of her and kneeling between her thighs.

She stared at him for long moments. When he quirked one eyebrow at her, she shrugged both shoulders as she considered him. “What?”

“I demand and you comply. In this I am your master. I’m the crème de la crème,” he said with a mischievous grin. “Take off your robe, boss.”

“Fine,” she said with a sniff as she shrugged out of her robe.

Apparently someone didn’t like being ordered around, Alejandro thought with a wry grin. They both had dominating personalities. It would be interesting to see who ended up on top.

The moment Theodora shrugged out of her devastatingly adorable terry robe, Alejandro was on top of her. One hand fisted in her hair and held her captive as his lips teased, nipped, and cajoled hers into opening. When she submitted to his domination and her lips parted for his thrusting tongue, his fingers left the midnight sanctuary of her hair.

Above her head as his tongue stroked in and out of her mouth, his hands untied the soft scarves he held. Then he deftly, but loosely tied them around her wrists.

Theodora groaned beneath him as his fingers skimmed the soft skin of her wrists. He immediately increased the hungry pressure of his mouth. He didn't let up on the domineering kiss until he had Theodora secured to the wrought iron posts of her intricately woven headboard. Only then did he lift his head.

She instinctively followed his movements. It was at that moment Theodora realized she was tied to the headboard.

Her beautiful deep brown eyes stared up at him with blatant shock. "This is your demand?" she asked on a breathless whisper.

His grin was a harsh parody of a smile. "Yes. I want you on my terms."

She swallowed slowly and then her lips parted. "Okay."

"Okay," Alejandro said before pressing his lips to hers and giving her a soft kiss. He took a step back and rummaged through the black leather bag on the floor beside the bed. He slowly placed the items from the bag onto her nightstand. The sound of her breathless gasps seemed to float through the air with every item. To his ears it seemed that her gasps got louder with each article he placed on the table.

Alejandro picked up one of the brightest of the items. "I call this one 'pink passion,'" Alejandro said as he held up the bright pink clit vibrator. "The best part," he said, "is that it's supposed to cup around the clit itself."

"Alejandro," she called softly with wariness in her voice.

“Let’s see how well it works,” he said before parting the lips of her sex and placing the cupped end of the vibrator on top of the already swollen head of her clitoris. As one hand held the vibrator to her, his other allowed his fingers to glide against the moist flesh.

“If I had to guess, querida, I’d say you’ve actually gotten wetter. I think you’re enjoying my game more than you’re letting on.”

Her eyes closed at his words. He laughed at her silent denial.

“You can run, Theodora, but you can’t hide. Not from me and certainly not from yourself,” he whispered into her ear.

She flinched at this nearness. Alejandro was so close to her quivering body that he knew she could feel his moist, hot breath on the shell of her ear.

He stayed there, close to her, but not touching her. He stayed there with the silent and dead vibrator sitting on top of her clitoris. Then when her breath was steady and she was comfortable with his touch, he flicked the small black switch at the end of the grip.

Her eyes flew open as her body instantly came alive.

Alejandro’s eyes caught her gaze and held it as the toy teased, caressed, and vibrated the most delicate inch of her body.

“You know what the best part is,” he growled lightly against the mound of one of Theodora’s bountiful breasts. “The best part is I can adjust the intensity of the vibrations. I can turn it up high,” he said as he moved the control. She immediately jumped, tried to shut her thighs, and when that didn’t work because of his thighs, she screamed.

“Dear God, Alejandro!” she yelped.

“Or I could make it purr,” he said before switching it to the lowest setting.

He slipped two fingers into her creaming sheath and stroked the moist, warm depths of her body. The only two sounds in the room were the harsh echoing breaths of her gasp for air and the low, steady purr of the battery operated toy.

Alejandro dipped his head and captured one pert nipple between his lips. He rolled the nubbin between his lips before surrounding in with the moist heat of his talented mouth. Theodora groaned and let forth an expletive as his lips worked at her breasts, licking, nipping, and sucking until he began to hear her pant.

He lifted his head to stare down at her painfully swollen nipple, wet with the moisture from his mouth. Her nipple was so tight, dark, and slick it reminded him of the gemstone onyx.

He had left his mark on her flesh.

Alejandro slowly pulled his fingers from her slick cunt. Then he moved the knob on the side of the bright pink vibrator. The speed of the low hum immediately went up a notch.

He darted a glance at the ties that held her to her headboard. She wasn't going anywhere.

He rummaged through the black leather bag at the foot of the bed and pulled out one of the smaller dildos. For some reason he hadn't felt comfortable purchasing one of the larger dildos. Alejandro wanted to be the only thing that scraped along Theodora's tight walls and stretched her.

"Querida," he whispered softly. "I bought myself a gift, but you get to play with it."

Her eyes softly fluttered open when he turned off the clit vibrator and removed it from her clit. Then she was groaning as he rubbed the gel vibrating dildo against the swollen lips of her pussy. He slowly pressed the toy into her clinging heat. Theodora's fingers tightened on the scarves that bound her.

"The last few days have slowly killed me."

"Why?" she asked with a half lidded glance. Then air was passing through her lips as the vibrating action of the dildo worked at the sensitive flesh of her body.

His smile was harsh as he looked down at her. "Not touching you was killing me."

"Why?" she breathed out on a whimper.



Alejandro knew he was torturing them both by having a conversation at that moment, but he couldn't help himself. He wanted Theodora to know how he felt the last week and he knew that at that moment she was vulnerable enough to accept the truth of his words.

"I didn't touch you because I wanted to get to know you better."

Her eyes connected with his.

"I wanted to get to know the woman who would one day mother my child."

Her eyes fluttered shut and her body bowed. Then she was shivering and shuddering as pleasure streaked through her veins. "Alejandro," she screamed as she came hard for him.

He watched Theodora as her body imploded on itself. The sound of her voice screaming out his name was burned into his memory along with the sight of her pleasure. Alejandro knew then that he could not let her go.

\* \* \* \* \*

Alejandro was tearing apart her carefully constructed plan. The night before Theodora had gone to him with her offer that he father her child in exchange for funds, she had promised herself that she would not get emotionally attached to him no matter what happened.

The last couple of days had made it difficult for her to keep her own promise. The last few moments had made it impossible. She could feel herself falling for him and he was a man she could never hope to keep.

The best she could hope to do was make Alejandro happy while he was still hers. She had to abide by her own rules. They were there to make a baby, not a relationship. And she had to remember that.

Always.

Her eyes connected with his and she felt her heart lurch at the sight of the emotion shining in his cognac gaze. His long, blunt fingers tugged at the flesh of her wide, rounded

hips as he pulled her body to his. Then he was sinking his hard, long length into her quivering pussy.

She closed her eyes and bit her lip as the anticipated sensation of being filled to the brim ran through her.

She'd had sex before. Once or twice Theodora had even believed that she was making love, but nothing compared to being with Alejandro.

He was devastating to her senses.

He was devastating to her sense of self.

She focused on the pleasure strumming through her veins as the fluttering muscles of her pussy tightened around Alejandro's cock.

His hot, moist, peppermint scented breath drifted over the sensitive skin of her neck as he leaned over. Their bodies, slick with sweat, arousal, and need, slid against one another as he pumped in and out of her tender flesh.

The sounds of their moans of pleasure and ecstasy echoed of each other. They moved to a rhythm that was older than time and as young as humanity.

Her fingers clung to the bindings as she threw her head back and sang out praise for his harsh movements as he hammered into her, forcing her to fall over the edge and into the dark abyss of satisfaction when she climaxed beneath him.

He was relentless as she screamed out his name and begged for mercy. He plunged in and out of her, stroking deep into her womb, even though her cries vibrated off the walls. She bit into the tensed muscles of his shoulder as her second climax thundered through her arched body as he thrust into her contracting cunt.

His breath wafted over her parted lips seconds before he pressed his mouth to hers. His tongue thrust past the parted gates of her lips to plunder the inner recesses of her mouth. He stroked and licked at her, gliding his tongue along hers as his cock stroked the tender depths of her pussy.

Alejandro growled against her mouth and grinded his hips against hers. She sighed when he began pumping his hard length into her quivering mound.

“Look at me,” Alejandro growled against her gasping lips. Her eyes slowly fluttered open and connected with his. The hunger and desire she saw there took her breath away.

She couldn’t tear her eyes away from him even as another orgasm shot through every one of her senses. Her toes pointed and her nails dug into the flesh of his back as she groaned her satisfaction.

Alejandro whispered something unintelligible against the moist skin of her neck, ground his hips against hers and shuddered his release. He pumped himself against her mound and released his seed inside of her.

A seed that she prayed would grow into a child.

## Chapter Six

### *Ingredients Included*

Theodora pressed one small palm against her mouth and yawned. She shrugged one softly rounded shoulder at the disgruntled face she received in reaction. She was not exactly riveted and her companion did not take her lack of attention well. She darted a look at the woman sitting across from her. With her angelic features and shiny, black curly hair Katarina reminded Theodora of a grown-up cherub. But there was nothing sweet or heavenly about the glare she was shooting Theodora. Yep, Katarina was definitely disgruntled to say the least.

Katarina snorted at her. "I meant what I said."

It took Theodora a moment to remember what Kat was talking about. Understanding dawned. "What do you mean you're not going to try any of my cookies?" Theodora finally managed to get out. The shock in her voice was the one thing that was clear.

"You heard me," the petulant, beautiful, caramel skinned, overgrown child said. Granted the description wasn't fair because Katarina was the same age that Theodora was, but she was certainly acting the part of the irritating child.

If Theodora took her eyes off her for one second, Kat huffed and puffed and threatened to burn her shop down.

Theodora stared at Katarina as if she had lost her mind, which must have been exactly what happened. Katarina never turned down dessert.

Especially cookies.

She glared at the woman before her. “Who are you and what have you done with my best friend?”

Kat stuck her tongue out. “I’m serious. I have a plan and I’m sticking to it.”

Something didn’t make sense. She was adding one and one and not getting two. Katarina and chocolate meant Kat eating chocolate until she was sick. Chocolate was to Katarina what marijuana was to a dopehead. She couldn’t live without it.

“You do realize that I’m making a batch of double chocolate chip cookies, a batch of mixed chocolate chips, and another batch of triple chocolate cookies with walnuts and just the right amount of oatmeal?”

“I know,” Katarina muttered as she chewed on a celery stick.

Theodora eyed the celery stick warily. *Where the hell did that damn thing come from?* she thought before fishing out a bag of gourmet chocolate chips. She turned back to Kat.

Theodora held out several chocolate chips.

Kat simply shook her head morosely.

“You have got to be kidding me,” Theodora yelled flabbergasted as she waved her mixing spoon in exasperation.

“I’m on a diet,” Katarina said with a huff.

“What the hell are you talking about?”

“I’m...on...a...diet.”

She rolled her eyes at the woman she dared to call her best friend. “Why?” Theodora asked as she poured flour into the liquid moisture.

Katarina threw her hands into the air in frustration. “Because I’m fat,” she growled in a voice that was deep and crumbling.

Theodora arched an eyebrow at her outburst. “And what do you mean by that?”

“Theodora, let’s not pretend. I’m more than a little overweight. I’m freaking fat.”

“Do you feel unhealthy? You feel like you can’t do activities you want to because of your weight?”

“Not really, not unless you count mini skirts,” Katarina said with a self-conscious giggle.

“Well,” Theodora said as she spooned white chocolate chips into the batter. “I think you’re perfect.”

“Easy for you to say.”

“What’s that supposed to mean? I’m no size two.”

“Yeah, but you’ve got a young, hot stud. I’ve got a vibrator with dead batteries.”

“What?” Theodora sputtered as she stirred the batter. “And who says young, hot stud nowadays?”

“I do. I’m fat and archaic, so hah.”

“Katarina!”

“Let’s not talk about my diet. Let’s talk about your new hubby,” she said as she shook her finger at Theodora.

“He is not my hubby,” Theodora muttered, chagrined.

“Uh huh,” Katarina said with a snort.

“He’s helping me with a problem. That’s all.”

“You call knocking you up ‘helping you with a problem?’” Katarina shouted with large, wide eyes.

“I’m allowed to call it whatever I want. It’s my relationship.”

“Hah! You said it. You’re in a relationship.”

“Oh shut up.” Theodora picked up the first thing she saw, the tablecloth, and threw it at Katarina. Unfortunately she ducked the flying fabric.

“Oh no! One of us is getting some. I’m going to live vicariously through you. Tell me all about that luscious mix of heaven and hell.”

“Heaven and hell?” Theodora asked before spooning a small circle of cookie dough onto the cookie pan.

“He looks like heaven, but I’m sure he does things that no angel would ever consider doing in bed.”

Theodora couldn’t help the heat that rose in her face. She wasn’t about to tell Katarina that she was right. Alejandro was a god in and out of bed. That was the problem.

“So tell me about him.”

“There’s nothing to tell. Its just sex.”

“Is it?” Katarina asked pointedly. That was the problem with best friends. They knew what you were saying wasn’t all that you wanted to say.

Damn, she thought as she warily eyed Katarina. She was immediately considering what to tell the overly romantic curly haired beauty. She did *not* want Kat thinking there was a relationship when there wasn’t one, but then again, Katarina always found a relationship where there wasn’t one. It was bad enough telling her own mind to stop picturing a fire where there wasn’t even the scent of smoke. She didn’t need Kat egging her on, making her believe things that could never be.

“Fine, it’s just great sex.”

“Oh, no you don’t,” Katarina said in a stern voice that took Theodora back to her childhood as she lunged from her seat. Theodora dubiously eyed the celery stick Kat was wielding at her like a sword. “I can see those gears moving in your head. Don’t you even think about skimping on the details. Tell me everything.”

“There’s nothing to tell,” Theodora said in a shy whisper. She was suddenly unwilling to say the things she and Alejandro had done.

“Why don’t you let me decide that? Spill it.”

“A lady does not kiss and tell,” Theodora said with a saucy, raised eyebrow.

“And who said anything about a lady? I’m talking to you. Tell.”

“Touché,” Theodora said with a bubbling laugh.

“So tell me exactly why you’re so exhausted. And don’t leave out all the juicy, naughty details. Porn is starting to bore me.”

“Katarina!”

“What? I’m just telling the truth. Now it’s your turn.”

“We’re just friends, friends with a very different sort of benefits.”

“How different?” Katarina asked with wide-eyed fascination.

“You’re disgusting and depraved.”

“You knew about all that years ago. Stop stalling.”

Theodora let out a sigh. She eyed her girlfriend dubiously and finally came to a decision. “He’s unlike any other man I’ve ever met.”

“Is that good or bad?”

“To be perfectly honest, I don’t know the answer.”

“Do you want to know the answer?”

“Dear God, yes. He’s incredible. When he looks at me sometimes I think...things I have no right to think. It’s disarming.”



“He makes you wish for more.”

“Yeah, he makes me wish that the moments we spent together never ended. Worst of all he makes me feel that I am more than fine. He makes me feel like I’m perfect, at least as far as he’s concerned.”

“Damn. And that’s all a girl wants.”

“That’s all this girl wants at least.”

## Chapter Seven

### *Raw Sugar*

“Okay, now you can open your eyes.”

Theodora took a deep breath and did as Alejandro commanded. The sight before her left her speechless. When she caught her breath, she turned to find him watching her cautiously.

“Thank you so much,” she exclaimed as she threw her arms around his neck. He lowered his head. She gave him a swift, hard kiss in thanks.

“I should be thanking you,” he murmured against her lips before moving his mouth across hers. The sweet glide of his lips over hers made Theodora’s belly drop as goose bumps broke out along her flesh. They had been going out for some time now, but each time Alejandro kissed her, she felt the sharp flavor of passion ring strongly throughout her body.

“You’re welcome,” she breathed out before thrusting her tongue into his mouth.

She had been more than reluctant when he’d “informed” her that they were going out for lunch. Out on a date.

As she had tested out her latest recipes, she and Katarina had talked about her relationship or lack thereof with Alejandro. Although Kat had tried to convince her

otherwise, Theodora reaffirmed her decision to keep things somewhat professional between her and Alejandro. Meaning she could not afford to get emotionally attached to him in any way, shape, or form.

And then he'd asked her out on a date.

She had given him an unequivocal no. Somehow he'd convinced her to change her mind. She thought about what he had done for her. A picnic in front of an old drive-in movie theater.

Theodora was very glad she had agreed.

She broke off the kiss before things got too hot and heavy. "We'll never even make it through the previews," she said in response to the question in his eyes.

"Maybe that's the plan," he growled as he reached for her. She evaded his hands and laughed. One dark eyebrow lifted in mocking irritation. Theodora took off running.

She reached the laid out blanket just as Alejandro's hands wrapped around her waist. Together they fell onto the blanket. Luckily, they missed the items Alejandro had strategically placed upon it.

He rolled her onto her back just as the music from the previews sounded around them. "What are you doing?" she asked when he started to lower his head.

"Kissing you?"

She smiled. "It better only be kissing."

"Why is that?" He said the words against her mouth as he stared into her eyes.

"We came here to watch a movie and we're in public."

He lifted his head and glanced around them. "I don't see anybody."

She paused as she thought about it. They were the only people at the drive-in. "Why is that?"

Alejandro flashed her a grin. "I know a guy who knows a guy."

“It’s good to have friends, huh?”

“It’s even better to have lovers.” The soft roll of his masculine laughter swept over Theodora, igniting a visceral reaction through the folds of her pussy. Her breathing became shallow and her heart rate doubled in time. She both loved and hated the fact that even Alejandro’s words elicited a carnal response from her body.

Still, she wasn’t into public displays of affection. Even kissing in front of others made her uncomfortable.

And they were most definitely in an open field. You didn’t get more public than that. “What movie are we watching?”

He glanced toward the screen. She saw the cool dismissal flash across his face before he turned back to her. “I’d much rather be watching you.”

She lifted her hands, running her palms across his hard torso until she reached his wide shoulders. “Seriously, Alejandro?” she chided.

He pressed his lips to the under curve of her jaw. “I’m always serious about making love to you.”

Sharp emotions that were a mixture of excitement and fear enveloped her. “Not here,” she responded even as she lifted her head and pressed her mouth against his.

*We’re just kissing. Nothing more@.*

Theodora clung to the idea that she could keep things under control as she allowed herself to delve deep into the deliciousness of Alejandro’s kisses.

But he effectively shattered her myth when he broke off their heated kiss to whisper in her ear. “I’m going to fuck you so good your scream will be heard in town.”

She shivered as desire rolled over her, teasing her skin, firing up every nerve ending in her body, paying particular attention to the ones in her erogenous zones. Her sheath pulsed with the need his harsh, erotic words birthed.

“Take me home, Alejandro.”

He shook his head, midnight hair flowing around his shoulders, giving him the look of a fallen angel. The man was not only handsome enough to play the part, he was devilish enough to be Lucifer himself.

Holding her gaze, he sat up. Leaning a little forward he grabbed her wrists and crossed them above her head. Feeling like she was in the middle of a foggy, lusty dream she allowed herself to be led.

“Keep your hands above your head,” Alejandro whispered before pressing a hard, quick kiss against her lips. He lunged to his feet and took a step away from her.

She didn’t move, waiting for him to give her permission to move. It never came.

In the few weeks they had been together, he’d trained her well.

She should have felt embarrassment, but instead she was pleased by how far they had come.

Tension rode every inch of her body as Theodora watched Alejandro make his way to the picnic basket across the blanket. She watched it warily. Lord knew what he had in there.

She’d learned in no time at all that Alejandro was very comfortable with sexual aids. He flipped open the basket and pulled two items from it. She immediately recognized one of the items. A bottle of red wine.

The second didn’t become clear to her until he stood right in front of her.

She stared at the long, slim purple vibrator in surprise. “Where the hell do you find these things?”

He grinned at her as he dropped to his knees and reached for her shoes. “Believe it or not, there are stores that sell these things for a woman’s pleasure.”

She glared at him. “That wasn’t what I meant and you know it.”

He removed her left shoe. “Maybe...now tell me, Theo, are you wet?”

She sucked in a breath at his bold question. It wasn’t that Alejandro hadn’t asked her more intimate things, but at those times they had been alone in her apartment.

He removed her second shoe. "You better answer me, querida...before I find out for myself."

"Yes." The single, damning word floated over her lips a second before his long, strong fingers threaded through her braids and pulled her to him.

"Good," he murmured against her mouth. His lips captured hers in a kiss that was both tender and teasing. In his kiss, Theodora could feel Alejandro's desire to prolong both of their pleasure. The soft kiss was meant to keep their desires humming, not flaming out of control. His tongue stroked deep into her mouth to coax hers into an ardent reaction before conquering the sweet cavern of her mouth.

His large, capable hands moved down her back, wakening her nerve endings as they moved the cool fabric of her spring dress across her sensitive skin. Alejandro palmed her bottom, cupping the full cheeks of her ass, before tightening his fingers around the rounded globes. Heat shot through the already slick folds of her cunt. Theodora ground her hips against his as his amorous touch elicited a dark reaction within her.

She didn't know how he had done it, but all of a sudden she wasn't so concerned that they were in the middle of a field, where anyone could walk up on them.

If anything it heightened her pleasure, increased her awareness of his every touch.

Almost as though Alejandro heard her thoughts and needed to push Theodora farther than she'd ever gone, he spoke. "You know not every moviegoer in the area knows I rented the theater for the night."

"And?" Theodora knew if she truly pushed, Alejandro would take her home and make love to her in the safety of her condo, but her need burned too brightly for her to wait that long for satisfaction. And there was the tantalizing allure of doing something so risky.

He leveraged himself on his strong forearms and stared down at her. She loved the fact that his desire always shined in his eyes, that when Alejandro got truly turned on his eyes lightened to that of a sleek, great cat.

She swallowed thickly, feeling like the prey to the panther.

“We’re going to do it here and you’re going to enjoy it...thinking about others watching me go down on you...thinking about others watching me fuck you hard and deep.”

*Holy fuck!* Theodora’s breath hitched and something akin to wildfire spread through her lower abdomen and pussy. She wanted him so badly her body was crying out her need. Her sheath was slick with the creamy evidence of her desire.

“Alejandro...”

He shook his head softly. “Say it, Theodora.”

She licked her lips slowly and tasted the salty flavor of decadent desire. She swallowed it before giving him what he wanted. “I want you to fuck me right here...right now.”

“Never heard anything so beautiful.” He stole her lips in a demanding kiss. Drowning in the feel of his lips moving over hers, feeding her the flavor of Alejandro’s desire, Theodora lifted her hands and placed them on his shoulders. She groaned his name as her palms moved over his flesh, indulging in the shift of muscle as he wrapped his arms around her.

Needing more than he was giving her, she broke off the kiss. “I need you now.”

He pressed a quick, possessive kiss against her mouth. His hands skimmed her body, mapping her curves until they rested beneath her breasts. Unable to help herself, Theodora rolled her torso just the tiniest bit. The act made her breasts jiggle in his palms.

Alejandro lifted his head, caught her gaze, and slipped his hands underneath her dress. The moment his hands touched her legs, she closed her eyes and savored the feeling on his warm, talented hands on her skin. She took in a deep breath when he reached the apex of her thighs and slipped his large, hard hand into her panties.

She opened her thighs and gave him better access to her deep core. A mewling cry was torn from her throat when he slid one finger into her pussy and pressed his thumb against her clitoris.

Theodora was totally unprepared for the orgasm that tore through her. She opened her eyes several moments later to find him watching her. “What the hell was that?”

He withdrew his hand from between her thighs and lifted it to his mouth. She watched him lick his fingers clean, feeling each swipe of his tongue deep in her cunt.

“That was beauty incarnate.” He leaned over her. “You’re a beautiful woman, querida, but you’re loveliest when you come.”

God, she loved the way he talked to her. Thankfully, she knew better than to think he really meant the words. They were the words spoken by a man determined to get a woman out of her clothing.

*And I can never forget that.*

“Silver tongue,” she said as she kissed him. He kissed her back, thrusting his tongue into her mouth and pulling her into a sensual web so dense she feared neither of them would make it out.

Their hands moved between their bodies. Lips fused together they stripped one another of their clothes. He slid his hands up her thighs and removed her panties. Theodora was able to push his shirt off his chest and pull his jeans down his hips. She groaned into Alejandro’s mouth when his cock sprang free.

She palmed it from root to tip. Once. Twice. Thrice. Eliciting a deep shudder from him. Alejandro broke off the kiss and gasped. “Shit!” He pushed her hands from his hard length and grabbed the edge of her skirt. He lifted the dress over her head in one slick act.

Theodora lay before him wearing only her bra. In mere moments even that was gone. Alejandro lifted one breast and plucked the nipple. She groaned against his mouth. He switched targets, showing her other breast the same attention, but this time pinching the bud a little harder. With every lick, every tug the muscles in her sheath clenched tighter.



The slight pain with her pleasure was almost too delicious to endure. Theodora's hips lifted off the ground to meet his. She brushed her pelvis across his erection as her hands pulled at his hair.

"God, you're wet."

She blushed at this statement. She was soaking. Theodora could feel her cream gushing from her pussy to dampen the blanket.

"Do something about it," she whispered in response as she rocked her hips. He stilled for a second before rubbing the bulge of his swollen manhood against her cleft.

Alejandro answered her challenge by placing hot, peppered kisses against her nape, down her chest until he reached her swollen mound.

She could feel the moisture of his hot breath against the inside of the left thigh. It tickled and sent her shuddering in anticipation.

Alejandro quickly found her clitoris. His hot mouth latched onto her clit, wrapped around it, and the blunt tip of his tongue flickered against the head of her clitoris.

His wet, hot tongue mercilessly teased her clit before it treaded a scorching path down her slit until it reached the entrance of her pussy. His tongue thrust deep and hard, caressing her fluttering walls, licking the inside of her cunt.

Theodora groaned, struggling for breath as his talented fingers robbed her of breath. She closed her eyes and allowed herself to concentrate on shocking pleasure weaving through her body as she rode his mouth. Suddenly her orgasm was upon her. Her shattering cry of satisfaction cut through the warm, spring afternoon.

Before she could catch her breath, Alejandro's mouth was on hers, sucking her tongue, licking her lips, and feeding Theodora the unique flavor of her release.

Seeking an anchor, she raked her nails down his arms. His cock twitched against her stomach in response. She repeated the act and was rewarded with the same reply. Until then, Theodora hadn't realized that Alejandro liked it when she was rough.

She kissed him earnestly, with all the passion she'd been harboring for the last few months. God, how she loved the decadent feel of his tongue inside her mouth. Her cunt tightened with desire, fluttered with need and moistened with passion with every sweep of his talented tongue. She had just come but she was not yet satisfied.

Rocking her hips against his, she told him without words that she was ready for him.

He broke off the kiss and moved away from her. "Turn over."

She gave him a smile. She loved it on all fours. Just before she did as he asked, he handed her the slick, purple vibrator. "I want you to place it on your clit."

Damn. Every time they got together, every time he added a new element to their lovemaking he turned up the notch. Each and every time they made love the sex got better and better.

And that afternoon was going to be no different.

She turned on the toy. The low hum of vibrations sang through the air. She tentatively placed it to her clitoris and gasped as a well of pleasure erupted. Her clitoris tingled and pulsed and felt on fire with the toy's attention.

*God, I'm not going to last very long.*

Theodora's thought on how far gone she was had just entered her mind when something cool and wet dribbled onto her back. She shrieked and attempted to spring away from the source, but Alejandro's hands held her hips immobile. Then the hot, wet feel of his tongue licking the small of her back, lapping up the liquid he had poured cut through her. With a jolt Theodora realized that Alejandro had poured the wine on her.

And he was licking her clean.

"Oh my God," she sighed the words as she pressed the rounded head of the vibrator harder against her clitoris. One of Alejandro's hands left her hips. Then a small fountain of chilled red wine landed on her spine, the small of her back, and her bottom. She pressed the toy harder as Alejandro's tongue swiped up over her skin.

“Lord, have mercy.” She leaned forward until her shoulders rested on the ground.

He spread her thighs and placed his tongue on her dark hole. She groaned his name as he fluttered it there for several heartbeats. Just when she thought she couldn’t take any more pleasure, his tongue moved south, teasing her perineum before thrusting into her sheath.

She was never going to look at red wine the same.

Hell, she was never going to be the same again.

She groaned in dismay when Alejandro slipped away from her, but before she could truly voice her objection he pressed his length to her entrance.

“Fuck me already.” Theodora rocked her hips backward and tried to force him deeper inside of her. He withdrew only to thrust deep into her pussy with one stroke.

“Oh Lord, yes. Give it to me just like that. Fuck. Me!”

His fingers dug into her thickly padded hips as he thrust into her repeatedly. Theodora closed her eyes and breathed deeply as every muscle in her body seemed to be centered on Alejandro and his cock’s pleasurable strokes. Every plunge felt as though it was exploding in her brain, taking away everything but the bliss pounding through her.

And then there was the vibe teasing her clit.

“Oh God...fuck...me...harder.”

One hand slipped forward, snaking around her waist, holding her closer to him, so every thrust went deeper, touched her more intimately. The other hand tangled in the mass of her braids, holding her head anchored. Alejandro increased his rhythm, moving faster, stroking more shallowly, and yet he was pounding into her.

*Damn!*

Heat crept up her spine, her neck, before exploding in her face at the same time that her orgasm thundered through her. With every stroke, her sheath tightened until it felt as though it was impossibly tightly coiled. Her cunt milked him with every thrust and still he pounded into her.

“HO-LY. Fuck!” The curse burst from her mouth in a ragged scream as her orgasm tore through her and her pussy flooded Alejandro’s cock with her release. She shuddered beneath him as bright lights exploded behind her tightly clenched eyelids.

But Alejandro didn’t change his pace. He simply grunted and thrust deeper, harder into her sheath.

“Oh. My...” Her choked shriek ended abruptly as another more intense orgasm slammed through Theodora’s pussy.

“That’s it, querida. Come for me, my love.”

She dropped the vibrator, unable to hold onto it, and clutched the blanket for dear life. Behind her she could hear Alejandro’s grunt of satisfaction before he pumped his hot essence into her.

For several moments neither of them moved. Theodora was all too content to lay where she was, trying to remember how to breathe properly. And then Alejandro spoke.

“We’ll just have to use the rest of the bottle for round two.”

Theodora looked over her shoulder and caught his gaze. “Ready then?”

“Damn, you’re dangerous,” he whispered as he reached for the wine.

## Chapter Eight

### *Bitter Fruits*

Alejandro had never been one for shopping. He wasn't as bad as most men. He didn't hate to shop. He just couldn't spend hours in the mall looking for that one perfect item.

But Theodora had changed his mind about shopping.

Now he could spend days searching for that one item, especially if she promised to give him a very personal runway show of everything they bought.

*That I can handle*, he thought as they made their way through the Macy's lingerie department.

Theodora stopped in front of a rack and pulled out one of the items. She held a red, lacy number that he suspected should have been a dress. He immediately pictured it on her curvy body. "Oh yeah," he growled. He took several steps forward and grabbed her around the waist, pulling her flat against his hard body. Her sweet ass pressed against the front of what was clearing becoming an erection.

"I have an idea," he whispered. His lips pressed against her ear, so he knew she felt every word. She shuddered in his arms.

"Yeah?" she said on a sigh.

“How about you model some of those heels you hide in the back of your closet? How about you model only those heels?”

She slapped at the hand that held her against him. “Alejandro,” she squealed, embarrassed.

“Come on, querida. Imagine it. Me, you, and your heels. Maybe a pair of garters, just to be naughty.”

“You are impossible.”

“No,” he said as he shook his head. “I’m impossibly hard.” To emphasize his point he pressed his hips against hers, nudging his cock against her cleft.

“We are in public,” Theodora moaned when his hand covered one breast. Through her clothing he could feel her hardened nipple. He wasn’t the only one who was aroused.

“Then let’s get out of public,” he groaned.

Her “okay” came out a groan when he plucked her nipple.

“Ready to try that toy kit I bought you?” he whispered. His lips were but a breath away from her neck.

“Mmmm,” she said softly. His other hand had moved to join the first. Both hands tweaked her nipples.

“This is indecent, Theodora. Say yes and we can leave.” He could feel his balls tightening at the thought of using the kit he had just purchased on Theodora. He’d never been one for anal sex. It hadn’t been his thing, but he wanted to try it with Theodora. Something told him he hadn’t really enjoyed it because he didn’t have the right partner. He had discovered with Theodora everything was hotter, sexier...more satisfying.

When he’d seen the anal trainer kit at the sex store, he knew he had to get it. Especially when he realized that he would be the first man Theodora had experienced anal sex with.

*The first and only.*

"Just say yes," he whispered against her earlobe.

"Yes."

Alejandro's eyes lifted to the roof at the sound of the singular word. He had been so relieved before. He couldn't wait to get them home and naked.

He pulled Theodora out of the lingerie section and toward the exit. "Wait," Theodora yelled. "I haven't made my purchases." She waved the hangers of delicate undergarments she held in her hand.

"We don't need those," Alejandro growled as he eyed the delicates. He wanted Theodora naked, not wrapped up in lace, silk, or satin.

"I want these," she said with a pout.

"Fine," he growled. He followed her to the cashier. They were halfway there when his cellular phone went off. He pulled it out of his pocket and glanced at the name. "Shit," he seethed. "I have to make a call."

Theodora turned to him with confused eyes. "Is it urgent?"

He shrugged one shoulder in feigned indifference. "I'd rather just get it over with while you wait in line."

"Here," he said, pulling a few bills out of his wallet. "Use this."

She stared at the money for a few seconds before her eyes lifted to meet his. The concern in her gaze burned a hole in his gut. "We've talked about this," she whispered.

"Just take them," he growled, shoving the money into her hand.

"Don't be foolish, Alejandro. It's my clothing. I'll pay for it."

"I want to pay for it. Just use the damned money."

"I know you care about me. I know how you feel, but let's be sensible," she whispered softly. "You work for me for a reason."

"Not the reason you're thinking," he muttered.

She flinched at his words. "What are you talking about?"

Alejandro considered telling Theodora the truth right then and there. He thought about telling her about his family and his inheritance.

He hadn't intended to end up working at Candy Drop Sweet Shoppe. Originally, he'd gone there to schedule an appointment with the owner in order to ask her a few questions about her more popular desserts. At the time, Alejandro had been considering adding a dessert menu to the coffee shops that were a part of the Alba conglomerate. He'd been floored when one of the waitresses pointed Theodora out to him. He'd applied for a job that night. He hadn't been able to walk away from her since.

Then he pictured how she would react...and in public too. No, now was definitely not the right time. "There's something I need to tell you," he whispered softly. "But not now. Later, okay?"

Theodora searched his eyes for a second before assenting. "You're sure everything is fine?"

He nodded his head yes, because he couldn't bring himself to say the word. The truth was he was afraid of losing her when he revealed his lies. And if that happened, nothing in his life would be fine.

"So I'll see you later?" Theodora asked.

"I'll meet you here. I just have to make a quick call."

"Okay," Theodora said before turning to the long line in front of her.

Theodora's mumbled "I hate shopping," followed Alejandro down the hall as he made his way toward the restroom enclave. He needed a quiet area when he made his call.

Earlier that day his stockbroker called and left him an "urgent" message. Alejandro had meant to call the man back, but he got caught up in Theodora.

Considering the fact that Alejandro had yet to tell Theodora about his actual financial situation, he couldn't exactly make the call beside her.



He turned down the hall and into the small dark enclave that housed the restrooms and payphones.

That was when he saw her.

Alejandro bit back an oath the moment she stepped from the shadows. He didn't realize until it was too late that Ling was the woman who had cornered him.

He darted a quick glance around the crowded mall before pulling her petite body farther into the shadowed enclave.

"What the hell are you doing here?" he growled into the shell of her ear. Although he wanted to yell, he didn't. He feared that Theodora would hear him and come looking for him. And the last place he wanted her to find him was there, in a corner with Ling.

She flinched at the closeness of his hard body, his words, and his angry tone. Alejandro took some perverse joy in the fact that her midnight eyes widened with what could only be apprehension before she took a step back.

Then all sense of self-preservation and fear flew out of her gaze. Her beautiful eyes looked Alejandro from his head to his toes and then back up again. Finally her gaze landed on his crotch. Her dark pink tongue skimmed the edge of her plump bottom lip.

"I missed you, Ali."

One eyebrow arched at her words. She had to be kidding. She was the one who had ended the relationship.

"You missed me, Ling? Or you missed my bank account?"

"Why do you have to be like that?" she said with a perfectly practiced pout. "I missed you, Alejandro."

"Or maybe you missed the way I used to give it to you. Guess the asshole I caught you with isn't up to the task."

"Ali," she purred as she sauntered up to him. The small, high mounds of her breasts pressed into the chiseled planes of his chest. "I miss you. I need you. I made a mistake and I

understand that you're still mad at me. But I'm willing to work hard," she said, her voice dipping huskily, "to make it all up to you."

His gaze connected with hers and tightened. "You can keep your apology, Ling. You can also shove your attempt to make me forget that you're a heartless bitch."

"You always did have a temper," she said in a soft voice he knew from experience was meant to soothe his rising anger. It was the voice she used when she wanted something she knew she had no right to ask for. Normally he gave in to whatever she demanded. But things hadn't been normal for some time now.

"Ling, it's over. It was your choice. Now you've got to live with it."

"But I want you, Ali."

When she saw the hard line of his grim frown, she must have decided to change her tactic. "I love you, Alejandro. It's taken me some time to figure it out, but I know it's true. I love you."

"The only person you love, Ling, is you."

"Ali," she cried in fake outrage.

"Don't call me that. I've moved on," he said before darting a look around the corner. "You should too."

"Don't tell me she's the one."

His head snapped up at her words. "What the hell are you talking about, Ling?"

"The woman I saw you shopping with. Tell me you're not going to turn me down for her?"

He grabbed her slim shoulders and pulled her small frame to him. His fingers bit into her flesh as his anger thundered to him. "Back off, Ling. I mean it. Stay away from her," he growled at her.

Just at that moment Theodora decided to peek her head around the corner of the long hall. “Alejandro,” she called. The soft melodic sound of her voice echoed off the blinding white walls.

Alejandro pushed Ling away as if her skin had burned him, which it just might have done if he wasn’t so quick. Ling was poisonous from head to toe. There wasn’t one inch of her that wasn’t caustic.

“Querida,” he yelled in answer. He heard Ling’s outraged gasp and immediately dismissed it. It wasn’t his fault Ling hadn’t been faithful enough and thereby worthy enough for a pet name. Theodora on the other hand...

He knew the moment she realized he wasn’t alone. Her steps faltered as she approached them in the shrouded hallway and then continued at their pace. He smiled encouragingly at her even though he knew his smile probably looked more brittle than warm.

She stopped just three feet away from him. And yet, Alejandro felt the need to be closer to her.

He crossed the small chasm that separated them and placed one arm on her shoulders, pulling her close to his hard body.

She immediately looked up at him with daggers in her eyes. Then she blinked and all emotion was gone.

Things weren’t looking good for him.

“I hope you weren’t looking too long for me, sweetheart.”

She shook her head no and her braids brushed against his chest. “Not really,” she said. Her tone was cold and emotionless.

“Theodora, this is Ling. Ling, this is my girlfriend, Theodora,” Alejandro said with a tense smile. He took sad pleasure at the fact that Ling’s face had crumpled at his words. He had never once called her his girlfriend while they were dating. Ling had made it clear early

in their relationship that she was his “woman,” not his girlfriend. Too late, he’d realized that meant she was free to date other people.

Fortunately for him Theodora was a different kind of woman.

He felt Theodora flinch at his words and try to pull away. Her nails dug into his side, telling him to let her go. Alejandro tightened his hold instead. He had no intention of letting Theodora go. Ever.

He had come to that realization as they had walked through the Macy’s kitchen and dining section to get to the lingerie section. He had been struck with a blinding vision of him and Theodora making a home, a family, together.

He saw them with at least two, hopefully four, children. He pictured them in a big brightly colored house that had a large backyard, enough room for the kids to play, and maybe even a pet or two.

He saw them growing old together as they watched their children mature and make their way in the world.

Alejandro had every intention of making that vision come true, even if he had to drag Theodora kicking and screaming to the altar.

“Really?” Ling asked with a smirk. “I never pegged you for the kind who needed a mother-son relationship. I didn’t know you preferred mature women.”

Theodora froze beside him. Alejandro gave Ling a cold smile. “I prefer women period.” He looked down at the woman beside him. “I prefer Theodora.” With that remark, he turned and led Theodora down the hall.

## Chapter Nine

### *Homemade Cream Pie*

Alejandro was prepared for a fight and received one. The fight didn't officially start until they reached Theodora's house. The seemingly endless drive home was tense and silent. He had plenty of indication that the rumble was coming.

The whole ride home Theodora's face had reminded him of the sky above them. With each passing moment, he could see the dark clouds in her mind gathering as she processed what she had seen and pieced things together.

The moment he parked his car, Theodora jumped from it and headed for her front door. She was already in her doorway when Alejandro slammed his car door. When he reached the door he found it locked. He had to knock for a full minute before she opened it.

She threw it open with an angry jerk and just stood in the doorway. The look on her face was the same look the linebackers on the football field had. Something told him he wouldn't have much luck getting past Theodora.

"I know you're mad. I get the feeling you're mad at me."

She lifted one eyebrow and grunted at him. She stared up at him for several seconds before turning away suddenly.

"I'm not mad. I would be mad if we were a couple. Why the hell did you tell her that I am your girlfriend anyway?" she threw over her shoulder as she stomped her way to her room.

"Because it's true, damn it," he growled. His voice was low and thick with the anger that had gathered out of nowhere. Now he was the one with the thick, black clouds hanging over his head.

He hated the fact that she thought of them as nothing more than friends with a weird ass sort of benefits scheme.

He had been waiting for the moment he could be with Theodora for over a year, but she refused to see him as anything more than a sperm donor.

That stopped Theodora in her tracks. "It can't be. We're just...we're just trying to make a baby."

Alejandro immediately sensed Theodora's apprehension. He reined in his anger. With the wild, caged look in her eyes, Theodora reminded him of a skittish animal. She needed a kind, determined hand to control her fear.

The very last thing she needed was his rage.

"While we're trying to make a baby, you and I are boyfriend and girlfriend. We're exclusive, aren't we?" he coaxed.

"Yes," she sighed softly.

"Good, because while we are together I better be the only one fingering that tight pussy of yours," he said as he stalked toward her. "Only my mouth better taste your cunt. Only my cock better enter your pussy, your mouth, your ass."

Theodora's breath came out a gasp.

Alejandro knew by the passion glazed look in her eyes that his harsh words turned Theodora on. She wasn't the only one, he realized as his cock thickened in his pants.

"Only me, Theodora," he whispered against her lips as his fingers caressed her face.

Her pink tongue darted out and licked her bottom lip. "Well, then..."

"You and I are exclusive. You are my girlfriend. And I am your boyfriend."

Her eyes fell to his chest. He lifted her head until her eyes caught his. "Say it, querida."

"You are my boyfriend."

"And?" he said, leaving no place for her to hide. He wanted her to acknowledge everything that was going on between them.

"And I'm your girlfriend," she muttered in a sulking tone.

He gave her a smile full of satisfaction. "Yes. Finally," he whispered as he brushed his lips against hers. His fingers caressed the soft, sensitive skin under her jaw and tilted her head up for his kiss. His tongue thrust past the barrier of her lips to sweep into her mouth and stroke the succulent flesh. He nipped at her bottom lip before pulling the flesh into his mouth and suckling it. She groaned against his mouth and her fingers clenched in the strands of his hair.

Alejandro's hands drifted from her neck, over her shoulder, until they landed on her waist. His fingers tightened around her middle, before lifting her. Theodora automatically wrapped her legs around his hips.

"I've been dying to get under this dress all day," Alejandro groaned against her lips. His hands skimmed under her thighs until they landed on the cheeks of her ass. "Shit, you're wearing a thong," he said as his fingers traced the outline of the itchy bit of lace. One long, blunt finger slipped under the thong and between the lips of her sex. She was wet and hot to the touch. It never ceased to amaze him how quickly she reacted to him.

His index and middle finger spread the lips of her pussy, exposing the swollen head of her clitoris. Alejandro pressed his fingers together, capturing her clit between, and stroked the turgid bud.

Theodora sighed against his neck before nipping the flesh.

“Somebody is asking for trouble,” Alejandro whispered before pinching the head of her clit.

Theodora came hard, coating his fingers with her wet release. The blunt edge of her nails dug into the tense muscles of his shoulder as she held on for dear life as he stroked her engorged clit over and over again.

He wanted her orgasm to last an eternity.

When the final shudder of satisfaction shook her body, he rubbed two thick fingers against her sex, coating them in her desire before slipping them inside her hot sheath.

Her eyes, dark as midnight slowly fluttered open. “Are you going to punish me for getting mad?” she whispered with a mischievous grin.

“Oh yeah,” he replied before thrusting his fingers deep inside her. He groaned as her cunt muscles fluttered and tightened around his fingers. The feel of her body contracting around him singed him from the inside out. Her pussy felt so tight; it felt like a damned vise.

He plunged his fingers in and out of her sheath, increasing the depth of his strokes. He fucked her hard, thrusting his fingers deep inside her clenching cunt. His teeth bit into the plump flesh of his lower lip as he stroked his fingers into her moist sex, eliciting a shallow sigh from her parted lips.

“Oh God...oh God,” Theodora panted. “Harder.”

Alejandro complied, thrusting his fingers hard and deep. Almost immediately Theodora’s cry of satisfaction rang through the air as she climaxed around his fingers. Her pussy contracted so tightly he was afraid she wasn’t ever going to dislodge his fingers from her cunt.

Sweat poured down his forehead and fell into his eyes as he slowly pulled his fingers from between the fluttering muscles of her sex. He tenderly rubbed his fingers across the head of her clitoris. She shivered and gasped against him before wrapping her fingers in the



strands of his hair and pulling him up for a wet, heated kiss. "I've never enjoyed a punishment so much," she whispered against his lips before pulling away.

"You were very, very bad today. You didn't trust me. You need to remember it's only you. There is no other woman for me."

"Alejandro, its not that I --"

He cut off her statement with a grunt and shake of his head. "No. The truth is you didn't trust me. You owe me so much more than one orgasm."

Alejandro grabbed her around the waist and carried her across the room to the living room. When he reached the sofa, he placed her on her feet. Then, he grabbed a sofa pillow and dropped it on the floor between them. "Get on your knees, querida."

She stared up at him with large eyes. "Alejandro," she whispered.

The soft, throaty sound of her voice sent shudders down his body. He couldn't wait to feel her lush lips wrapped around his cock.

"Now," he growled.

Theodora slowly lowered her body to kneel on the plush pillow between them. He took a step closer so that she was but a breath away. Her small hands shook with desire as she reached out and unbuckled his jeans. The low rasp of the zipper teeth widening and her husky breath were the only sounds in the room.

The seconds seemed endless as he watched Theodora pull down his jeans and unsheathe the swollen head of his cock. Her soft, firm hands slowly stroked out the long length of his thick shaft.

She held him with both hands. He watched with his heart in his throat, as she slowly moved her head toward him. Finally, her tongue, wet and pink, licked the full, engorged head of his manhood.

His heartfelt curse cut through the air.

Theodora sat back on her haunches and grinned up at him. The devilish look in her eyes made him want to howl. It was at that moment that Alejandro realized he really wanted her to pay.

He wanted her to beg for his forgiveness.

He wanted her to make him forget the lightning flash of pain that had bounced through his chest when he thought he was going to lose her.

“Show me your breasts,” he said, his voice soft and thick like cream.

She hesitated for a second before complying. She let go of his cock. The swollen length bobbed in the air in front of her as she tried to remove her dress.

“No. Keep the dress on.”

She stared at him as if he had just told her to jump off a bridge. Then, after a few seconds of apparent contemplation, she gave him a sultry smile and lowered the scoop neckline of her dress until her bra showed.

“You’re lucky I’m wearing a stretchy dress,” she said with an impish smile.

He shook his head at her. “No, querida, you’re lucky you’re wearing a stretchy dress. Regardless of what you were wearing, the command would be the same. Take off your panties,” he grunted.

Theodora quickly stood and started to pull off her underwear. Her hands were under her dress, on her hips, when he stopped her.

“No. Show me. Lift your dress and show me...everything,” he rumbled.

She tried lifting her dress as she pulled down her panties. It didn’t work the first time. The dress fell around her as she tried to pull down her underwear. She cocked one eyebrow at him.

Alejandro simply folded his arms over his chest and regarded her. He would have laughed if he wasn’t so tense. There he was, hard as hell with his jeans around his ankles and his cock pointing to the sky, and he was trying to be stern.

“Fine,” she muttered before tucking the long length of her skirt in her bra. Then she slowly lowered her panties, revealing her lovely pussy.

“That’s it, baby,” he groaned. Theodora returned to her knees thighs spread for his viewing pleasure. “Touch yourself,” he growled softly when he saw the soft down of midnight curls that shielded her most perfect secret.

Theodora slowly parted the thick lips of her sex and stroked one index finger down her flesh, from clit to slit. The soft purr of her arousal slithered down his spine.

“Do it again,” he growled harshly.

Her glazed, ebony eyes fluttered open and connected with his. She held his gaze as she pressed two fingers against her flesh.

“Pretend those are my fingers and fuck yourself.” The harsh sound of his voice grated through the air.

Her fingers slipped into her pussy.

Alejandro grimaced and his cock twitched as he watched Theodora’s fingers slid into her tight sheath. He was barely holding on by a thread, but it was a beautiful position to be in. He had never been so turned on in his life. He suspected that he could cut a diamond with his cock. He was that aroused by the sight of Theodora pleasuring herself for him.

“Harder...deeper,” he rasped as he watched her small, dark fingers disappear in her sex. She immediately complied. Her eyes widened and the sound of flesh hitting flesh floated through the air as she fucked herself hard and deep...just like he asked.

“Damn, sweetheart, you’re something beautiful,” he said as he watched her face heat with arousal and her skin dampen with sweat.

“That’s it, querida. Come for me.”

Theodora’s eyes grew large with shock. She shuddered and mewling sounds escaped from her plump, parted lips as she climaxed. The sound of flesh meeting flesh grew louder, more insistent as her body leaked more cream from her orgasm.

“Don’t stop. Don’t you dare stop,” he groaned when her pace started to slow down. “I want you to come again.” He palmed his rock hard cock in a tight fist as he watched her.

“Please,” Theodora moaned.

“Again.”

He took a step forward. His cock bobbed in front of her face. “Put it in your mouth, but don’t stop you hear me? I want you to come as you suck my cock.”

Theodora moaned something indecipherable before taking the idle hand on her thigh and wrapping it around his cock. She used one hand to pleasure herself as the other fed his dick into her mouth.

Alejandro groaned her name when the wet, heat of her slick mouth encased him. Nothing had ever felt so good. He shuddered when Theodora’s answering moan vibrated around his thick length.

“Take some more, sweetheart.” His fingers tightened in Theodora’s ebony hair, guiding her to take him further down her throat. Theodora swallowed and he slid to the back of her throat.

“Shit!” Her mouth felt almost as good as her pussy. He closed his eyes and pulled her away before pressing her head back so she could swallow more of his cock.

The sound of his harsh breathing echoed over the harsh slap of Theodora fingering herself. He opened his eyes and stared into her midnight gaze. “I want you to come now. With me down your throat, I want you to come.”

It was as if he had pressed her button. Her eyes fluttered and closed. She groaned around his length and quivered from head to toe.

The sight of her coming with a mouthful of his cock was too much for Alejandro to ignore. He pulled himself from her lips, grabbed her shoulders, and threw her onto the couch. In one sweeping move he pushed her thick thighs apart and thrust himself into her moist heat.

“Oh my God,” she screamed.

“Son of a bitch,” he growled when he was balls deep inside her pussy. He could feel the aftershocks of her orgasm as her cunt tightened around him.

“Now I want you to show me you’ve learned your lesson,” he growled before capturing her lips. He nipped at her lips and withdrew out of her until only the head of his cock was sheathed inside her pussy.

“I’ve learned...I’ve learned,” Theodora groaned as her fingers clutched the firm cheeks of his ass.

Alejandro resisted her fervent attempts to push him back inside her. He shook his head. “Tell me,” he whispered.

“I’ve learned to trust. I promise. I trust you,” she screamed before thrusting her hips up at him.

Alejandro stared down at her heated face, loving the fact that she was so gone, she didn’t care what he did, what she had to say. She only cared that he fuck her.

One hand caught her face and directed her gaze to him. “Tell me.”

“I trust you,” she whispered. “I trust you like I’ve never trusted another man before.”

“I’m your lover,” he groaned.

“Yes, you’re my lover and my boyfriend.”

Alejandro thrust himself back into her clinging heat. The sounds of their screams of completion vibrated through the pungent air as they came together.

## Chapter Ten

### *The Sweetest Taboo*

Theodora jumped at the sound of the front door lock clicking. Her heart started pounding immediately. Her wild eyes connected with a gaze she knew intimately. She breathed a sigh of relief when she saw who it was. It was just Alejandro. The moment her heart rate returned to normal, her anger rose.

“Are you trying to give me a heart attack?”

The bastard winked at her before giving her a saucy smile. “No, I think I’ll keep your heart rate up in bed and only in bed.”

She glared at him. Her mouth opened to let him have it. Unfortunately a sneeze came out.

“Or on the kitchen table...”

She frantically reached for the box of tissues on the side table. She needed a Kleenex desperately.

“Or in the living room.”

*Oh my God! Oh my God.* She could feel snot coming out of her nose. This was embarrassing as hell.

“How many cups of coffee have you had so far?”

Theodora stared at him for a couple of seconds over her tissue before speaking. “Why?” she asked, suspiciously. She had been seconds away from saying, “I lost count hours ago,” but something in his voice made her keep her comment to herself.

“You do know you’re not supposed to drink caffeine or milk when you have a cold? And you have a very bad cold,” he said before shaking his head, and tsk-tsk-ing, as he made his way to her.

“You’ve known me for a year now. How well do you think I’ll last without coffee or milk?”

“You need to get better.”

“I know that,” she said before sitting up and reaching for the cup of coffee sitting on her center table. Her small fingers reached for the gigantic mug.

Alejandro moved like a cat and snatched it out of reach moments before her fingertips would have touched the warm ceramic handle.

“No coffee.”

“You do realize that what you are proposing is akin to telling a vampire not to suck people’s blood because he might contract AIDS. It’s not really an issue. I can’t function without coffee. I can function with a cold. I NEED my coffee, Alejandro,” she ground between her teeth before standing on shaky feet.

“And I need you to get healthy,” he said with a grin.

Her eyes squinted at the sight of his smile. Theodora wasn’t sure if she was more angered by the smile or the fact that he wouldn’t let her indulge her addiction. “Give...it...back,” she growled.

She jumped up and attempted to snatch the cup out of his hands. Midair she realized she was being ridiculous. She had a coffeepot full of chocolate truffle coffee and about a million coffee cups. She didn’t need *that* cup of coffee.

Theodora stormed her way to the kitchen. *Stupid, coffee stealing bastard*, she thought snidely as she grabbed the coffeepot.

“Uh-uh, Theodora. I meant what I said.” Alejandro’s hand sat above hers, preventing her from pouring the coffee out of the pot. She stared up at him. He obviously had to be kidding.

“This is not funny, Alejandro,” she said between clenched teeth.

He watched her for several seconds. She didn’t dare flinch under his perusing gaze. After what felt like an eternity he spoke. “You really feel that you need it. You don’t just want it do you?”

Her shoulders lowered and she removed her hand from the pot. He could have it if he was going to go there. “I don’t need it. I want it,” she threw at him before turning.

Theodora went to sit on the couch. Her arms were tightly wrapped around her body. She couldn’t explain it, but she was pissed as hell at Alejandro. It was one thing to acquire a lover, a boyfriend. It was one thing for the boyfriend to think he could tell you want to eat and drink, even if you are sick as hell.

Alejandro stood in the doorway that separated the kitchen from the living room. “You’re mad at me,” he said softly.

Theodora didn’t bother to look at him when she replied. “No. I’m not.” She gathered the papers set out on her coffee table. She had been balancing her books and making sure that she was nowhere near the red.

Alejandro took a few steps into the room. “So, you’re not mad. Or are you mad, but not at me?”

She lifted her head at the sound of the smile in his voice. Now it was obvious that the bastard was taunting her. “Don’t you think that just because...” Her words trailed off when she looked up and saw what he was holding. Or better yet what he was drinking. “What is that?” she said in a voice so soft and sweet, she wondered how her teeth didn’t rot.



"I'm not the one who is sick."

Theodora clenched her teeth so hard she thought they were going to crumble under the pressure. He was definitely goading her on purpose.

And then he smiled before lifting the cup to his lips.

She watched him take a sip of her perfectly roasted, expensive as hell, imported chocolate truffle coffee. It was too much to ask a girl to take. "Lock the door on your way out," she said before gathering all of her papers and books. She was halfway out of the living room when he stopped her.

"What will you give me if I give you what you want?"

"Let me go," she growled, eyeing the corded arm wrapped around her chest.

"What will you give me if I give you what you want, querida?" he purred. His voice was thicker, smoother, and full of arousal. At that moment Theodora realized why Alejandro had been playing with her.

Her head fell back and she leaned against his strength. "Why do you like to get a rise out of me?"

"Why do I keep getting a rise out of you?" he retorted.

She smiled despite herself. "I don't know. Because you know which buttons to push? Because you won't stop pushing those buttons?"

She could feel him shaking his head. "No, it's because you're sexy as hell when you're angry. Since I'm shameless, I'll admit it. I push your buttons because I want you to play with mine. Once you get angry I'm allowed to coax you out of your bad mood," he murmured. As Alejandro spoke, his hands moved over her body, to settle on her breasts.

"You haven't answered my question, querida. What will you give me if I give you what you want?"

She snorted at him. "You expect me to give it up in exchange for a cup of coffee."

"No. I expect you to give it up in exchange for a cup of coffee and several orgasms."

“Oh,” Theodora said numbly. The man did have a point. She was guaranteed a couple of orgasms with Alejandro. The man was a magician when it came to her body. Before him, Theodora had believed that multiple orgasms were a myth.

Still...

“I’m sick. You pointed it out yourself.”

“You’re not that sick. And I need you.”

“Oh...you’ve got to give me more than one cup of coffee.” She would need more than one cup to get through the rest of the day. “And as much creamer as I want.”

His hand tightened over her breast. “In that case, I want several orgasms and you will try out the toy.”

She gasped and closed her eyes as immediate arousal surged through her body. Even though they had been going at it like animals, she was still surprised by how quickly her body flushed with desire whenever he said something that even remotely related to sex.

“You know what toy I’m talking about, querida, don’t you?” he purred. His voice was so silky, smooth, and deep it caressed every inch of her skin. She felt the goose bumps break out across her flesh as Alejandro’s voice traveled down her body.

Theodora sighed. “Yes, I know which toy.”

“Good,” Alejandro growled. The wealth of satisfaction in that one word promised Theodora untold pleasure.

He stepped away from her and swatted her ass. “Go get your coffee. I’ll go get your toy.”

Theodora walked to the kitchen with a smile on her face. She headed straight for her espresso machine, grabbed a cup and poured the last of the coffee into her mug. She snickered to herself as she opened the refrigerator and grabbed one of her flavored creamers. She opted for the matching chocolate truffle flavor.

Only Alejandro could make her feel wanton enough to barter a cup of her coffee for her ass. She sighed and thought about what she had done. The truth was she had won on both ends. She had her coffee and she would receive an endless amount of satisfaction in Alejandro's hands.

But she had to use the toy.

Almost as if he had heard her, Alejandro appeared toy in hand. He cocked one midnight eyebrow at her, turned, and walked away. Theodora immediately gulped half of her mug full of coffee. It burned the back of her throat. Her eyes watered and her first instinct was to put the cup down. Instead she drank the rest and placed the mug on the coffee table. Theodora had bargained for her coffee and she was going to drink every last drop.

She found him in her bedroom.

Theodora stood in the doorway admiring him, her lover. His long, lean length left her breathless. Alejandro had already removed his shirt. His back was to her. His perfectly sculpted muscles stretched and tightened with his simple movements. He placed a tube of lubricant on the side table.

Theodora sighed to herself.

The man was beautiful. He was intoxicating. He was arousing. She watched his long fingered hands grasp the unopened box that held the toy, her toy. He tore it open. Theodora was amazed when her belly muscles jumped at the sight.

The sound of the paper tearing reminded her of when Alejandro had torn her panties from her body. The muscles of her cunt tightened with potent desire. The sight of the slim toy reminded her that he would be pleasuring her in a way no man ever had. The folds of her sheath filled with creamy evidence of her desire.

He turned to her with a cocky grin on his sensual mouth. "Done?" he asked with one cocked midnight eyebrow.

“No,” she retorted. “Turn back around. I was just about to get to your ass,” she said saucily. He turned fully around, strode across the room and grabbed her around the waist, pulling her hard against his chest.

“Don’t tease the beast, querida. He just might bite back,” he whispered, his voice thick, harsh and alluring. Like gravel wrapped in silk, it was deceptively smooth.

Theodora couldn’t ignore the challenge. Or was it a lure? “Maybe I want to get bitten,” she answered softly.

He chuckled. “Your wish is my command, Mistress,” he growled. His voice didn’t quite convey the subservience of a submissive. It couldn’t. Alejandro was, after all, a natural dominant.

His free hand moved up her front until it cupped one large breast. He plucked the nipple. Her head fell back, curly braids brushing against his face and neck.

“How badly do you want to get bitten, querida?” His moist breath tickled her neck, fanning the amorous flames that she could already feel leaping between her thighs.

Her panties were wet, her pussy slick with her arousal.

One hand reached up to cup her neglected breast. Then both hands massaged the mounds and tweaked her nipples. “Answer the question, Theodora,” Alejandro breathed against her skin, his lips brushing over her neck, before nipping her.

She groaned his name and moved her hips against the erection that pressed against the small of her back. “Just give me the damned toy,” she growled.

“No.” He kissed her neck, tongue darting out to taste the skin. “I want to get us both...ready.”

His words washed over Theodora, making her shiver with their soft, promising caress.

“How badly do you want to get bitten?”

She smiled at his relentlessness. He never gave up on anything. “Depends on where you’re biting me.”

She felt him jerk behind her. She had surprised both him and her with that answer. She was still surprised by how sexually liberated she felt with Alejandro, a man almost ten years her junior.

“What if I bit your neck...your nipples...your clit?”

She groaned and ground her ass against his cock. “Yes,” she gasped in shock and arousal.

“Yes to which one, querida?”

“To all. Bite me, Alejandro. Mark me. Fuck me. Just...”

“Yes,” he growled against her neck. His mouth, his tongue licked a scorching path down the pulsing vein until it reached her collarbone, twirling in a heated circle.

“On the bed, sweetheart.”

Theodora immediately did as she was told, laying on her belly. Alejandro’s fingers danced on her skin, moving from the sensitive skin of her ankles, up the goose-pimpled flesh on her calf, drifting under her robe, lifting the cloth until they reached the full cheek of her ass. She shivered at the feel of his hands on her as he inched down her panties.

She sighed in relief when he dropped them on the floor beside the bed.

Instinctively, her hips lifted, her body seeking out his touch.

*Whack.*

His full palm came down hard on her left cheek, stinging, burning the flesh with the scandalizing touch.

She gasped in shock. *Did he just...*

*Whack.*

His palm struck her right cheek, leaving a matching burn.

“Alejandro, I don’t...”

*Whack.*

His third spanking cut off any and every protest she was going to voice. Plus, the protests would have been lies. Theodora could feel her pussy clenching, fluttering with every smack. Her already aroused body felt like it was getting close to climaxing.

*Whack.*

Her ass jiggled, her gasp became a groan, and her hips lifted higher, needing the hot, searing feel of Alejandro's broad palm against her ass. Cream leaked out of her pussy, dampening the sheets.

*Whack.*

"Please, Alejandro. Please."

His fingers slid over her ass, soothing some of the need and slipped between her thighs. Theodora groaned in pleasure the moment his hand reached the swollen lips of her pussy. His deft fingers parted her lips of her sheath, smoothing the thick, natural cream of her desire over her cunt. His thumb pressed against her clitoris. Her body broke out in shivers.

"Oh God."

Theodora jerked when she felt his hot, wet finger against her rosette. Her teeth bit into her bottom lip as he fingered the sensitive flesh, spreading cream against her ass, and lubricating her for the toy.

His finger slid in to the first knuckle. Pleasure, pain, and heat shot through her. Her hips jerked off the bed.

"Breathe, querida, and push back."

She took a deep breath and moved her hips back tentatively. It was too much. Too much for her to handle. Her fingers gripped the sheets.

Theodora shook her head. "I can't," she choked out.

"Back. Now."

She took another breath and moved her hips. "Oh God."

“That’s it, sweetheart. Ride my finger. Take just a little more, querida.”

After a few moments of getting used to the presence of his finger in her ass, she pushed against him. Alejandro worked his finger deeper. She felt the second knuckle stretching her. Just when she had gotten used to his presence Alejandro slipped his finger out of her. Moments later he returned it, plus another with more lubricant.

“Fuck!”

“Good girl. Remember, we’re taking it slow. Slow.” The sound of his gruff voice smoothed over some of her resistance. She wasn’t the only one affected.

“Tell me what you see.”

He slid in another inch. “My fingers...God, my fingers are deep in your ass. It’s...beautiful. Your skin is so lovely, dark. It reminds me of the sweetest chocolate from Columbia. And my fingers warm, hot, like caramel.” He laughed, the sound harsh, sexy, full of sexual desire. “We’re the sweetest candy.”

His fingers withdrew from her body. With every inch that he withdrew, her body burned more and more, needing the feel of his touch. He slid the warm, ridged toy in to replace the fingers that had abandoned her.

Theodora could feel every line, every curve of the warm plastic instrument moving against her skin as it thrust in and out of her ass. “Fucking shit,” she groaned into the pillow.

“How does it feel, querida?”

She pressed her hips back, seeking the feel of his skin against hers and gasped when the toy slipped in more.

“Now, damn it. Now, Alejandro.”

Theodora heard Alejandro hiss through his teeth, the sound a testament to the desire riding him as he fitted his cock to the mouth of her empty pussy. She moved her hips back and he slipped in the first few inches.

“Yes. Yes!”

His cock plunged past the tight muscles of her cunt, until he was fully embedded inside of her.

“Fuck yeah!”

Theodora almost laughed at his growling exclamation, but pleasure was riding her too hard for her to do anything but moan.

She was tight, tighter than she had been since losing her virginity. The toy in her puckered rosette created the stretched, tense feeling of being filled to the brim. Adding Alejandro’s impressive size to the mix meant she felt like kindle that had just been doused in gasoline before being lit.

Alejandro slid out of her, his cock stroking along the walls of her pussy, and Theodora felt herself bubbling over the edge, heading straight to a shattering orgasm. He thrust back in, hard and full of energy. She moved up the bed with the force of the plunge, but the fact was barely noticed as she groaned low.

“Harder,” Theodora growled as she clenched the sheets, hoping to keep herself anchored for his thrusts. His fingers grabbed her hips, digging almost painfully into her flesh. He thrust deep, hitting the raised button of flesh deep inside her pussy.

Bright, pleasurable lightning struck through her system, sending her headfirst into a shattering climax. Her pussy tightened almost painfully around Alejandro’s cock with the force of her orgasm.

When Theodora’s eyes opened she looked over her shoulder to glance at Alejandro. He looked as depleted and satisfied as she felt.

He gave her a slow smile and pulled out of her. “Give me five minutes and we’ll try that again.”



## Chapter Eleven

### *Double Chocolate Crumble*

Theodora tapped her fingers on the steering wheel waiting for the light to turn green. She was nervous as hell and every second felt like an hour. After what felt like an eon the light changed color, announcing her right to drive forward. She pressed her foot hard against the gas. The car flew under her command. After a few moments she realized she was speeding and slowed down.

It wouldn't do to get pulled over for speeding. She doubted the highway patrol man would understand why she felt the need to rush to Alejandro's place. Even she couldn't understand why she couldn't wait to see him. They were scheduled to meet later that night.

But her news couldn't seem to wait. She could feel it burbling up her throat, threatening to come out in an exuberant scream.

Theodora was too excited to be alone.

She glanced at the driving directions she had gotten off the Internet for the thousandth time, making sure she hadn't missed her exit. She had never been to Alejandro's place. They always met at her place. She frowned at that. She had been so excited about her news that it

hadn't occurred to her earlier that through their whole relationship she had not seen where Alejandro lived. It seemed odd to her.

But then again, it had just happened that way. Hadn't it?

Fingers gripping the steering tightly, she took the exit. She squinted when she saw where the turn led to. She slowed down as she stared at the sign announcing the name of the town. She darted a glance at the driving directions and sure enough she was in the right spot. She had to stay on the road for a mile make a two lefts and a right and she was on Alejandro's street.

But that didn't make sense.

She glanced back at the address she had copied off his employee information. Yup, it was the same address the driving directions had titled "Destination," right down to the zip code.

Although Theodora didn't know how to get to the town, she knew of the neighborhood Alejandro lived in. It was prime real estate. So prime in fact that she would have to open up three Candy Drop shops just to afford the rent on one of its infamous, luxurious condos.

So how could Alejandro afford to live there?

The question ran through her mind the whole short mile and a half it took her to reach Alejandro's place.

She pulled up in front of the condo. It had the distinct look of carefully constructed, sterile opulence. There was no other way to describe the building. It, like the replica buildings on both sides of it, appeared to have no personality except that of lavish richness. It was one of a million.

"No, Theo. The world can't afford a million of these," she muttered to herself. It was one of a thousand.

She had to be at the wrong address.

Theodora reached into her purse and pulled out her cellular phone. She chewed her lip as she contemplated calling Alejandro to find out if she was in the right spot.

She wanted to surprise him. And it wouldn't be much of a surprise if she let him know she was lost.

She darted a look around her. This was not the kind of neighborhood a woman, especially a black nonresident woman could sit in her parked car without looking suspicious. Theodora grabbed her purse and headed for the door with the number that matched her driving directions.

She knocked three sharp raps against the polished wooden door. She was going to ask if Alejandro Alba lived there, get her no, and drive her ass home, where she was going to wait until their dinner date to tell him the good news.

There would be no more surprises from her.

Theodora was thinking of all the naughty ways she could tell Alejandro her secret when the sounds coming from the other side of the front door permeated her thoughts.

With a start she realized she had been standing on the front porch for several moments daydreaming and no one had opened the door. Furthermore it sounded like the occupants of the house were fighting.

Or having really loud sex.

She looked down at the doorknob. The door was actually cracked a little. Someone had forgotten to close the door in his haste. Theodora took a step away from the door.

"Get out," a man yelled very loudly. There was something that sounded like a glass shattering against a wall followed by a woman's heartfelt cries.

That sound of feminine pain motivated Theodora out of her shock. She couldn't stand by and let a man beat a woman into submission.

But she wasn't a fool.

She pulled her cell phone out of her purse and dialed 911. If the bastard did anything she didn't like she was going to hit the send button.

She lightly pushed at the front door, waited a few seconds, and thrust her head over the threshold. "Hello," she called. "Is everything all right? Just a concerned citizen stopping by."

There were a few snuffles and the soft murmur of voices. Theodora wasn't sure if the occupants had heard her or not.

She considered turning right back around and leaving. Finding Alejandro wasn't worth being charged for trespassing or worse, dying.

"Ling, please. Just leave it alone."

Theodora stopped short halfway out the door at the sound of those words. But more than the words, the voice made her pause. Her heart jumped and lodged itself in her throat at the sound of the shockingly familiar baritone.

*It can't be!* her mind screamed.

She pushed at the door and stepped back into the entranceway.

"But, Ali," a soft, whining voice purred. "I want you."

Theodora stood at the end of the entranceway, at the bend right before the living room. She stood there for a few moments trying to decide if she really wanted to venture into the room. But then she heard the female's voice loud and clear.

And it reminded her too much of a small, petite devastatingly beautiful Asian woman.

The same woman who had clung to Alejandro like a life raft.

It definitely sounded like he was in the middle of a heated argument with her, which didn't make any sense since he and Ling were no longer together.

Theodora stepped into the living room.

For a few seconds time slowed before it ultimately stopped. She felt as if her very existence, everything she had ever worked for, everything she had ever believed in had been reduced to two, three, maybe even four seconds as she stared at the sight before her. She felt like she couldn't take in a single breath and her chest was on fire.

Too late, Theodora realized the fire was a result of her heart breaking.

An alien sound filled with pain, outrage, and disbelief escaped through her lips.

The sound was so heart wrenching that it shocked her into consciousness, pulling her from the fog of misery and astonishment that she had been wandering in. She turned away from the disheartening sight with a shudder of sorrow.

She could no longer take in the sight of Ling sprawled on top of Alejandro in a beautiful tumble, lovers correcting a wrong, lovers making up after the fight. Ling's state of undress attested to the fact.

The woman was wearing two scraps of clothing that could at best be called a bra and panty set.

As Theodora turned she saw that her pitiful cry had caught Alejandro's attention. His wide hands grasped Ling's lithe shoulders and pressed, pushing her tiny frame off of him.

"Theodora," he called as he got off the couch. "Damn it. It's not what you think."

She turned to him with a smile so brittle, so painfully hard that she wondered how her face didn't split with the effort to maintain it. "I'm sorry for interrupting you and your girlfriend."

Theodora was surprised at her strength, surprised that she had been able to utter the word "girlfriend" without choking on it. She couldn't help but think of the many times Alejandro had forced her to say that she was his girlfriend. What a fool she had been to think that there was anything real going on between them.

There was a moment of pure shock. Alejandro glanced at the woman beside him. Ling smiled back at him, obviously pleased. He glared at her and then turned an angry face to Theodora. "She's not my girlfriend, querida."

Theodora's hard smile crumpled at the sound of the very personal endearment. It was the last thing she wanted to hear from him. So she masked her pain and shrugged one rounded shoulder. "Whatever," she murmured.

Alejandro's jaw tightened. He glanced at her hand, took in the bottle of champagne, and then glanced at her face.

Theodora stood stoic, waiting for him to finish looking her over. It was the hardest thing she had ever withstood. Alejandro muttered something in Spanish and turned to Ling. "I think it's about time you left. You've overstayed your welcome."

"That's no way to talk to your girlfriend."

The look in Ling's beautiful eyes at her words made Theodora want to cut off her very own tongue with a rusty knife. There was so much pleasure in the other woman's gaze. And the sight cut Theodora deeply. Somehow she managed to pretend she was indifferent.

Ling looked from the cool mask she wore to Alejandro's face. Her wide smile slipped.

"Good-bye, Ling," Alejandro said through clenched teeth. He was angry. Theodora could see a tic pulsing in his jaw. She was mildly surprised by the fact that the sight brought her just a little pleasure.

At least she wasn't the only one unhappy with the situation. Although he had nothing to be angry about. She was the one who had caught him with another woman.

Ling jerked like she had been shot. The look in her eyes made Theodora feel for her for a moment. Apparently she too had believed that Alejandro Alba had scruples.

Poor thing. The man was obviously a soulless bastard.

Thankfully, Theodora was finding that out before she fell head over heels in love with him.

*Uh huh. Right.*

Ling quickly gathered her clothes, dashing around the living room picking up the scattered articles of clothing.

Theodora glanced at her wondering if Ling knew she was practically naked. Almost as if an afterthought, the young woman pulled out a pair of jeans from the pile and pulled them on as she stood in front of the door. She grabbed the handle and looked over her shoulder at Alejandro. Whatever she saw there made her already tight face crumple into a grimace. The door slammed behind her.

A tight, heavy silence descended on the apartment. In the stillness of the room Theodora could hear the soft tick of the wall clock as it announced the departure of time.

“You should learn how to treat your girlfriend.”

Alejandro’s chiseled jaw hardened further. She could see him clenching his teeth. After a few tense moments he spoke. “I told you she’s not my girlfriend. Ling is a barracuda. You are mine, Theodora. You are my girlfriend, querida.”

For one foolish, heart-blinded second Theodora believed him. And then she remembered the sight of Ling’s body tangled with his. She lifted the champagne bottle in her right hand. She was slightly surprised by the fact that her arm moved. Her whole body felt numb. She knew her fingers were clenched tightly around the neck of the dark green bottle but she could not feel a single thing.

*It’s probably best that way*, her heart screamed to her mind.

“It’s better this way, Alejandro.”

He stilled. “*This* is not happening,” he gritted out.

She looked away, away from the anger she could see in his gaze. “We both knew the score. It was never supposed to be anything more than sex. And...” She trailed off, unwilling to admit that she, herself, had already taken things too far.

Theodora feared she had fallen in love with Alejandro.

She'd broken her own rule to keep things in perspective.

She needed to get out now...before she did her heart any more damage.

"And you don't want to feel anything more than lust for me. Isn't that right, Theodora? I'm good enough for a hard screw, but not good enough for anything more."

She shook her head at the anger she could feel coming off of him, the rage she could feel seething in the air. He was livid. "That's not true and you know it."

"I know nothing," he yelled. "Because you keep everything bottled up. I have to fight you for everything. Hell, I had to fight you to get into your bed and that was after we signed that damn contract."

"I'm sorry you feel that way."

He strode across the small space that separated them, grabbed her shoulders, and shook her until she was forced to look up at him. A dark fire shined in his deep amber eyes. "Are you really, Theodora? Tell me are you really sorry, because I get the feeling you're very comfortable where you are."

She jerked out of his hands. "What the hell is that supposed to mean?"

"You know exactly what I'm talking about. You might have left the corporate world, but you're still using the rules of business in your new life."

"Excuse me?"

He laughed, a chilling sound that made her break out in goose bumps. She shook her head and took a step back. Theodora had underestimated Alejandro. He wasn't just angry. He was hurt. But it made no sense.

He had nothing to be hurt about.

He took a step forward, not allowing her any breathing room. "You want a bakery, you sign a contract, rent a building, and start baking. You want a baby, you sign a contract, rent a stud, and start fucking. Tell me, Theodora, am I at least a thoroughbred?"



She stared at him aghast, trying to figure where she'd gone wrong. What had she done to bring on such strong emotion? She opened her mouth to say something, anything to let him know she had not meant to make him feel like a whore being paid for his services.

"What are you doing here?" he said before she could formulate the words.

"I was on my way to Katarina's to celebrate," she lied through numb lips. She would die before she told him she had rushed here, to his house in her excitement to tell him her good news. "I just wanted to stop by and pay you. You've done your job. Thank you."

Alejandro stared at her face for several seconds and then blinked. She could almost see his mind working. He had just realized what she'd said.

"What do you mean I've done my job, querida?" he asked slowly. The words, the tone told her he was angry and barely hanging on to his self control.

Like she gave a damn! Every time he called her querida, she fought an insane urge to reach low, grab him by balls and pull until she took away his manhood. Maybe then he would feel an iota of the pain she felt before him, pretending that her heart wasn't breaking apart into a million sharp pieces, each one cutting her deeply.

"I'm pregnant, Alejandro."

Theodora immediately turned away and placed the lukewarm bottle of champagne on the side table beside her and opened her purse. Almost mechanically, she pulled out her wallet.

"What are you doing?"

"Writing your check." Theodora didn't bother to hide her irritation when she responded. She was obviously pulling out her checkbook. She was sure he could see the white unicorn background on the top check.

"What the hell are you writing a check for?"

"For services rendered."

She could feel him staring at her for several, long seconds. Her skin felt hot and her palms itched, but she sat there with her heart beating rapidly in her chest, letting none of her discomfort show.

“Services rendered, huh?”

Theodora didn’t dare look up at him. She was afraid the emotion she was desperately trying to hold back would be in her eyes. “The deal was to get me pregnant. I’m pregnant. What else is there?”

“What about what we have?”

Her gaze snapped to his. She stared at him for several seconds, memorizing his beautiful, lying face. She couldn’t even conceive that he was telling her the truth. She couldn’t for one second think that there was really something going on between them. The single thought would bring too much pain and it would be fruitless.

They had nothing and whether she liked it or not she had to face the truth. She had seen the proof of what they had earlier. The truth was that he had a girlfriend and she...she had a baby growing inside of her that she had to be strong for.

“It was just sex, Alejandro. We both know that. There’s no point in pretending it was more than that. There’s no point in getting emotionally attached. It just wouldn’t work out.”

Theodora walked across the room on rubbery legs and handed him the check.

Alejandro didn’t move to take the check from her hand. His dark eyes bore into hers. After several moments it became apparent he didn’t like what he saw. He growled. The sound was low, deep, and deadly.

“It wasn’t just sex, damn it, and you know it.”

Theodora shoved the check at his chest. He automatically grabbed her hands, caging her to him.

She swallowed thickly, pushing aside the desire to claw her hands out of his grip. She didn’t want his hands on her, touching her, making her vividly aware of how much of a fool

she was for starting to think there was something actually going on between them. But she didn't want to give Alejandro the satisfaction of seeing her break down.

"Stop running away from what you feel, querida. We both know you can't outrun yourself."

She gave him a tremulous smile. "I'm not blind, Alejandro," she whispered softly, her gaze glued to his broad chest. She didn't dare look up, didn't dare allow him to see the turmoil swimming inside of her.

"Ling is not...she doesn't know how to take no for an answer."

"Let's be honest. This isn't about Ling."

"Thank you."

"For what?"

"For admitting that much."

Theodora's eyes fluttered shut at the emotion she could hear in his voice. The problem was she couldn't decipher what his tone meant. She wanted to believe he wanted her and was hurt that she was walking away from him, but she couldn't ignore the niggling feeling that any man, even one who'd agreed to her stipulations would be offended when push came to shove that she was paying him for getting her pregnant.

"Thank you, Alejandro," she said, unsure of saying anything more.

"For the orgasms or the baby?"

"For both," Theodora thundered before wrenching her hand from his grasp. She turned and grabbed her purse.

"Damn it, Theodora. So I shouldn't have said that, but you're being foolish."

She shook her head, braids flying everywhere. "I'm being smart. I got exactly what I asked for."

He glared at her for several seconds before gritting out, "You are a coward."

“No, Alejandro. I’m a woman who knows that getting exactly what you paid for is more than plenty. I never had delusions about us being anything more than a business arrangement. I paid for something. I got that something and now our association is over.”

Alejandro stared at her, shocked at her words for several seconds. Then, red heat rose in his face, highlighting his sharp cheekbones. He stalked over to her, heavy footsteps sounding despite the lush carpeting. He held the check out she had given him. “I refuse to be bought. You cannot pay for me, damn it.”

Theodora stared as Alejandro ripped up the check into tiny pieces of confetti. She turned, opened the door and looked over her shoulder. “In a week you’ll be thinking more clearly. I’ll mail you your check then,” she said before closing the door behind her.

As she ran down the stairs to her car, Theodora heard the distinct sound of something shattering. Alejandro had obviously lost his temper. He had thrown the vase sitting by the door against the wall.

## Chapter Twelve

### *Sour Comfort*

Theodora held the lukewarm bottle of champagne up in front of her face. Behind it she could hear Kat sputtering when she opened the door and found the green glass bottle in her face.

“Interesting way to say hello,” Kat grumbled when she took the bottle from Theodora’s weak fingers.

“So what are we celebrating?” The smile that had been on her face crumbled when she saw Theodora’s face.

“I’m pregnant,” Theodora whispered softly.

“Whoohoo!” Kat screamed. Her arms captured Theodora in a lung squeezing, gut busting bear hug. “Hot damn. You’re pregnant. You’re actually pregnant.” Her arms loosed slightly, just enough so Theodora could breathe, and took a step back. She loomed over Theodora and leered. “I knew that big, gorgeous lug was full of sperm. Figured if he couldn’t get you with child no one could.”

Theodora gave her a tremulous smile and cocked her head to the side. “Can I come inside?”

“Damn. Look what good news does to me.” Kat stepped back and allowed Theodora to enter the apartment.

“Yes, he did the job I paid him for. I’m going to be a mother, a single mother.”

Kat closed the door behind her. “Exactly what in the world do you mean by that?”

Theodora dropped onto the couch. “You know exactly what I’m talking about. I told you I was paying Alejandro five thousand dollars for his services.”

“For his services?” Kat gaped at her. “Don’t tell me you actually think you were paying him to sleep with you. You didn’t think the five thousand was for that, did you?”

“That’s exactly what the five thousand was for. Do you really think a man like that would sleep with me without the promise of thousands of dollars?”

Kat stood in the middle of the room and braced her hands on her wide hips. “What exactly is going on in that pretty little head of yours? You weren’t talking like this last week.”

“Last week I didn’t know that Alejandro had a girlfriend.”

“Okay, you’re going to have to explain that from the beginning.”

“There’s nothing to explain. It’s over. It’s done. And I’m pregnant.”

Kat stared at her for long seconds. “Damn it, Theodora. What did you do?” she thundered suddenly.

“Oh no you don’t. You don’t do this to me. You’re supposed to be there for me. I’m your friend, remember?”

“I remember exactly who I am. That’s why I’m asking you what is going on. You’re not telling me everything.”

“I caught him with another woman, his girlfriend to be specific.” Theodora’s gaze caught Kat’s. “She was wearing only a bra and panty set. I had come there, champagne in hand, to celebrate my good news. Guess I should have called first.”

Kat turned on her heel. "I think we're going to need something stronger than champagne for this conversation."

"I second that," Theodora yelled at Kat's retreating back. "I need the fucking hard stuff. Something to drown out the pain," she muttered to herself.

When Katarina entered the room she was holding two bottles of alcohol. In one hand she held a light wine with more flavor than alcohol. In the other was large dark bottle of Tennessee whiskey. Kat handed Theo the larger, darker bottle.

Theodora wrenched the cap of the bottle with a savage, angry movement. She lifted the bottom to her thirsty lips. With a raging cry she slammed the bottle on the wooden coffee table in front of her.

"What the fuck is wrong with you?" Katarina asked with large, frightened eyes.

For a second Theodora feared that a giggle would escape from her quivering lips. But she tamped the feeling. Kat was obviously worried about her sanity.

She screwed the cap back on the bottle and pushed it away from her with regret. "I can't drink. The bastard got me pregnant, remember?"

"Oh." Katarina's full red lips were a shocked circle. "I totally forgot that you were..."

"You're not the only one," Theodora finished with an angry laugh.

"Huh, I guess we'll have to get used to not getting drunk," Kat admitted softly.

"Among other things."

Katarina eyed her for several seconds. "I'm not sure..."

Theodora gave her a small smile. Kat was at a loss of what to do to continue on this road of bonding and man hating when there was no alcohol. Theodora tried to make it easier. "We can just go to step two and get something horribly bad for us. Got any cake?"

Kat shook her head. "I'm on a diet, remember?" After several seconds she burst from her seat. "I got a bag of M&Ms from a coworker the other day."

Almost immediately memories assailed Theodora. She could feel Alejandro's hungry mouth moving over her, nibbling her tender flesh, sucking the melting chocolate off her belly, licking, devouring her as he ate the melted chocolates off her body.

"Shit," Theodora growled when she realized her eyes were watery with tears. Large tears slid down her cheeks falling to land on her shirt. When Kat came back in the room she was openly sobbing. The sound was heart wrenching, painful, and desolate even to her own ears.

"It will be okay, sweetheart. Don't cry," Kat murmured as she wrapped her arms around Theodora's quivering shoulders.

"Like hell it will be," Theodora growled vehemently. "If you even knew what I let that bastard do to me, you wouldn't be saying that."

"Don't think about it, honey."

"I can't help it, Kat. Can't help but think about how I got pregnant."

"Think about the baby. Don't think about him. He's not worth it."

"Damn right, he's not. I hope it's a girl."

"It will be. A beautiful girl."

Silence descended between the two friends and only Theodora's sniffles could be heard. Just when Theodora had started to fall asleep, Kat pulled away.

"I think we should order in."

Theodora smiled at her best friend. She knew how hard Kat had been working to stick to her diet. "It means a lot that you're willing to kill your diet for me."

Kat gave her a bright smile. "That's what friends are for. If I can't eat greasy food for you with dessert on the side, what kind of friend would I be?"

"You wouldn't be mine."



When Kat hung up the phone, Theodora turned to her and asked the question that been haunting her since she'd walked out of Alejandro's condo.

"How am I supposed to work with him now? How am I supposed to walk into that shop and not think about how stupid I was to start...dreaming the dreams I dreamed? How will I keep myself from hating the back room simply because it's the first place we made love? How I am supposed to keep my shop when every last inch of it reminds me of a man who made a fool of me?"

## Chapter Thirteen

### *Survival of the Sweetest*

Katarina was angry, seething to be exact. Her best friend was the most intelligent woman she had ever met but the woman was acting as if her brain could not work. And try as she might, Kat could not jumpstart it.

It was time to start working with a new product. It was time to talk to Alejandro.

Katarina couldn't stop fidgeting as she sat in the plush restaurant waiting for her date. The nagging voice in the back of her mind told her she was opening a can of worms she had no right to even touch.

Still...

Kat damn near sighed when he appeared. The air in her lungs rushed through her parted lips as she gasped, taking in the masculine beauty that covered every inch of Alejandro Alba.

The dark slash of his ebony eyebrows. Raven colored hair that was roguishly long and called to every woman, daring her to run her fingers through the shiny midnight strands. Fathomless, beautiful eyes the color of perfectly aged whiskey and just as intoxicating. The full lips that promised endless, erotic kisses at midnight and finally, the body that made a

woman think of ancient warriors, men with muscle, mass, and something indescribable that brought to mind images of pillages.

Lord, what she wouldn't give to be pillaged by him.

Damn! Theodora had to be crazy to walk away from a man like that. Katarina knew Alejandro well enough to know that the man had been infatuated with her best friend for over a year and he wasn't the kind of man to want a toy only as long as he couldn't have it.

She had been waiting for him try and capture Theodora from the moment he started working at her bakery.

Alejandro had not and would not cheat on Theo. But Kat feared she knew exactly why Theo was running.

Theo loved Alejandro and was afraid that she wasn't enough for the young stud.

For the past few weeks the stupid woman had been harping on the fact that the relationship never would have worked anyway. Apparently Theodora believed that she was too old and made too much money to have an actual, legitimate, till death do us part relationship with Alejandro.

Alejandro gave her a strained smile when he sat down. It was obvious that he was as uncomfortable with their meeting as she was.

"This is not a good idea."

For a few moments Katarina was stunned into silence. Then red heat infused her face as she became angry. How dare he? She was trying to help his ass. She opened her mouth to rip him a new one when he spoke.

"I don't want you getting caught in the middle of this. If...when she finds out about this she'll be angry and I don't want to take the chance that she won't forgive you. She needs you now and I'm not sure she'll be calm enough to realize that."

Bloody fucking hell! The bastard was right. Theo had a temper that when ignited burned hotter and was more destructive than a volcano. She could very well kill Kat for this.

“Damn.”

For several minutes Kat stewed in her misery, thinking over what had been a glorious plan. She was going to have to make sure that Theodora didn’t find out about this meeting, because...

Alejandro’s softly spoken words cut through her musing.

“How is she doing? Is she eating properly?”

Kat stared at Alejandro’s handsome, hardened face for several seconds. He was obviously trying to keep his emotions hidden. Too bad she could feel the anguish, anxiousness, and pain simmering between them. “If you called her, you would know.”

He snorted. “If I called her, I would find out very quickly just how many curse words my querida knows.”

Kat paused, hand over her water glass. She wondered if Alejandro knew what he let slip out. The man still thought of Theodora as his woman, his querida.

“Call her, Alejandro. Be man enough to handle the fire. The truth is you want her and she wants you. Hell, she needs you.”

He leaned forward. The act reminded Kat of just how large of a man he was. She looked up into his bottomless brown eyes and immediately felt like a deer as she was caught up in his swirling gaze. He had the most beautiful eyes she had ever seen.

“I don’t want a woman who doesn’t trust me, doesn’t trust that the man, the emotions I’ve shown her are real. I don’t want or need a woman who doesn’t understand that I love her with my whole heart, with everything that I am.”

With a slow blink, Katarina righted herself, falling away from Alejandro’s dark gaze. All that emotion, passion, pain, and anger, had left her mesmerized for several seconds. The man felt. He felt more than she had ever given him credit for.

*Theodora was out of her mind to walk away from a man who loved her that much.*

“You’re not the problem, Alejandro. She is. Theo’s had it hard with men. Her whole life she has been second best, always the one left behind when her boyfriends found a better, younger, flashier model.”

“And I am to pay for their mistakes.”

The statement hadn’t been a question requiring an answer, but Kat, big mouth that she was, couldn’t help responding. “If you let her walk away you will,” she retorted. “Her exes, every last one of the bastards made her feel like she was the problem. You need to show her that you are the answer. Don’t let her hide behind the fact that she’s older, makes more money or is fat.”

“My querida is not fat,” he said softly.

Katarina felt the words like a bullet to the heart. She could not wait until the day a man felt that way about her size eighteen body.

“Well then, show her that you love *her* and are not willing to let her walk away.”

Alejandro’s eyes darkened. His lips parted, ready to give her a blistering account of why she was probably sticking her nose where it did not belong when the waiter approached with their menus and the bread.

Kat almost kissed the young man for his timely disturbance. She quickly ordered for both herself and Alejandro, ignoring the young man’s raised eyebrow over her audacity.

Before he could comment on her actions, Kat made a beeline for the restroom.

\* \* \* \* \*

Alejandro watched Katarina make her way toward the back of the restaurant. He knew she was running from him and he couldn’t blame her.

Alejandro had no desire to be in the restaurant with Theodora’s best friend talking about how a woman who didn’t trust *him* needed *him*.

He glared at Kat's retreating back, barely paying attention as she stopped and talked to a couple dining together. For a few moments he couldn't help thinking about the woman who had rocked his world before destroying it. There was something about the woman Kat was talking to that reminded him of Theodora. Then again, he had been seeing Theodora everywhere.

Once, he'd envisioned her walking past him while he was dressing in his gym's locker room. Too bad when Alejandro looked around he found himself in the midst of men, and only men.

He started to turn away from the sight of the woman who reminded him too much of his querida when she turned to the side, revealing her profile as she waved to Katarina.

Alejandro sucked in his gut as fists of emotions landed hard in his abdomen. For once, the vision of Theodora Adams wasn't a mirage, but the truth.

And the truth hurt like hell.

Alejandro wasn't aware of when he stood or how he made his way across the restaurant, but somehow he found himself standing in front of Theodora's table, staring down at her with hot anger bubbling through his veins.

Her dinner date noticed his looming presence first. He stopped in mid-sentence and stared at Alejandro. Theodora glanced at her date's face and followed his gaze.

Alejandro felt a savage sense of joy when her gaze connected with his. Her eyes widened with shock and dimmed with pain, before tightening in anger.

"Excuse me," she murmured to her dinner date before throwing her napkin on the table, grabbing his arm, and marching them to the alcove that housed the restrooms.

He cornered Theodora before she could say a word. Pressing his chest against hers, Alejandro flattened her breasts, forcing Theodora back against the cold wooden wall. She gasped in surprise at the intimate, domineering touch.

He saw the anger etched on the lovely planes of her face. Her full lips parted, ready to tell him about her outrage. Alejandro staved her off and pressed his mouth against hers, taking advantage of her parted lips to thrust his tongue deep. But he knew her well enough to know she wasn't going to let him get away with touching her. Using the strength of his thighs, he pried her legs apart, until the thick bulge of his erection was in the cradle between her hips. Alejandro managed to grab her hand seconds before it would have landed in his hair.

Alejandro knew that if her fingers got anywhere near his hair, he would be leaving the restaurant with a lot fewer strands. He moved away from her, giving her just enough room to take a deep breath, but nothing more. Their lips were less than an inch apart. "Behave, querida," he growled.

Her eyes snapped to his. The fire in her gaze would have singed a weaker man. "Like hell I will."

He watched her for several seconds, his eyes searching hers. Finally, he spoke. "Fine, pull my hair out if you want to, but I'm warning you. I'll get mine and I'll make you scream when I do."

She blinked up at him. Then the dark espresso color of her eyes deepened with arousal before flaring with irritation.

They both knew he wasn't above fucking her, right there in the hallway in front of the restrooms. They'd had sex in public before and if he remembered right she'd liked it then.

"You are one hell of an ass. Now, if you're done I'd like to go back to my seat," she gritted out between clenched teeth.

"Do you love him?"

"I don't think that's any of your business," Theodora said crisply, as she tried to inch her way from beneath him. Like a cat playing with a tantalizing mouse, Alejandro let her go a few feet before grabbing her arm and dragging her back against him.

“Every inch of you is my business,” he growled before pressing his lips against the rapidly beating pulse at the base of her neck.

Theodora growled something that sounded distinctly like a curse, but he ignored her, sliding the scorching, velvet heat of his tongue on top of her pulse.

She gave a small shriek at the feel of his teeth against her when he nipped her hard, just the way she liked it.

“Tell me,” he murmured against her moist skin. “Does he understand you, how to please you? Have you let him learn all the secrets I know?”

She started to struggle against him, but Alejandro held her tightly. “Does he know that you like it hard and fast the first time, but that to really make you scream, the loving has to be slow, teasing, and last all night long? Tell me, Theodora. Does he make you shout at the top of your lungs? Put me out of my misery and tell me he can’t give it to you like I can.”

“I’m not sleeping with anyone,” she said softly as if she couldn’t take in enough air to strengthen the words.

“Thank God. I don’t think I could handle being replaced so quickly.”

“I could never replace you.”

At Theodora’s whispered words, Alejandro felt his heart skip a beat. He’d been so afraid she felt nothing for him, especially after their last conversation, he hadn’t been able to get up the nerve to contact her and try to talk things through.

He tilted her head to look deep into her eyes. “Say it again.”

“There’s no point in going there.”

“Isn’t there?”

A shocked sob escaped from her. Alejandro stepped back and looked down at Theodora to find tears in her eyes. “Why are you doing this to me? Haven’t you hurt me enough?”



The sight of the woman who owned his heart in pain made Alejandro doubt himself for a moment, but then the memory of her writing a check for his services cut through the tender emotion.

She wasn't the only one in pain.

Because of her, he could barely make it through a night.

She was the reason they were in the situation they were currently in.

He snorted. "Haven't I hurt you enough?" he asked, his voice full of gravel, pain, and anger. "Tell me, are you going to let that bastard raise my child? Is Mr. Armani Suit over there good enough to be the father you won't let me be?"

Theodora stared at him for several seconds, surprise evident on her face.

"Damn it. Answer me. Will my son or daughter be calling him Daddy?"

Confusion lit her face. After a moment Theodora sighed with resignation. "He's not who you think he is. I'm not on a date, Alejandro. At least not that kind of date. You interrupted a business dinner." She chewed her bottom lip nervously. "I'm selling the shop. He's a real estate agent. Apparently he's the best in town."

That information threw Alejandro for a loop. Before the thought was formulated, he spoke. "Why the hell are you selling your shop? You love it."

The moment the words were out of his mouth, Alejandro realized just how stupid he sounded. They both knew why she was selling her beloved shop. Still, he wanted to hear her say the words.

"Answer the question, querida. Why are you selling your store?"

"Don't you dare call me that! We're not together. Only couples call one another pet names."

"We are a couple, Theodora. You know it. I know it. Now if only you would accept it, we could be together, the way we're supposed to be." He murmured the words against her lips, parted in shock and outrage a second before claiming her mouth in a harsh, bruising

kiss. All of the emotion he had pent up since she'd walked out of his condo, all the emotion that had surged to the surface when he saw her sitting across the room from him, and all the emotion he felt as he pressed his body against hers went into the tongue-tangling kiss.

"I will get my answer," he whispered against her open mouth before running his tongue across her quivering bottom lip, caressing the full, firm flesh with a velvet heat that left them both shaking with need.

"How could you think to walk away from me, from your store, from all you've earned?" One hand drifted up her side to cup one heavy breast. He easily found her diamond hard nipple and tweaked it.

"How could you walk away from all that we've become?"

"Please," she groaned.

He pinched the tight bud just a little harder, knowing he wasn't giving her enough of what she needed, but giving her enough of what she wanted to keep her on the cusp of satisfaction.

She shook her head. "We shouldn't...can't do this."

"Give me one reason why we shouldn't."

"Do you love me?"

He froze. Yes, his mind screamed but his mouth couldn't seem to formulate the words. He knew he wanted to spend the rest of his life with her, could picture them having and raising children together, but he couldn't say the words.

He couldn't help wondering if what he felt was stronger than attraction.

She gave him a watery smile. "See, Alejandro? This why it won't work. We're at different points in our lives. I want marriage and kids. Kids, if I can't get the ring, but I refuse to compromise and I won't wait. Not a year, not two years. I need both of them now."

"You want a ring?" he choked out. Alejandro wasn't about to admit that she was right. Even in his fantasy he hadn't pictured himself getting married for a few years. He believed

they were headed that way, but had not considered he'd be popping the question quite that quickly.

"Yes, I want a ring and I wanted it last year, so let me go, Alejandro," she whispered as she pressed at the wall of his chest.

He felt the simple act deep in his heart. Her rejection burned. Still, he didn't want to let her go. The truth was he wasn't sure he could let her go.

She had sunk under his skin and he didn't want to be without her.

But he wasn't ready to get married, at least not according to her timeline.

He stared into her eyes. For a moment she held his gaze. Then her gaze dropped to his chest.

She couldn't look him in the eyes.

"Damn it, Alejandro. Don't you think we've been through enough? Let me go. Let me get on with my life."

"Without me? Is that really what you want?"

She jerked and her body went taut with hard lines of tension and unease. Her head lifted until her blazing gaze collided with his. "There are a lot of things I want that I can't have, but this...this is exactly what I need."

Alejandro loosened his hold and took a step back. Theodora smoothed one shaky hand down her skirt suit, took a deep calming breath and walked away as he stood in the shadowed hallway.

## Chapter Fourteen

### *Sour Good-bye*

Alejandro stared with unseeing eyes out the large bay window that seemed to take up the whole wall. He stood in his room, packing up the evidence of over two years of his life, but his mind was on the past and on a future that would never be.

The painful, haunted look in Theodora's dark eyes had scarred him, leaving him more bruised and broken than he could have believed possible after watching her walk out of his condo.

But nothing had prepared him for finding out that he had hurt her. No, he had done more than hurt her. From the look in her eyes, Alejandro was worried that he had broken her, broken her heart, shattered her self-esteem, and ripped apart her soul.

Because he had been too afraid to lose her when she found out about his lies, he had damaged her.

His eyes slowly fluttered shut. The only thing he could hope and pray for was that the strength that was naturally imbedded deep inside Theodora would help her get through the pain he caused.

And to think he had once believed he could make her happy.

The shrill sound of the phone ringing cut through his thoughts. He ignored it. He wasn't talking to his parents. He couldn't face their depressed looks and concern. And his friends had long ago given up on trying to make him talk about Theo.

After a few moments the answering machine picked up the call. Alejandro stilled at the sound of Katarina's voice. For a moment he considered picking it up. He discarded the idea when he remembered how his last meeting with the raven haired beauty had ended.

As far as he was concerned she had interfered enough.

It had been a week since he had seen Theodora, a week filled with painful memories. Memories of the things they had done together, the emotions he had experienced with her, and the love she had elicited inside of him.

Within that week, Alejandro had discovered that his feelings for Theodora were a lot stronger than he had originally believed. He loved her.

Alejandro strode from the room, trying to outrun the ghost of their relationship.

He headed straight to the kitchen and grabbed a beer. It was his third that day and it wasn't yet noon. Lately he had been drinking more and more of his calories.

He had just pressed his lips to the bottle when the sounds of Katarina's second message filtered through the kitchen.

"Damn it, Alejandro. Pick up the fucking phone. I need to talk to you. I'm coming, sweetie," she yelled at the top of her lungs to someone. "You good for nothing cowardice bastard, pick up the damn phone. Theodora needs you, Alejandro. She's in trouble."

He snapped the phone up from the holder and growled into it. "What exactly are you calling for now? She doesn't want me, remember? We're through."

"Shut up and listen for a moment. This is not about you. This is about Theodora."

Alejandro paused, caustic words on his tongue, at Katarina's tone when she spoke of Theodora. Something was wrong. Something was very wrong.

"What the hell is going on? What's wrong?"

“You need to come over right now, Alejandro.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Alejandro stood a feet few away from the darkened doorway to Theodora’s bedroom and glared down at Katarina. “We’re no longer together. She hates my guts. I’m not sure I’m the best one to ask for help.”

Katarina pushed past him, grabbed the knob, and turned, throwing the door open. “Get your tight ass in there now,” she growled. Before Alejandro could open his mouth, Katarina pushed him inside the shadowy room.

It took his eyes a moment to adjust to the darkness. When they did he saw that Theodora was huddled in the middle of her bed, a ball covered with a pile of blankets.

“I’m not hungry.”

Alejandro’s heart caught in his throat at the pain-tinged sound of her voice. There was so much emotion, so much pain, so much desolation in those simple words. Words that broke his heart.

“And I’m not here to feed you.”

Even as he said the words he knew he was lying. He was there to feed her. But the sustenance he wanted to give her was more than food, more important than water.

He wanted to feed her hope.

Theodora turned and peered out from her cotton cocoon. “What exactly are you here to do?”

Alejandro’s tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth and his mind emptied of all thought. What exactly was he doing there?

“I want to share your pain,” he whispered before sitting on the bed, sliding beside her. He pulled Theodora toward him until she lay under his arm. After a few moments, the soft rise and fall of her breasts told Alejandro that she had fallen asleep.

Hours later, long after the sun had set, Alejandro woke to the feel of Theodora moving against him.

He stilled when he heard her snuffle. Alejandro wondered if Theodora had slept for minutes or hours.

How long had he slept through her tears?

“Everything will be all right, Theodora.”

She groaned and moved closer into the curve of his body. He could feel her breath on him, feel it moving over his skin, and he was ashamed of the fact that his body responded to the simple, innocent caress. He tried to pull back, knowing what he was starting to feel, going to feel was wrong and improper.

His querida needed his care, his attention, maybe even his affection, but not his lust.

But when he tried to move away from her, she followed, snuggling closer, so close that he knew he had lost the fight before he entered the ring. It had been so long, and he craved her touch.

“Don’t lie to me. I can handle it, but I don’t want to be lied to.”

For a moment Alejandro had no idea what she was talking about. Then his mind latched onto the threads of his last statement. “I’m not lying. Everything will be all right,” he whispered softly, as one hand cradled her jaw and lifted her face so her deep gaze bore into his. “I would never lie to you.”

Her gaze dropped. “Then don’t tell me everything will be okay. Everything won’t be fine...I won’t be fine.”

Alejandro was so shocked by her softly spoken statements that it took him a moment to respond. “You will be fine,” he finally got out. “You will be fine and you will get pregnant again and you will have a beautiful, healthy child.”

“But it won’t be the same. It won’t be yours.”

For a moment Alejandro thought he had misheard her. Theodora's words had been so low, so whispered he couldn't trust his hearing.

But then she repeated her last words. "It won't be yours."

"Theodora..."

"I wanted to have your baby and now it's gone. I won't be fine. It won't be all right. Your baby is gone."

He swallowed thickly and let the tears he had been holding back fall.



## Chapter Fifteen

### *Lick of Sweet Passion*

Theodora flipped the switch and bathed the large, spacious empty room in blinding white light. She had never noticed just quite how bright the lights in the Candy Drop Sweet Shoppe were until that moment. As she looked over the room for the last time she realized that there were a lot of things she had never noticed about the small enclave that had been her home away from home, her sanctuary.

She walked into the room and danced the fingers of one hand across one of the pale pink cloth covered tables. When she reached the middle of the dining room she stopped, hands on her chest, right above her heart and stared with unseeing eyes.

She had not been expecting the pain. Relief, yes. But not the pain that came when Theodora realized that tomorrow morning the Candy Drop Sweet Shoppe would be just another acquisition for Alba Coffees, Inc. It would no longer be hers. Never again would it be her sanctuary.

Alejandro had called her several times since that night. The night she spent in his arms. The night they'd spent together sharing the pain of her miscarriage.

It had been over a month, and the memory of the emotions his comfort had elicited still got her through the night.

Even though Alejandro had called her too many times to count, Theodora had never once picked up. She hadn't even bothered to listen to half of the messages, erasing them almost the moment she heard his voice. She figured he wanted to restart their "relationship," and she wasn't ready for that. She had lost a child and gained a broken heart. She was definitely not ready to get back on that ride.

She needed time. She needed forever.

Theodora stilled, hands on the counter at the sound of movement. Someone was in the Candy Drop Sweet Shoppe with her.

For a moment she wasn't sure what to do. She eyed the door trying to figure out how she could make it across the room without alerting her guest.

First thing, she bent and took off her shoes. She would never make it quietly across the linoleum floor in her heels.

"I kind of prefer them on. They do dangerous things to your legs."

Theodora whirled around to find Alejandro standing in the doorway to her back room.

"What the hell are you doing here?"

He smiled, giving her a flash of white teeth before turning and heading into the back room. Theodora followed him, grumbling. "Look, I know you think there's something we need to talk about, but there is nothing left."

"I'm not deaf. I heard you the first couple of times you said that." He spoke without turning around. That irritated Theodora to the point where she had to grind her teeth to keep from screaming.

Oh, he'd heard her all right. Too bad he hadn't listened to a word she said. "Get out." She poked his shoulder to emphasize her point.

Alejandro turned around so quickly that her jaw dropped. He captured her hand in a tight grip. "I'm not leaving," he growled in a menacing voice that danced down her spine. She shuddered and stared him straight in the eye.

"You must leave."

He leaned low, so close that Theodora feared he would kiss her. She didn't dare let his full, lush lips touch hers. Theodora stepped back and fell onto the island. She was trying to right herself when Alejandro grabbed her hands.

"Don't you dare touch me," she yelled, trying to fight his hold. If anything, his grip tightened.

"I waited a year to get you in my bed." He crossed both arms at the wrist.

"And then you back out because things are getting too hot, too soon, and I'm not ready for marriage." Alejandro held both wrists with one hand and pulled something out of his back pocket. He knotted it around her wrists.

Belatedly, Theodora realized it was a tie.

She struggled against him with renewed enthusiasm.

"Am I right, querida?"

She watched his face, trying to figure out where she'd lost the thread of the conversation. Her brain had started short-circuiting the moment he'd placed his hands on her skin.

"Excuse me?"

He flashed her a wicked grin that did dangerous things to her nether region. She swallowed thickly.

"Always so polite, querida. I asked if I gave you an adept description of your flight."

"My flight?"

“Hmmm, yeah,” he said as he lowered his head and nuzzled her. “You keep running ’cause you think I’m going to hurt you like those corporate bastards did.”

She stared at his dark head in horror. “What...who?” She clamped her lips closed when she realized only one woman would be so bold as to tell Alejandro about her past lovers. She was going to murder Katarina.

“Tell me, do you really think I’d leave you for someone younger, skinnier, and flashier?”

She turned away. “Every man does.”

“Believe it or not I’m not every man.”

“I’m much older than you, Alejandro. It’s natural for you to want someone your age...or younger.”

“I have given you everything. My heart. My soul. My every being. I think that’s all the nature I need.”

He spread her legs until she was totally open to him. Her skirt had hiked up around her hips so that she was baring her panties to him. Theodora stared at Alejandro from her precarious position, horrified. She tried to scoot off the island, only to find his strong fingers around her thighs, holding her immobile.

“Alejandro, don’t do this.”

His gaze snapped to hers. The smoldering darkness in his deep amber eyes made her belly jump. “Do this? Do what? Remind you of the pleasure you found in my arms, in my bed? Remind you of what is between us, what you’re hiding from?”

“I am not hiding from you.”

“Aren’t you?” Alejandro challenged. “Tell me you don’t love me.”

Theodora’s gaze slid away. “I don’t want you.”

His grin widened. “That’s not what I asked you, love.”

She jerked against the bindings. "Damn it, Alejandro."

"Theodora, you may not want me, but you need me...and I need you," he whispered before capturing her full lips in a drugging kiss. He nipped her bottom lip with the sharp edge of his teeth before suckling the flesh, caressing it with the soft, velvet feel of his tongue.

Theodora broke off the kiss. "Alejandro, we can't...we can't do this. We can't even be here. I no longer own the Shoppe."

"No, you don't. I now own the Candy Drop Sweet Shoppe. You're looking at the new owner, sweetie."

Theodora stared at him in shock. What he was saying made no sense. "Damn it, Alejandro. Stop playing games. The new owner is supposed to collect the keys tonight. He will be outraged when he finds us here. Listen to me."

"I am listening. And the new owner is outraged. He's pissed as hell at you." Above her face, Alejandro held up a mass of papers and shook them out. "Does this look familiar?"

Theodora stared at the sheets for a few seconds. Then recognition settled. It was the contract she had signed with Alba Coffee. She had reflected briefly on the fact that the company purchasing her dessert shop shared the same last name as her lover, but had chalked it up to a coincidence.

Because it couldn't be anything more than that.

"What the hell are you doing with that?"

"Well, it's my own personal copy. We each get one."

"We?"

"Ah, querida, didn't you read the fine print? I'm the new CEO of Alba Coffee."

"That's impossible."

"Is it, querida? Don't tell you haven't suspected that I had a little more money at my disposal than I let you assume."

Theodora gasped, remembering all the times that she had wondered where Alejandro got the money for the random, exquisite items he owned. He dressed a little too well and the one time she'd spotted his car, she'd thought it had been a high-class German import. When she'd asked Alejandro about it, he'd murmured something about getting it for a steal. She hadn't pried further.

And the little trinkets she saw... She knew how much Alejandro earned working for her. She had assumed they were gifts, but...

She thought back to their first dinner at one of the city's most expensive restaurants...the afternoon at the drive-in movie theater, and finally, where he lived.

If she had looked closely she would have realized Alejandro's story didn't add up.

"My father is Alberto Alba, the notorious Prince of Coffee. My grandfather, Antonio, the King started the company." He pointed to a bold, masculine signature. Right there in black ink was his name sprawled on the contract.

"Oh my God." Theodora stared at Alejandro dumbfounded. She had watched enough television to know exactly who Alberto Alba was. He was famous for the growth of the company he had taken over from his father.

Alejandro even looked a little like Alberto Alba.

"You lied to me."

He gave a smile that was devoid of all emotion. "Like you didn't lie to me, sweetheart. You told me you didn't love me, that our relationship was just business. Consider us even."

"Alejandro..."

The hands on the inside of her thighs moved higher, edging closer to the heat that ached between her legs. She attempted to move away, but his grip tightened. Her gaze caught his. A fire flamed in his cognac eyes.

“Are you scared of me, querida?” he murmured, never breaking the mesmerizing hold his hot gaze had over hers. His palm slid up her thighs, callused skin caressing every inch of her sensitive flesh.

Her teeth bruised the tender flesh of her bottom lip as she watched the ascent of Alejandro’s hands. After an infinity they reached the edge of her boy cut panties. Alejandro pushed her skirt higher up her waist until he fully bared the lower half of her body.

His fingers moved under the elastic band around her thigh. Her face heated when he touched her. Theodora knew he could feel the moist evidence of her desire.

Alejandro palmed her through her panties, large hand cupping her cunt as she shuddered beneath his touch. He moved suddenly, grabbing the fabric at her hips and pulling her panties down her thighs. He threw them clear across the room. “You won’t be needing those,” he murmured.

He grabbed her skirt and pulled it down her hips. Next, came the suit jacket, blouse, and bra until she lay across the island naked.

“God, you’re beautiful.”

“Alejandro...”

He shook his head. “You will listen to what I have to say. And I do mean listen.” He paused, waiting for her assent.

Theodora licked her suddenly dry lips. They both knew she wasn’t going anywhere. That she did not want to be anywhere else. She nodded her agreement. Still, he didn’t speak. He wanted her to say the words. “I will listen, actually listen.”

“Good. I love you, Theodora. I’ve loved you for over a year, since that first moment I saw you. I came in to ask you a few questions and ended up working for you.” He cupped her breasts. His callused fingers strummed her nipples, brushing against the tips, making her breasts burn with pleasure. “I want to spend forever with you. I want to have children with

you. I want to marry you and spend the rest of my life making you happy.” He pinched the turgid dark buds. “I want you and I won’t take no for an answer.”

Her body bowed, breasts reaching for his tantalizing touch as Theodora moaned Alejandro’s name.

His hands slipped between her legs and spread her thighs wider. Long, callused, golden fingers dipped between the fleshy folds of her sex. His fingers traced the inner slit of her sex, testing her readiness, spreading her cream. Theodora closed her eyes as pleasure ripped through her at the single, intimate touch. It had been so long since he had touched her. She felt like a fiend who had gone through withdrawals getting her first taste of her drug of choice.

And Alejandro was premium grade.

Theodora barely stifled the urge to growl when Alejandro’s hands were no longer brushing against her skin. She looked up to find him bending over, reaching at something on the floor beside the table. She jerked when he stood back up with a grin on his handsome face.

He placed an opened black leather bag on the table beside her. Her calf brushed against it. She shivered at the cool touch.

Theodora watched the slow descent of Alejandro’s thick, corded wrist as he reached into the bag. He pulled out two small black items.

He gave her a heated smile. “I bought these right before we...went on vacation,” he finished slowly. Alejandro reached across the table and cupped one breast. His thumb brushed against it. He dipped his head and flicked his tongue against the swollen bud. Once. Twice. Thrice. And stopped. Just as Theodora was starting to feel the painful pleasure that came from satisfied desire.



He placed the small, cone shaped plastic over her nipple and squeezed. She gasped as the action forced the toy to latch onto her tit. It suckled her like a hungry mouth.

Her wide-eyed gaze caught his. He grinned. "I thought you might enjoy that," he whispered against her other breast before wrapping his lips around the dark tip of the mound. He teased her, using his mouth, teeth, tongue, until she was driven mindless with need by the dual tugging sensation. He released her only to replace his mouth with the second toy. Theodora groaned as pleasure slammed through her.

Just as Theodora had begun to think her body could take no more pleasure Alejandro placed a pink tickler against her clitoris. She came in a blinding flash that was so intense it was equal parts pleasure and pain. It left her gasping for air.

Body writhing, Theodora reached for Alejandro. Her small fingers tangled in the midnight strands of his hair. He put the pink tickler on the tabletop and placed his mouth against her. The wet heat of his tongue seared her whole body, flaming the emotions she had ignored for months.

Desire.

Need.

Love.

Tears gathered in her eyes. She couldn't do this. She could not be with Alejandro, make love with him, when she was fighting the very emotions she felt inside. "Stop, Alejandro. Please stop." She tugged at his hair.

His fingers wrapped around her wrist and prevented her from grabbing any more of his hair. "Why should I stop, querida? So you can pretend you don't love me?"

He lifted his head and caught her gaze. "Why? So you can avoid what is between us? So you can pretend I don't want you with my every being? No, I will not stop." He placed his cock at the mouth of her pussy. "I will not let you run from us." His cock surged deep into

her in one thrust. Theodora jerked as she felt Alejandro plunge into her, plowing past the tight walls of her cunt to fully imbed himself deep within her.

“You are mine,” he growled. His lips pressed against hers, capturing her mouth. His tongue thrust between her lips to stroke over her teeth, slid against her own tongue and caress the inner most cavern of her mouth. She felt his every slip, every slide, every plunge of his tongue deep inside her, deep between the folds of her sex, even as his cock stroked inside her cunt.

Her emotions were stronger, her passions too great. The pleasure she felt as Alejandro made love to her was more intense than anything she had every felt before in his arms. Its strength was frightening.

Alejandro broke off the kiss. His feverish, deep amber eyes stared into hers. “Tell me you don’t love me, Theodora. Say the words and I’ll let this be. I’ll walk away from you, from us.”

Theodora looked into his honest gaze and saw the desire, the need, and the love there that she had always dreamed of. The desire. The need. The love she had hoped a man would feel for her.

The love she felt for him.

And he felt it for her. She turned away. “I can’t say it,” she choked out. He stared at her for several movements. Theodora could feel the imprint of his gaze on every inch of her skin. It marked her as his.

“Oh God,” Alejandro groaned and leaned his forehead against hers. “Say it, querida. Say it.”

Her gaze caught his. Theodora licked her lips and said the words they both needed to hear. “I love you, Alejandro. I’ve loved you since the day I first saw you.”

There was a moment of utter silence, a profound absence of sound that settled deep in her bones. Alejandro stilled above her, eyes searching hers. His smile was slow in coming, warm, and filled with such emotion she felt tears forming in her eyes. His lips brushed against hers in a sweet kiss. His hips moved away from hers, his cock withdrawing from her slick folds.

She reached for him automatically, instinctively wanting to be near the man who was her whole world. She jerked the bindings around her wrists. A simmering smile lit her face. She looped her bound wrists around his neck and pulled him down to her for a kiss. Her lips slid across his, sending shockwaves of need surging through her. At first their kiss was a tender glide of silken flesh against satiny skin, Theodora quickly pushed for more, needing to feel his tongue moving across hers, teasing her with the wet swipe of that talented velvet heat.

One of his hands delved into the thick strands of her hair and held her head immobile. His tongue plunged deep into her mouth, tasting, devouring, and consuming Theodora until she felt as though they were so close they shared the same breath.

"Damn." He broke off the kiss and stared deep into her eyes. The sight of his passion darkened, heavy lidded eyes made her already smoldering body burn with desire.

"Alejandro," she whispered as she rocked her hips against his.

He shook his head and gave her a nervous smile. "I want to ask you something first."

Lord, she'd give him a kidney at that point as long as he promised to give it to her. "Okay."

He lifted his hands to her face. He had them cupped. Curious, Theodora stared at his hands as he slowly spread his fingers to reveal a black velvet box sitting in the middle of his palm. He flipped it open to reveal the glimmering diamond solitaire ring inside. "Will you marry me?"

Theodora stared at the ring in shock. She hadn't really been sure what to expect when Alejandro had opened his hands. To be honest, she'd thought he was going to pull out one of his toys.

But an engagement ring?

"Yes. Oh God, yes, I'll marry you."

"Thank the Lord!" He whooped and dropped a hard, tender kiss on her mouth. He lifted her hand and placed the ring on her left hand.

"You know you could release me and let me do that."

He gave her a sultry smile. "Then you wouldn't be at my mercy," he growled before kissing her. Theodora brushed her lips across his mouth. The slight touch was all it took. Alejandro thrust his tongue into her mouth and kissed her deeply, as though they had never kissed before.

Theodora paused and broke off the kiss. "Alejandro, my doctors say I might not be able to carry a child to full term. I might not --" He pressed his lips to hers effectively cutting off her admission. She gasped into his mouth when his tongue swept over the plump curves and contours of her lips.

"I don't care if you actually give birth to our children, Theodora. I only care that you are the mother of our children." He grinned down at her with wicked promise in his eyes. "Plus, it's not like we've given it all we've got. If I remember well you're quite...fertile now."

She gaped at him in shock and embarrassment. According to her calendar, she was ovulating at the moment. "You remember?"

He chuckled. "Querida, I remember everything that you've ever told me. And I'm more than ready to spend the rest of my life figuring out all the things you haven't told me." He slid into her cunt, pushing past the tight walls of her pussy. "Now, let's get started on Alejandro Junior."

“Alexandra,” she retorted with a laugh that turned to a moan when he slipped out of her and thrust back in full of force.

“Alexandra it is, querida.”

 THE END 

## Tuesday Morrigan

Tuesday Morrigan began her love affair with romance at an early age. As a child she was always infatuated with the romance novels she snuck from her mother. Later, in high school, the public library became her sanctuary with an endless array of romance novels. Tuesday is still an avid reader of books. Thanks to shows like *Buffy*, *Angel*, and her latest infatuation, *Supernatural*, Tuesday prefers her stories to have a little more grit. Her favorite genres have always been fantasy, mystery, romance, and erotica, so as a writer, she tries to blend the genres to create her own personal niche.

You can learn more about Tuesday, including what's her latest project, at [www.tuesdaysmorrigan.com](http://www.tuesdaysmorrigan.com) and you can reach her at [tuesdaysmorrigan@gmail.com](mailto:tuesdaysmorrigan@gmail.com).