

ELLORA'S CAVE PRESENTS

QUEEN'S
Surrender
NADIA AIDAN

ELLORA'S CAVE
Quickies®

Queen's Surrender

Nadia Aidan

Queen Sumatra is used to bending men to her will. Her harem is overflowing, but she has grown bored and restless with them. She desires a challenge, a man she cannot so easily command, and she finds one in Adaire.

Ten years her junior, Adaire may be in the queen's employ, but he cannot be manipulated by her. He is not her servant and certainly not one of her whores. Adaire is adamant that in their bedchamber Sumatra will not be the one giving orders, for behind closed doors she will not be his queen, but his woman. And Adaire will accept nothing less than her complete surrender.

An Ellora's Cave Romantica Publication



www.ellorascave.com

Queen's Surrender

ISBN 9781419926846

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Queen's Surrender Copyright © 2010 Nadia Aidan

Edited by Jaynie Ritchie

Cover art by Syneca

Electronic book publication March 2010

The terms Romantica® and Quickies® are registered trademarks of Ellora's Cave Publishing.

With the exception of quotes used in reviews, this book may not be reproduced or used in whole or in part by any means existing without written permission from the publisher, Ellora's Cave Publishing, Inc.® 1056 Home Avenue, Akron OH 44310-3502.

Warning: The unauthorized reproduction or distribution of this copyrighted work is illegal. No part of this book may be scanned, uploaded or distributed via the Internet or any other means, electronic or print, without the publisher's permission. Criminal copyright infringement, including infringement without monetary gain, is investigated by the FBI and is punishable by up to 5 years in federal prison and a fine of \$250,000. (<http://www.fbi.gov/ipr/>). Please purchase only authorized electronic or print editions and do not participate in or encourage the electronic piracy of copyrighted material. Your support of the author's rights is appreciated.

This book is a work of fiction and any resemblance to persons, living or dead, or places, events or locales is purely coincidental. The characters are productions of the author's imagination and used fictitiously.

QUEEN'S SURRENDER

Nadia Aidan

Chapter One

Amazonia—3456 A.D.

"I want him."

Adaire glared at the woman before him, his lips curling into an angry frown when she stared back at him, her liquid brown eyes, cool and assessing. She was a bitch—a haughty, arrogant bitch, but apparently his body didn't care. His cock stirred when he caught a glimpse of the dark areolas of her full breasts, which teased him from behind her sheer garment. His breathing grew ragged, almost painful, when she crossed her legs and her robe parted, revealing one long, shapely leg, her rich copper skin smooth and supple. He ached to run his calloused hand along that expanse of bare flesh, imagining it would be as soft as the finest silk. He bit back a needy groan and made a fist, fighting the urge to cross the distance that separated them and find out just how soft her skin was.

The woman before him knew she was painfully, achingly beautiful, that every man in her kingdom, and many beyond, desired her, would kill for the pleasure of warming her bed, the honor of thrusting between her thighs. Her conceit knew no bounds, so he imagined it was impossible for her to concede defeat, for her to admit there was one man in all of Amazonia who could resist her advances.

"Your Highness, must we do this every time I come here? I am not for sale."

He gestured toward the half-naked man who stood before the queen, the chiseled definition of his muscles, rippling beneath his bronze skin.

"However, I have brought the young soldier you expressed an interest in."

Queen Sumatra's lips thinned into a tight line. She didn't want that soldier who was barely out of boyhood, and he knew that. She glared at Adaire. He was arrogant,

insufferable, full of insolence. He was also the best *acquirer* in all of Amazonia. He brought only the finest breeders, the most handsome concubines, the strongest servants. Every woman in Amazonia clamored for Adaire's services. She on the other hand, required *other* services from him, but he was being stubborn, completely unreasonable.

She waved her hand. "Leave us," she barked to her servants. "Not you, Adaire," she said when he turned toward the door.

He faced her, his hazel-green eyes burning a hole straight through her, but he remained rooted to his spot at the foot of her throne, completely still.

She stepped down and moved toward him, and she noticed his eyes followed her every movement, the subtle sway of her rounded hips, the gentle bobbing of her breasts. The bulge in his breeches grew bigger, a telling sign that he wasn't as immune as he pretended to be. But then she already knew that.

"Why do you persist in denying me?" she asked when she stood before him.

He arched one brow, the gesture one of blatant arrogance.

"Why do you persist in pursuing me, a man who has once rejected you?" he retorted in response.

She drew back in surprise, fighting the urge to wince. She knew his words were not meant to be cruel but simply a statement of fact. Yet no other man would have dared speak to their queen that way, but Adaire was different. That's what drew her to him, what made her want him. He was impossible to manipulate, to bend to her will. He was his own man, and he knew it.

Her harem was full, overflowing with men eager to please her, and yet she was bored, restless. She stared up at the handsome trader, her gaze traveling the length of his chiseled frame. His tunic hung open, revealing the hard, muscled planes of his bronze torso, and her heart skipped a beat when he shifted, the corded muscles of his lithe body bunching and flexing before her, capturing her full attention. She swallowed when his eyes met hers. She was so tired of men who did her bidding, men who were

quick to jump when she commanded. She wanted something different. She wanted Adaire.

"I could ruin you." She spoke softly. "With a simple edict I could ban you from Amazonia."

He shrugged as if he didn't give a care that she could bankrupt him, destroy his entire livelihood. "And what would the noblewomen of Amazonia say when they had no more men to tend to their homes—to tend to *them*? What do you think would happen when they discovered you were the reason why they no longer had men to serve them?"

Anger surged through her at his blatant disregard and veiled threat. She didn't bother to examine the fact that she'd threatened him as well. "You are an arrogant swine, completely lacking in respect."

She spun around and marched toward her throne.

"And you are spoiled and self-centered and completely without scruples if you think you can blackmail me into your bed."

The deep timbre of his voice sounded so close and she spun around, a gasp tearing from her lips when the tips of her breasts grazed his torso. She shivered as lust pulsed through her, her body growing hotter when desire darkened Adaire's gaze.

"You continue to deny me, but you're not unaffected by me, Adaire."

"I never said I was," he whispered, so close that the warmth of his breath caressed her face. "But I refuse to surrender to you, Sumatra. If you want me in your bed, then you know what you must do."

Fury roared through her veins and she practically shook with it. She didn't know if she was angrier that he didn't use her royal title or at the vivid image he conjured with his words. Her cheeks heated at the vision that flashed before her eyes. It was demeaning, degrading, completely beneath her.

"How dare you!" she spat, and her anger mounted when he furled his lips into a cocky grin.

"I assure you it wouldn't be unpleasant, Your Highness. You wouldn't even be down there long."

For a moment she couldn't breathe. She saw herself before him on her knees, her lips closed around the length of his cock, his face twisted in pleasurable agony as she sucked him, tasted him, gave him infinite ecstasy with her mouth.

"The thought of sucking my cock arouses you, doesn't it?"

It did, but she wouldn't—*couldn't* admit it. She was a queen, a member of Amazonia's nobility. Not even the most common woman pleased a man with her mouth. Men existed for a woman's pleasure; the needs of men were inconsequential.

"You're dismissed," she managed to get out finally, remembering who she was. Not even her desire for Adaire could make her do something so degrading, so humiliating. But she certainly wondered what it would be like, what it would feel like—for both of them. Ever since he'd issued his ultimatum that was all she seemed to think about.

"One day, Your Highness, I will force you to your knees, force your surrender and you will welcome it."

He was gone then, his proud, arrogant gait taking him out of the throne room on five easy strides. Rumor had it that Adaire was of royal blood, descended from a noble family on a planet far from Amazonia, which had been destroyed centuries ago.

She had no trouble believing that rumor, she thought wryly. Men like Adaire—with that kind of arrogance, that unwavering confidence—were not made—they were simply born that way.

* * * * *

Adaire curled his fingers around his goblet and took a sip of wine, his eyes never once leaving the queen.

She sat atop her throne on the raised dais, pointedly ignoring him. But he knew she saw him and every move he made. If she was as aware of him as he was of her, then he was certain not a single breath he took went unnoticed because every time she tipped her lips into a secretive smile or let out a husky laugh, he noticed. He shifted in his seat, a frown marring his handsome face. His cock was all too aware of how closely he studied Sumatra.

"I am amazed you two still persist in playing this game."

Adaire spared his friend a brief glance. Like him, Malachi was an *acquirer*, and a well respected one at that. Among the handful of men in Amazonia to achieve noble status, Adaire and Malachi had earned their titles by providing the class of ruling women with men from across the galaxy, men to please them, to serve them.

"It is not a game to me," Adaire remarked, deciding it was futile to pretend as if he didn't know what his friend was referring to. "The queen refuses to surrender, but I refuse to become one of her whores."

He turned to face Malachi then. His friend was as light as he was dark. Malachi's blond hair was clasped at the nape of his neck, his clear, blue eyes boring into Adaire.

"Sumatra will never suck your cock. She is the queen. That is beneath her."

Adaire turned his attention back to the dais, his next breath sticking in his chest when her golden eyes met his. Her lips parted, and her tiny pink tongue eased its way across her mouth, leaving her full lips glistening wet. He bit back a groan, imagining the swollen, red lips of her sex and how he ached to ease himself between her lush thighs and kiss her there until she was dripping wet and begging him to fuck her.

She glanced away, her cheeks booming with red splotches, as if she could read his thoughts. The exchange had left him painfully hard and he considered Malachi's words.

"She has certainly been a challenge, but I would expect nothing less from a queen." He raised his goblet to his smiling lips. "But have no doubt I will have Sumatra's complete and utter surrender. I refuse to accept anything less from her." He took another sip of wine, ignoring Malachi's skeptical look, his gaze fixed solely on the

queen. Malachi might assume his words were spoken as a boast, but Adaire did not boast or make idle claims. Physically, he could not endure this constant state of painful arousal whenever Sumatra was near for much longer. He was determined to force the queen's surrender – there was simply no other alternative.

* * * * *

The Maenadian Festival was one of the most celebrated annual traditions in Amazonia. Wine would flow all night, and the women would indulge in the pleasures of the flesh. Many would take several lovers in the celebration of Maenadia, the goddess of fertility and lovemaking.

Sumatra sat at the raised dais, her gaze skimming along the crowd. She felt the weight of eyes on her and turned to find herself drowning in twin pools of piercing jade. She sucked in a breath, her nipples tightening, pressing against her sheer gown. Unlike many of the other women, tonight she only wanted *one* lover, but she knew he would deny her. And he would continue to deny her until she gave him what he wanted – what he demanded.

A flash of gold caught her eye and she glanced over at Adaire's companion. Where Adaire was bronze, Malachi was golden, his hair, his skin, were as radiant as the sun. His blue eyes were mesmerizing, crystal clear jewels that always seemed to twinkle with laughter. She'd always liked Malachi. He was kind and lighthearted, easygoing. She couldn't quite understand how he shared such a deep friendship with the brooding and seemingly perpetually serious Adaire. The only time she saw Adaire smile was when he knew he held the upper hand. She wasn't even sure if she could call what he did a "smile". They were grins, always smug and full of arrogance.

She stood then. The festival was well underway. The crush of bodies intertwined in every erotic position imaginable surrounded her. The musky scent of sex and cum permeated the air, the husky moans and grunts of pleasure building to a deafening roar in the large hall.

Several people simply watched the orgy before them, a few stroking themselves to climax at the decadent scene. Sumatra had not come to simply watch. She'd come to indulge herself in the festivities, to spend her lust in the arms of a willing man, anything to get the image of Adaire out of her head, even though she already knew any man she fucked tonight, she would still be imagining it was him and only him.

She sauntered across the room, ignoring Adaire when she came to a stop at his table.

She reached out her hand. "Malachi, would you care to join me?"

Her voice was low and husky, intentionally provocative. Malachi's eyes widened, his attention darting between her and Adaire.

"Go with her. You wouldn't want to *insult* the queen." Adaire's words sliced through her, his voice cold, and she forced herself not to look at him, although she felt his emerald glare all the way to the tips of her toes.

Malachi seemed reluctant, but eventually he stood and grasped her hand. The musicians still played, and she walked with Malachi toward the dance floor.

She turned to face him, falling into his strong arms, letting him lead her across the dance floor in a sensual dance.

"I should be offended that you have made me a pawn in your game with Adaire."

She leaned back, meeting his twinkling gaze. "But you're not offended," she said, not bothering to deny the obvious. She was trying to force Adaire's hand, force him to bend to her will, no matter how futile such an action was. Adaire was stubborn enough to watch her all night and still never lay a finger on her, even as she burned with an all consuming need to have him.

"I would think you would resent being used as a pawn to make your friend jealous."

Malachi smiled, but there was a knowing in his eyes that gave her pause. "I will assist you in your quest, my queen, but beware, Adaire is not a man to be easily manipulated or toyed with. I sense he is approaching the end of his rope with you."

Sumatra was startled by the insightfulness of Malachi's words and she opened her mouth to question him, but before she could get a single word out, Malachi crushed his lips to hers, his tongue probing deep inside. The invasion was so unexpected, she moved to push him away, but he held fast, cupping the full globes of her ass, dragging her flush against his body.

Malachi was handsome, his kiss sensual, and she found herself succumbing to her desires while her wandering thoughts of Adaire only heightened her lust. Maybe his friend could ease her painful arousal, give her the relief that Adaire denied her.

She twisted her arms behind his neck, her breasts pillowing against the hard muscles of his chest. He groaned into her mouth, the hard bulge of his cock digging into her belly.

Sumatra kissed Malachi with a fierce passion, but all she saw was Adaire, and she imagined it was him in her arms, him with his lips pressed to her, his cock straining against the confines of his breeches, begging for entrance inside her wet heat.

She was so lost in the foggy haze of her fantasy that she didn't realize Malachi had foregone their dance and carried her back to the dais, to lay her down atop the plush, carpeted floor, until she felt a cool blast of air between her legs.

Sumatra let her eyes drift open, her gaze clashing with his, and she held her breath, even as she held his smiling stare when he lowered his head to place his lips against her cunt. Searing heat slashed through her, and her belly churned with pent-up desire as he kissed her pussy, his lips sucking on the tiny nub at the apex of her sex.

Clutching the back of his head, her fingers plunged through his soft locks, breaking the tie at the nape of his neck so that his golden hair fanned out across his tanned shoulders.

He tongued her deeply, his talented mouth causing her entire body to shiver. Wetness pooled at her center, and he lapped up her juices, sucking vigorously. She held him imprisoned between her thighs, her fingers digging into his scalp, her entire body on the very edge of climax.

Her breath came in short pants, and she was nearly there, but she just couldn't come, just couldn't find release. She let out a strangled groan, her eyes falling shut. She let her mind wander, and that's when she saw him. Adaire, between her legs, fucking her with his hot mouth. His harsh gaze was trained on her, daring her to come, daring her to succumb to the need that only he aroused.

Her orgasm hit her so strongly that she nearly blacked out. She let out a hoarse cry, her thighs trembling, her hands still clutching the back of Malachi's head, and she kept her eyes clenched shut, not wanting to release the vision of Adaire.

But when she felt a presence looming over her, she was forced to open her eyes, her gaze meeting the hard glare of Adaire's.

"Get up," he bit out.

She didn't bother to protest, didn't waste her breath reminding him that she was *his* queen. The look in his eyes left no room for argument.

Everything and everyone seemed to disappear when he snarled at her.

"I am going to let you walk out of here in front of me with your head held high, so that there will be no doubt that I respect your authority as Amazonia's queen. But when we get to *my* chambers, you will not be a queen, Sumatra, you will only be a woman, a woman who shall pay for the disrespect that you have just shown me."

Chapter Two

In honor of The Maenadian Festival, Sumatra had opened her palace to all of Amazonia's nobility. If they wanted a room for the night, they would have one. At first Adaire had been tempted not to attend, and even when he'd decided to go, he'd been certain he wouldn't remain in Sumatra's palace for the night. But he'd requested a room, just in case. Now he was glad he did. He had no desire to return to Sumatra's chambers and lie in a bed with her where she'd fucked all her concubines, her whores, many of whom he'd supplied her with.

He unlocked his door and ushered her inside, slamming the door behind them and twisting the knob until a soft click told him it was securely locked.

He stood there facing Sumatra. Her eyes were wide, full of an emotion he'd never seen there before—uncertainty. He'd known the queen for almost a decade, and he'd never once seen her appear anything but the haughty, composed, self-assured woman that she was.

Though she was ten years his senior, he'd always admired Sumatra. She had many responsibilities as the queen of an entire kingdom, and he admired her fairness, her willingness to do anything to ensure the health and happiness of her people. She was superior in intelligence; her devotion to her kingdom unmatched by any ruler he'd ever known.

When they'd met, he'd been practically a boy, just turned twenty-five. At the time he'd been in awe of her—her beauty, her captivating sensuality that held him enthralled. Had she demanded it, he would have eagerly joined the many that warmed her bed. But back then, she'd practically ignored him, preferring to indulge her desires with other men, *many* of them, sometimes all at once. Her appetites had been insatiable—and he knew that for a fact. He'd brought her dozens of concubines seemingly every

month. He'd realized then Sumatra didn't want a real man, she wanted a servant, a puppet, someone she could control. Adaire had never taken to authority very well and he knew no matter how much he desired her, he would never allow Sumatra to wield control over him. So he'd buried his attraction to her and ignored it. And it wasn't until then that Sumatra had taken notice of him.

When he'd ceased being the eager boy who fawned over her, she found she desired him, but Adaire refused to play games with the queen. If she wanted him, then it would be on his terms—after all, she'd had her chance.

"You play a dangerous game, Sumatra. I am a jealous man. I do not share what is mine, and when I do, I am the one who makes that decision, not you."

Her eyes grew round, surprise and haughty conceit warring in their golden brown depths. "Yours?" She chuckled softly, but the sound was mocking to his ears. "I do not belong to any man, and certainly not you—"

He snaked his hand around her small waist, dragging her into his arms, flush against his hard body, effectively cutting her off. He was glad she was quiet—her words had renewed the anger that had raged through him as he sat by, helplessly watching his best friend give Sumatra the pleasure that should have been his to give and his alone.

"You belong to me, Sumatra, and before you set foot out of my chambers I will force you to acknowledge what we both already know."

He crushed his lips to hers, the anger he'd tried to keep at bay surging through his veins. He tried to keep his fury out of the kiss, but he couldn't and she whimpered against the assault he waged against her mouth.

He ripped his lips from hers, his chest heaving. Her eyes were wide, startled, her breath coming in stilted pants.

"Undress for me," he uttered, hoping the time it took for her to disrobe would be enough to cool his temper, but when she shook her head, he accepted that their first time together would not be the slow, sensuous lovemaking he'd imagined, but quick

and rough—an angry fuck. At least that was exactly what it would be if she continued to try his patience.

“I am a queen. I do not undress for men, men undress for m—”

“I told you, Sumatra, inside *my* chambers you are not a queen. You are a woman. Now disrobe.”

Her nostrils flared and she stood there in silence, appearing almost petulant.

“I will rip your gown from you, and in the morning you will have to leave my chambers naked. Is that what you want, Sumatra? Do you want everyone to know I tore your clothes from you and forced you to submit to my will?”

Sumatra glared at him. Of course that wasn't what she wanted. But that's exactly what everyone would think. Amazonian women did not allow men to rip their clothes from them—they did not submit to the lusts of men. But if she left his room with tattered garments, everyone would whisper that she'd allowed Adaire to have his way with her—that she'd surrendered to him.

As queen, that was unacceptable, but she *wanted* Adaire to have his way with her, she wanted to know what it was like to have a man desire her to the point of madness, to the point that he would do anything to have her naked. She'd never once given in to the lusts of men—no man had ever dared—but she ached to surrender to Adaire, to have him make demands upon her body and then watch herself yield to him.

She reached behind her neck to undo the ties that held her gown together, but she'd waited too long. She felt the cool air wash over her naked body at the same time the ripping of soft silk echoed off the walls.

She gasped when her unbound breasts spilled forth, her body on display before him.

Lust darkened his eyes to a forest green, his gaze roaming appreciatively over her breasts before dipping lower to stare at her pussy. She'd barely taken in her next breath before he was upon her.

Her knees buckled against the back of the bed and they tumbled down, the heavy weight of his body pressing her deep into the feather soft mattress.

He fumbled with the laces of his breeches and she called his name.

He didn't stop as he released his cock, his wild gaze falling upon her face.

"I warned you, Your Highness, that you were playing a dangerous game. I have waited for you for years, and yet you give yourself to my best friend. I imagined that our first time together I would make love to you slowly, tenderly, but you have pushed me too far, Sumatra. You have toyed with me for far too long."

She struggled to wrap her mind around his words, but before she could even discern the depth of meaning behind them, he surged forward, the thick length of his cock stretching her, plunging deep inside.

"Adaire," she cried out, her body arching off the bed, her eyes squeezing shut. She felt so full, so stuffed. For the past year she'd been celibate, the thought of fucking any other man but him held no appeal. So her body resisted the invasion and she gasped, struggling to draw in a deep, calming breath of air.

Adaire stilled above her, his throat clogging with emotion. Her sheath was wet, filled with the juices of her arousal, but still she was tight around him, too tight. He glared down at her, not sure who he was truly angry at—him or her. She had an army of men in her harem, but it was obvious she hadn't taken one to her bed in a while—a *long* while—and he now felt like an ass for hurting her.

"I'm sorry. I didn't..." His voice drifted off at the shy smile that spread across her face. The look in her eyes said it all. Of course he wouldn't know. How would he when she pretended to fuck a different man every day?

She cupped his cheek, and for the briefest of moments there was a vulnerability, a softness he'd never glimpsed in her eyes. Her lashes fluttered shut and she tipped her head back, offering him her mouth. He didn't hesitate, his eyes closing as he dipped his head to capture her lips in a slow, sensual kiss. He took his time tasting her, his tongue probing gently inside. When she relaxed beneath him, he began to move, his cock stroking in and out of her wet heat.

He groaned as she drenched him, her channel slick and tight as he thrust inside her.

Her pussy opened to accept him, the muscles of her cunt stretching around the thick, ruddy length of his cock, permitting him entrance into her most intimate place.

He deepened the kiss, his cock plowing deeper inside her, his strokes growing harder, more urgent as he fucked her. He shifted up her body, his hands spreading her thighs wider, holding her open for him as he drove deeper into her.

She clutched the back of his head, her hands tangling in his hair. He felt her shudder beneath him, and her pussy clamped down around him, at the same time she tore her lips from his and screamed out his name.

Her juices poured from her body, coating his thrusting shaft. The pulsing of her cunt around him was like a tight fist, strangling his cock.

He'd waited too long to claim Sumatra, and his infamous control now failed him. He buried his face against the crook of her neck, a strangled groan ripping past his lips as he erupted inside her, his dick pouring his seed deep into her waiting womb.

Sweat dripped from his brow and he struggled to breathe, the air burning through his aching lungs. When he finally found the strength, he rolled off her and simply lay there, staring at the ceiling.

She shifted beside him, and he turned to meet her gaze. He swore he'd never seen anything more beautiful in his entire life. She was propped up on one elbow, her unbound hair cascading over one shoulder. Her eyes were satiated, and her cinnamon smooth skin wore a soft rosy blush. He started to smile, but stopped when he saw she clutched the bed sheet to her chest.

“Do not hide yourself from me.”

Her eyes flashed and he knew she wanted to protest, but apparently she was realizing that her defiance would come with repercussions. She relaxed her fingers, and he tugged down the sheet, revealing her gorgeous, full breasts.

He reached out to cup the soft flesh, teasing one nipple and then the other until they both were taut. He rolled her beneath him, his body already hard for her.

Her eyes rounded when she felt the evidence of his arousal pressing against her opening.

“Are you going to remain clothed?”

He’d forgotten all about the fact that he still wore his garments. A grin spread across his face. “You shall undress me.”

She started to shake her head but stopped, obviously glimpsing the steely look in his eyes. He was done with these ridiculous Amazonian rules—they had no place in their bed and he said as much.

“I’ve never undressed a man before,” she replied tentatively.

He bit back a frown. Of course she hadn’t. Men stripped for her. After all, they existed only for *her* benefit, her pleasure. Well not tonight and not with him, and if he had his way, never again. Sumatra existed for his pleasure and his alone, just as he existed for hers. He was determined to teach the queen that when it came to lovemaking, there were no rules, no dictates, only mutual pleasure.

He sucked in a breath when she pushed his tunic down his shoulders. He shrugged out of it, casting it aside. She slipped her hands inside his breeches and managed to get them past his hips, but with her beneath him, her arms wouldn’t allow her to push them down any further, so he finished for her, and kicked them off his feet, throwing them to the floor.

“That wasn’t so bad was it?” He grinned when he was completely nude, and it grew wider when she smiled.

She didn't smile often, at least not a genuine one. He was often treated to her coy grins, but they didn't light up her entire face the way her smiles did. He didn't think it was possible, but she was even more beautiful when she smiled.

He rolled off her and in a single motion, he scooped her up into his arms.

"What are you —"

"We're going to bathe," he answered as he walked outside and with her still in his arms, he stepped into the warm bathing pool adjacent to his chambers. He set her down so that she stood in the center of the pool, and he turned on the geysers, watching the frothy bubbles lick at her smooth skin.

She closed her eyes and leaned her head back, her arms stretched out behind her. For a moment, he simply watched her in silence, enjoying the peaceful serenity that was etched across her face.

"Are you sore?" he asked, hating to pull her from whatever blissful thoughts were running through her head.

Her eyes snapped open, her cheeks growing red with embarrassment. She shook her head, but he wasn't sure if he believed her. He reasoned he would find out soon enough.

"You want to explain to me why you seemingly purchase concubines from me almost every day, and yet it is apparent that you don't use them?"

Sumatra knew there was no way she could mask the guilty look on her face from Adaire. There was also no way she could explain her reason for celibacy without embarrassing herself, and she knew Adaire was too intelligent not to spot a lie.

She shrugged. "I have my reasons." She turned away from him and moved to pull herself out of the pool.

"I didn't tell you to get out."

She whipped her head around, biting back a tiny yelp when her wet hair whisked across his bare chest. When had he gotten so close?

"I do not need your permission to get out of my own pool." She reached for the ladder, but stopped when his hand closed over hers. In a single motion he pushed her up against the wall of the pool, and flattened her hands atop the deck. She gasped when his cock nudged the swells of her ass, teasing the seam of her buttocks.

"Why won't you just admit that you simply wanted to see me every day? That at some point you grew tired of all your *yes men*."

She tried to turn around, but he held her imprisoned, his chest brushing against her back, and his hands gripped her hips. She managed to twist just her head around, and he leaned down to place a tiny kiss against her lips. Whatever annoyance she had toward him, slowly evaporated. What was it about Adaire that had her forgiving his insolence? His complete disregard for rules? His borderline disrespect? She'd bedded him – she should have been satiated and all set to put him back in his place.

But instead of being thoroughly done with him, she now found she only wanted him more. She enjoyed the challenge he presented, and she was eager to discover just how far he would push her, just how far she would let him go.

She froze when she felt the length of his finger nudge against the pucker of her anus. "*No*," she protested, and he stopped.

"Y-you cannot – not *there*," she stammered out, completely unprepared for the rush of desire that swamped her with his forbidden invasion of her body.

"I won't hurt you, Sumatra. I promise I will be gentle." To emphasize his words, he pulled his finger out of her for just a moment to dip it into a nearby jar of oil, completely coating it, before gently pressing his finger inside her again.

"It's not that..." She didn't finish because he already knew. She'd never once allowed a man to make love to her there.

His expression was tender, but there was a yearning in his eyes, a deep-seated need that called to her, that she acknowledged and understood. And yet, she didn't know if she could give him this.

"You don't want to deny me, Sumatra. I can feel it." She gasped when he pushed deeper inside her, coating her passage with the slippery oil as he slowly stretched her rectum with one finger and then another until she relaxed around him.

He knew the moment she was ready as he positioned the crown of his cock at her entrance and fed her his length, inch by inch into her now slick tunnel.

She clenched her eyes shut and her head fell forward. She fought against the slight pain of his invasion—both his physical invasion as much as his emotional one. As he took her body, she felt a tiny piece of her heart go with it. She stilled. That was absolutely out of the question. He could fuck her, he could do things to her body that she'd never allowed before, but she refused to fall for him, she refused to give him her heart.

"Ada—"

"I want what you have given no other man. I intend to be the first and only man you surrender to," he whispered hotly as he surged forward, seating himself fully inside her, and she cried out, protesting his possession of her body just as vehemently as she protested his possession of her heart.

Every single objection she could imagine was right there on the tip of her tongue, but then he snaked his hand around her body, his long fingers strumming her clit as he began to move wildly inside her anus.

Water sloshed all around them, and she gripped the edge of the pool, the mixture of pleasure and pain an indescribable feeling, one she'd never experienced before.

Her fingers tightened around the edge of the pool to brace herself against his thrusts. Warmth began to fan out across her entire body as he built her arousal with the steady rhythm of his fingers.

He gripped her hip with his other hand, pulling her flush against his body.

Tunneling deeper, he sucked in a breath and called her name. The sound of it was highly erotic on his lips, coming out as a deep, almost tortured groan.

“Come with me,” he breathed. “Come with me, Sumatra.”

He sank deeper inside her, and his fingers stroked her harder, building the pressure between her thighs until she was powerless against the onslaught of desire that rushed through her.

She screamed, her strangled cry mingling with his hoarse shout. He pulled out of her suddenly, and she felt the spray of warm droplets against her back, her ass.

She slumped against the pool, completely boneless. She heard him move behind her, the sloshing of water told her he was cleansing himself. And when he turned his ministrations on her, she moaned at the soothing, warm, wet towel against her back as he removed his seed from her body.

She was exhausted by the time he finished, and when he lifted her into his arms again, she snuggled deep into his embrace. She was barely aware of him laying her across the bed and tucking her beneath the covers. The last thing she remembered was the feel of his warm body against hers as he cradled her within the circle of his arms.

Chapter Three

Adaire was not pleased with her – that much was obvious.

“Your Highness. May I have a word with you?”

She waved her hand, dismissing the two guards and the prospective concubine Adaire had brought to her. “Leave us.”

As soon as the door closed, any pretense of civility that Adaire had maintained was now all of a sudden gone.

Not waiting for her command, he marched toward her, taking the three steps that led up to her throne in a single stride.

“Do you want to explain to me why you have summoned me to provide you with yet *another* concubine?”

His stormy gaze swirled with fury, but she was not daunted, her own fury igniting in her eyes.

“Remember yourself, Adaire.” She glared pointedly at his feet.

He snorted. “You want me to get down off your stupid throne.” His eyes turned cold. “I ought to fuck you on your throne,” he cast his arms wide, “all over this fucking room, until everyone in this entire palace hears you.”

She swallowed deeply, but she didn’t betray her unease, or the wave of desire that washed over her with his heated words. She knew Adaire would do just that, and that’s exactly what she feared, even as she longed for his arrogant dominance over her.

They’d made love in his bed chambers well into the afternoon, and while she refused to go down on her knees before him, she’d allowed him to do things to her, things she’d never allowed any other man to do to her, and he knew this. And that was exactly the problem. She’d avoided him for a week, summoning him now because she

fancied one of his concubines. Adaire was becoming far too emboldened for her tastes, far too demanding. He needed to be reminded that they were not lovers.

"I will say this again, remember yourself, Adaire. Just because you fucked me does not mean you have any claim to me, and it certainly does not give you the right to forget that I am still your queen. I have tolerated your disrespect long enough. I promise you I will not continue to turn a blind eye to your impudence."

His nostrils flared, and a tiny muscle in his jaw jumped. The look he gave her made her want to take a step back. She could almost feel the searing rage, but she stood her ground. She had to because if she wasn't careful, she would give Adaire *everything*. Not just her body, and not just her heart, but when she was with him, he made her want to give him complete control over her—even her very soul. The power he already had over her was frightening. She couldn't allow them to go on this way, with him crossing every single boundary that she laid down. If she didn't put her foot down now, she knew he would come to disregard her authority, which was something she refused to tolerate.

"I see what you are doing, and I understand why," his face hardened, "but I am not the kind of man who can just sit back and watch you take other men to your bed just because you are desperate to erase me from your mind."

She fought the urge to gasp because that was exactly what she wanted. It wouldn't happen overnight, but maybe, just maybe she would wake up one day and not find herself obsessed with Adaire and the powerful memory of their lovemaking. But maybe if she fucked enough men, one day she *would* forget.

"As of right now, I am no longer in your employ."

His outburst broke through her thoughts, propelling her to action when he twisted around and marched toward the door. She rushed after him before he could make it outside the throne room.

"What do you mean you are no longer in my employ?" She grasped his arm before he could walk out. "You can't quit. Who will I purchase my concubines from?"

He shook free of her grasp, the cold sneer he gave her forcing her to take a step back.

"Yes I *can* quit, and I don't give a fuck where you get your whores, but they won't be coming from me, not any longer." He wrenched open the door, but before he walked out, he stopped to glare down at her. His eyes were so cold, so alien, she wondered how it was possible they belonged to a man she'd known for ten years.

"Just so we are clear, Your Highness. I would have never done what you just did. I would have never forced you to swallow your pride by parading another woman before you."

He stormed out then.

"Adaire," she shouted. "Adaire!"

He kept walking, and she stared at the rigid lines of his back until he disappeared from sight. She slammed the door shut, ignoring the shocked expressions of her guards. She had no doubt the news of Adaire's defiance would spread like wildfire throughout the palace.

It was unimaginable that anyone would turn their back on the queen and then ignore her when she called after them. Any other time she would have cared about the gossip, but in that moment, it seemed so insignificant, so trivial in light of what had just happened.

She'd played one too many games with Adaire, and now she'd lost him—for good. But even worse than that was that before he'd stormed out he'd looked at her with such contempt, such loathing, that she'd feared she'd not only lost him, but also whatever respect he'd once had for her.

* * * * *

As soon as he left the palace, he could have returned to his estate on the outskirts of the city, but Adaire needed someplace quieter, more secluded, where he could find solace. When Malachi had offered to let him stay at his estate along one of Amazonia's

many crystalline beaches, with amethyst hued waters and coal black sand, he'd jumped at the opportunity. Adaire had quit a month ago, and he'd been alone at the house for most of that time, but Malachi had decided to join him for a couple of days.

"I still can't believe you left."

Adaire stared out at the rolling, violet waves of the ocean, the stormy waters echoing his own turbulent thoughts and emotions.

"What choice did I have?" He glanced at Malachi. "I wasn't going to continue supplying her with men and then pretend as if I was fine with it."

"The entire palace is abuzz with how you stormed out. Everybody is curious about what happened."

He snorted. "I bet they are. Well, I'm sure the queen can tell them whatever version that will satisfy her ego."

"That's just it. Sumatra isn't around much these days."

Adaire sat up straighter. "What do you mean she isn't around?"

"When she is done with her daily duties, she retreats to her chambers. Hasn't been doing much socializing since you left."

Adaire ignored Malachi's knowing smirk. He wanted to tell his friend that just because she wasn't socializing didn't mean she was pining away for him in her chambers. If he knew Sumatra, she was probably indulging in her latest concubine—his parting gift to her.

"You can wipe that smug grin off your face," Adaire said finally. "Sumatra isn't brokenhearted. Sumatra doesn't even care that I'm gone." He leaned back in his chair and closed his eyes, letting out a long sigh. "I could have handled that." He spoke more to himself than to Malachi. "I could have handled that she just didn't care, that she just didn't give a damn, but I refused to be insulted by having to bear witness to her endless parade of men." He opened his eyes. "I wouldn't have done that to her." That's what

really rankled him—her complete disregard for him and his pride. He snorted. And *she* talked about disrespect.

“Well maybe you should have.”

He glanced over at Malachi. “What?”

“Maybe instead of quitting and running away, you should have turned the tables on her.” Adaire ignored Malachi’s not-so-veiled dig. Malachi made no secret that he disapproved of the way Adaire had dealt with Sumatra. His friend had basically done everything but call him a coward.

“I need to get ready to head back into the city.” Malachi stood. “But think about what I said. The ruling king from Abyssinia will be visiting next month, and you know Sumatra will hold a welcoming celebration in his honor. There will be several women in his party who do not share the same inhibitions the Amazonians seem to. I highly encourage you to attend and enjoy yourself.” Adaire shook his head when Malachi winked before disappearing inside his home.

What his friend suggested held little appeal to him. Adaire had no interest in any woman but Sumatra. And yet, he did realize he needed to begin to move on at some point. But if he took Malachi’s advice, he would be no better than Sumatra. He’d blasted her for playing games, but then here he was prepared to do the same.

He would give Malachi’s suggestion some thought, although he doubted he would even go. He had no desire to see Sumatra, how happy she was with her latest conquest, how happy she was without him.

* * * * *

Sumatra was miserable, and she felt as if she was going to be ill. She touched her hand to her belly when her stomach lurched again. She glared at Adaire from across the room. The bastard. It would seem as if even his seed was defiant. She’d lain with more men than she could count, and her procreation herbs had always been enough to keep something like this from happening. That was, until he’d come along. With his

arrogance, she should have known he would do something like this. How was it that after only one night with Adaire she would find herself with child? If she didn't know any better, she'd think he'd done it on purpose.

When he'd accepted her invitation to attend King Fulani's welcome celebration, she'd taken that as a sign that maybe he was ready to talk to her, that maybe she could share the news of her condition with him.

She glowered at him when he leaned into the woman who sat beside him. So much for that. Adaire hadn't so much as even glanced her way. Not even when she'd greeted him at the door had he spoken. He simply nodded coolly and looked right through her.

She wasn't sure she could stomach much more of this. Amazonian celebrations always culminated in wild and raucous displays of lovemaking, but tonight she expected the festivities to take an even wilder turn. Abysinthia was a patriarchal society, and the women had a predisposition to be of a submissive nature. The male nobility of Amazonia had turned out in droves, undoubtedly to sample the delights of the Abysinthian women who'd accompanied their king. From the corner of her eye, she caught a glimpse of a dark haired woman on her knees, her face buried in the lap of Adaire's friend, Malachi. She didn't need to use her imagination to figure out what was taking place off in that darkened corner.

She turned her attention back to Adaire, her heart skipping a beat when their gazes clashed. He looked away and her heart sank. Discovering they'd made a child together had been a bit of a shock, yet she'd been happy to learn she carried his son or daughter in her womb. But now she realized she wouldn't be sharing her news with him after all. No matter that it was her own damn fault, that she'd driven him away and only had herself to blame. Still she'd expected he would come around eventually, that he'd come to forgive her at some point.

It was obvious he hadn't or then again, maybe he had. Maybe he'd forgiven her and moved on with his life. And when the beautiful auburn haired woman slid out of her chair and disappeared beneath the table, Sumatra froze. Yes, he'd definitely moved on.

Was she really going to sit through this? Was she really going to torture herself by watching them? She knew the moment the woman took him inside her mouth. One hand clenched against the table while the other disappeared underneath it, presumably to cup the back of her head.

Sumatra stared at him, noting the pleasure that gripped his face. His eyes were closed, his lips slightly parted. She was grateful he didn't look at her—she didn't think she could stand it. A host of emotions warred inside her. Jealousy was the strongest, but there was also a curiosity, a wondrous sense of not knowing and wishing she did. She also hated to admit it, and would certainly never reveal it to him, but his pleasure aroused her. Even though it was like a knife ripping through her belly—the knowledge that she wasn't the one pleasing him. And yet, the ecstasy on his face heated her blood, and the lips of her sex grew swollen and heavy with need.

His lips parted as if he were groaning, and she stared at him, transfixed, as he came inside the girl's mouth. She wanted to move, she wanted to get up and leave, but she couldn't seem to find the will to.

It wasn't so bad, watching him, and knowing another woman was pleasuring him, but when the woman slid out from under the table and moved to kiss him, Sumatra's heart felt as if it were being wrenched from her body.

Kissing was an intimate gesture, but it wasn't just that. It was the way he looked at the redhead, as if she was the only woman in the world that mattered, as if he wanted to pour his soul into the woman with the intensity of his gaze. And yet, all of that didn't force her to leave, what forced her out of her chair was that not once did he even glance at her. Not once did he indicate that he thought of her in that moment or any other. It was as if she was invisible, as if she didn't matter.

She was going to be the mother of his child, and he could have cared less if she lived or died in that moment. That thought propelled her out of her seat, and ironically it drew his gaze to her. She didn't think he'd notice so she didn't have time to mask her

tears. She knew he saw them, and though she didn't let a single one fall, she knew he saw the moisture in her eyes, the wretched look on her face.

Fuck him. She gathered up her gown in her hands and stormed out of the hall. She made it halfway down the hallway before the nausea hit her. This time was worse than any other, and she gripped the wall to steady herself. She felt hot, feverish and her head began to spin, everything becoming a blur around her until she felt as if she couldn't breathe. She closed her eyes, struggling to compose herself, but it didn't help and her world turned black at the same time she crumbled in a heap to the floor.

Adaire had known he would regret taking Malachi's advice. And when their gazes clashed, just before Sumatra stormed out, he'd experienced a pain that was so crippling, for a moment he couldn't breathe.

He'd never once seen Sumatra cry. Not when she'd lost her parents in a tragic accident. Not when Amazonia had been threatened by famine. Not even when her betrothed had broken their engagement to wed another woman. Tribulations that would have crippled another person, Sumatra had emerged from them seemingly unscathed. So the fact that he'd seen tears in her eyes, tears he knew he'd put there, had sent him bounding out of his seat to follow after her.

He was such a fool. Malachi had elicited the redhead's help in this disastrous charade. And with his hand Adaire had jacked himself to climax while she'd been on her knees beneath the table. But she hadn't touched him, and he hadn't touched her. When she'd pulled herself back up, she'd moved in to kiss him, but he'd pulled away at the last moment. The thought of kissing any woman but Sumatra had repulsed him.

This entire farce had been a mistake—a stupid, immature ploy to pay Sumatra back for the slight to his pride and his battered heart when she'd forced him to bring her that last concubine. But if he'd known Sumatra would be hurt by his actions, he never would have agreed to Malachi's foolish plan. The fact that Sumatra seemed to care enough to even experience any twinge of emotion left him puzzled because when he'd

quit over two months ago, she'd acted as if she could have cared less about him and his feelings.

He slipped out of the hall and rushed toward her, his eyes narrowing when she stumbled and clutched the wall.

"Sumatra?"

She didn't hear him and when she slid down the wall, he raced toward her, scooping her up into his arms before she could hit the floor.

"Call for a physician," he barked to the guard who'd rushed toward Sumatra when she'd begun to fall.

He carried her to her bed chambers and was gently laying her down across her bed when a midwife bustled inside. He frowned at her presence. A midwife? He'd specifically asked for a physician, but he figured she would have to do until they could find one.

"What's wrong with her?" he asked as soon as the woman finished examining Sumatra. He was anxious, his heart beating wildly in his chest.

He'd never known Sumatra to be sick a day in her life. It terrified him that she could be seriously ill, and a cloud of guilt settled over him. He should have been there with her, taking care of her, seeing to her needs, not off on a beach somewhere licking his wounds and nursing his battered pride like a pathetic boy.

A frown spread across his face when the woman smiled. What was wrong with her? Sumatra was unconscious and obviously very sick. Nothing about this situation was the least bit amusing.

"Sumatra is fine. She simply over exerted herself and fainted, but as far as what's wrong with her..." The midwife's smile widened. "I will let the queen share that news with you when she awakens." She packed her things and headed toward the door but stopped to glance over at the jug of wine that sat on Sumatra's bedside table.

“I told the queen she could continue to have a goblet every now and then, even in her condition, but I suggest she doesn’t drink any more wine tonight since I’m sure she already had a goblet at the celebration.”

The midwife slipped out, leaving Adaire standing in the center of the room wearing a puzzled frown. What did she mean by Sumatra’s condition? He glanced down at the sleeping queen then back over at the jug of wine. Although Sumatra probably didn’t realize it, he’d watched her from the corner of his eye the entire night. Not once had she drunk a goblet of wine, not even a tiny sip. She’d had pomegranate juice and some water but never any wine. All of a sudden he understood the midwife’s cryptic message, and he wasn’t sure which emotion was stronger—his unbridled joy or his absolute fury.

He sat down in the chair beside Sumatra’s bed, his gaze fixed on her. He hoped Sumatra was enjoying her fainting spell because as soon as she came to, she would have some explaining to do, and he had a feeling she was going to wish she was unconscious all over again.

Chapter Four

Sumatra eye's fluttered open and she stirred awake. The first thing she saw was Adaire's face looming over her.

"Here let me help you sit up." His hands were gentle as he helped her prop her back against the headboard, but there was something in his voice, something about the way he looked at her, that gave her pause.

"Would you like some wine, my queen?" He held out a goblet, but she shook her head.

"No, I insist. You didn't have a single cup at the celebration." He pushed the goblet closer to her mouth, and she twisted her head, her hand instinctively going to her belly. He followed the gesture with his eyes, and the temperature in the room seemed to plunge as she watched him warily.

His eyes were hard as he set the goblet down on the table beside her bed. She let out a sigh, realizing there was no point in pretending that he was ignorant of the truth.

"Who told you?"

"Certainly not you."

Her head snapped up at his cutting tone, tiny flames of anger igniting in her belly.

"I was going to tell you —"

"When —"

"Tonight, but you were too busy shoving your dick down that bitch's throat."

He drew back as if she'd struck him, and truth be told, she really wanted to, but she balled her hands in her lap and resisted the urge.

"I didn't touch that woman, nor she me. It was a ruse to make you jealous," he added, when she remained quiet, her eyes questioning. "It was also foolish—I feel foolish for even admitting it."

He sighed and she realized then that he spoke the truth. Something fluttered in her belly, or maybe it was her heart, she couldn't be sure. He hadn't let that woman touch him *and* he'd set out to make her jealous. She didn't know which revelation thrilled her more.

"But no matter what I'd done this night or any other, you still should have found a way to tell me," he said, breaking through her thoughts. "If you hadn't fainted in the hall, I wonder if you would have ever shared with me the news."

"Eventually."

His green eyes turned hard as stone, and she realized too late that hadn't been the wisest choice of words.

"When, Sumatra? When your belly began to swell? Or when I arrived one day to present to you yet another concubine and you greeted me with an infant in your arms?"

She bit her tongue because she knew she deserved his scathing retort.

He shot to his feet and crossed the room to stare out her open window. He ran a hand through his hair, sending it tumbling in several directions.

His voice was low when he spoke, strained, but she managed to make out every single word. "I've grown so weary of your selfishness, your self-centeredness, that it makes me wonder how I ever could have fallen in love with you."

She blinked at his back, her heart thumping harder in her chest. She swore she'd heard him say he was in love with her, but she couldn't imagine she'd heard him correctly. Not once had she ever suspected he had any real feelings for her, certainly not the depth of emotion she felt for him. She slid out of bed, tiptoeing across the room to stand behind him. But when she reached out her hand to touch his back and he jerked away from her, she let her hand fall back to her side with a heavy sigh.

She felt so helpless, at such a loss of how to make things right between them and she stammered. "I didn't know...I didn't know you felt that way," she said, finally.

He spun around, and the darkness in the room made it nearly impossible to make out the expression on his face.

"I don't know how you couldn't. When I first entered your employ, I followed you around like a lovesick puppy, but you ignored me then, so I hardened myself to you, I thought I was actually over you too. But then one day you apparently woke up and realized I existed." He laughed, but it was bitter, harsh. "I guess when you ran out of men to fuck, you eventually had to turn to the one you hadn't—"

"That's not t—"

"True? With you, Sumatra, I don't know what's truth and what's a lie. When I made love to you, it was clear you hadn't been with a man in some time, and yet as soon as I leave your bed, you want to fill it with one of *my* concubines. And now—now I discover from someone else you're carrying my child. And then you tell me you would have told me *eventually* as if I deserved to find out that I was a father at *some* point in the future."

Although she couldn't see it on his face, she knew he glared down at her. His words dripped with such venom, it was inconceivable that his eyes didn't mirror the anger that poured off him in waves.

He shook his head. "Looking at you now, I wonder what I ever saw in you. It's clear you only care about one person and that's yourself."

He moved to step around her, but she blocked his path. She took a deep breath to steady herself. She feared his reaction to what she had to say, but there was no point in keeping her feelings bottled up inside her any longer. What good had that done her? She had to be completely honest with Adaire. She knew that was the only way she stood a chance with him. "I know I've made many mistakes, b-but I do love you. I didn't fully realize it until you left." She took in a long breath when she felt her hands begin to tremble. "I was just so afraid of losing myself to you. I didn't know what to do so I pushed you away, but I was wrong—so *very* wrong for hurting you."

Silence blanketed the room; the only sound she heard was the rush of blood to her ears. After what felt like forever, he stepped out of the shadows, closing the distance between them.

"You love me." He said it flatly, less a question than a statement. His face was a blank slate, his voice dripping with scorn, as if to say *now* you've finally realized that you love me.

She nodded in answer, not trusting her voice.

"Really?" He arched one brow and he appeared bored as he stared down at her. "Then prove it."

Her eyes widened. "Prove it?" She would do anything to prove her love for him. "But how?" The words were barely out, and her eyes grew rounder when she realized exactly what she could do to convince him she was sincere in her feelings for him.

His hand shot out to cup the back of her head, tangling in her hair. "You know there is only one thing you can do to prove your love to me," he whispered against her ear, his voice deep, and the warmth of his breath stroked across her cool skin causing a shudder to race through her.

She opened her mouth, and for a second nothing came out.

"Adaire, I-I..."

He dropped his hand from the back of her head.

"It's okay, Sumatra. You don't have to do this." He backed away from her, his face empty. His words weren't meant to manipulate or coerce her. There was actually a note of regret and sadness that clung to his voice when he spoke, as if he wished she could love him enough to surrender to him, but that he'd always known she never would.

"Wait." She gripped the front of his tunic, halting his steps when he moved to sidestep her again. "Wait," she repeated, her voice quieter.

Seconds ticked by in silence as he simply watched her, waiting to see what she would do next. She blew out a long shaky breath when she finally made her decision.

She trembled as she slowly dropped to her knees before him, and her hands shook as she undid the laces of his breeches. She heard his sharp intake of breath when she reached inside his breeches and curled her slim fingers around him, freeing his hard shaft.

"Look at me," he whispered, his hand at the back of her head, gently nudging her so that she was forced to meet his open gaze.

"I don't want you to do this if you know you will feel shame or regret later."

She understood the depth of meaning behind his words. Adaire wanted not just the surrender of her body and her heart, but he wanted, no demanded, her entire soul, every piece of her. There would be no going back once she did this—she would be his, and only his, from this moment forward.

She relished the thought of belonging to him and was not afraid to give him her total self—every single part of her. After all, he'd given her every piece of himself, didn't he deserve the same from her?

Her heart beat wildly in her chest, and nervousness shook her hand as she curled it around his hard girth. She closed her eyes and parted her mouth, her tongue running across her full lips. And before she lost her nerve, she leaned forward to take him down her throat, filling her mouth with his cock in one smooth stroke.

Adaire's knees nearly buckled. Women had pleased him with their mouths before, but not like this. None but Sumatra had ever held his heart and possessed his soul, so her every touch was pure bliss, every swipe of her innocent tongue took him to the pinnacle of ecstasy. What she lacked in skill, she made up for with her eagerness, her desire to please, her need to demonstrate her love for him.

He was humbled by the honor she did him and that he held this woman's heart. A woman he'd loved from afar for so long that he'd never once dared to hope she would ever return his feelings.

A strangled groan escaped his lips when she moved faster, up and down his engorged length, taking him all the way to the back of her throat. Her head bobbed vigorously, her untrained mouth eager. Her lips were tight around him, her mouth wet and hot, almost as pleasurable as her cunt, but nothing could ever compare to the heat of her pussy wrapped around him, strangling his dick as he battered inside her tight walls. He stared down at her from hooded eyes, and his cock twitched as he watched his thick shaft disappear within her full, pink lips with each stroke. He groaned when she cupped his balls, her tongue swirling around the head of his dick. When she flicked it within the small cleft at the tip, she set off a maelstrom of pleasurable sensations inside him, the intensity of which he'd never experienced before.

His balls drew up tight to his body and his control snapped in a blinding flash. He tried to push her away, but she held fast, and he erupted, hot and fast inside her waiting mouth, shouting out her name as he shot his warm seed down her throat. She worked her mouth, her lips, hungrily around his cock, taking every drop of his essence, swallowing his cum until he felt as if his balls were empty. For someone who'd never pleased a man with her mouth, she was certainly greedy to swallow every drop of his seed.

When he had nothing left to give her, she leaned back and he slipped from her mouth, his ruddy length limp and completely spent.

"Come here." He dragged her to her feet, crushing his lips to hers, the metallic taste of himself on her tongue feeding his desire. When he finally lifted his head for air, they were both panting deeply and already he could feel his cock swelling.

He rested his forehead against hers, his eyes closed.

"Thank you," he whispered.

He opened his eyes when she placed a gentle peck against his lips.

"You're welcome, but you should know I would do anything for you. I love you." She wrapped her arms around his waist and rested her head against his chest, but her words raised his brows.

"Anything?"

She leaned back to stare into his face, her gaze never once wavering. "Anything," she repeated, her voice firmer.

He smiled as he held her close. He hoped the queen understood what she'd just promised, he hoped she really did mean she would do *anything* for him because there was a harem full of men that he was eager to disband and he couldn't wait to send them all on their merry way.

Epilogue

Moonlight streamed through the open window of her bed chambers, bathing the room in a single gleam of silver light. Sumatra pretended to be asleep as she huddled beneath the covers and watched Adaire as he cuddled their infant son to his bare chest. She smiled when he placed a gentle kiss against the crown of their son's head. He disappeared then and she knew he was headed to the nursery where he would put Alastair in his crib for the night.

She closed her eyes, a small smile on her lips as she drifted off to sleep. So much had changed in just a year's time. Much to Adaire's delight, she'd dissolved her harem. He'd been a bit surprised by how quickly she'd gone about it, but when she'd reminded him that she hadn't visited the chambers of her concubines for over a year, he'd understood. Her concubines held little appeal to her anymore, not since she'd discovered what she wanted and that was Adaire, unbending and unyielding and more stubborn than any man she'd ever known. He was also faithful, unfailingly loyal and completely devoted to her and their son.

No, getting rid of her concubines had been easy, convincing her to enter into a contract with him to form a single monogamous union, now that had been a bit harder. Entering into a single monogamous union was a powerful statement, and it had sent ripples across Amazonia, but not the ones she'd expected. Instead of being dismayed that their queen had formed a single union with a man, her kingdom seemed to welcome Adaire's presence. She found she didn't even mind the rumors that were whispered behind her back. That behind closed doors Adaire was the one who held all the control, that it was he and only he who wielded power in their bed chambers.

Adaire slipped into bed and pulled her close, tucking her within the circle of his arms. She sighed into his chest, melting into the warmth and strength of his embrace.

No she didn't mind the rumors at all, or that there was mostly truth to them. She actually reveled in Adaire's mastery over her body in their bed chambers, and that for once she didn't have to be in charge, that she didn't have to be in control. Adaire understood her needs and he made sure she attended to his. She almost couldn't believe she'd fought against surrendering to him, but she understood why she did it. She'd believed surrendering to him would mean she would give up her power to him, when that couldn't have been further from the truth.

What Adaire took, what he demanded from her, he returned to her tenfold. And to her, that wasn't surrender at all; that was simply love.

The End

About the Author

Nadia Aidan is a multi-published author who writes interracial and multicultural erotic romance across all genres. She lives, works and writes on the West Coast of the United States. Under her real name, Nadia holds a Ph.D in Political Science and by day she works as an Assistant Professor.

In addition to writing erotic and sensual romances, Nadia enjoys reading other authors, playing flag football, studying muay thai, working out, listening to music, scuba diving and target shooting. Her other interests include collecting Top Cow comics, especially *Witchblade* and *Tomb Raider*. She loves professional football and soccer. Her favorite teams are the Washington Redskins and Manchester United, respectively.

Nadia loves strong, assertive heroines, which is why she's an enduring fan of Fight Girls, Xena, Buffy, American Gladiators (new and old) and Le Femme Nikita!

Nadia welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her [author bio page](#) at www.ellorascave.com.

Tell Us What You Think

We appreciate hearing reader opinions about our books. You can email us at Comments@EllorasCave.com.

Also by **Nadia Aidan**

His Rebellious Concubine



Discover for yourself why readers can't get enough of the multiple award-winning publisher Ellora's Cave. Whether you prefer ebooks or paperbacks, be sure to visit EC on the web at www.ellorascave.com for an erotic reading experience that will leave you breathless.

www.ellorascave.com