

Chapter 1

“Come on, baby, you know you miss it.”

David’s hot breath steams on my neck as his hand slides down the small of my back. If I didn’t hate him so much, I might take him up on it. It’s been 623 days since I felt a man inside me. I really need to stop keeping track. Maybe one little roll in the hay wouldn’t be so bad. Maybe I could. Maybe I should. It’s just sex.

Sometimes I stop hating David long enough to look at him, really look at him. He’s a stunning specimen. GQ gorgeous, muscular, adonis hair, and stylish dresser. I had never been into pretty boys, but somehow David won me over... until he got me. How fast he slipped from adoring me to ignoring me.

I used to love him, deeply. I craved the feeling of his flesh next to mine. When did it stop? In fact, I know exactly when my love for him crashed off a cliff. Two years ago on December 12th at 2:05PM. When I walked in on Ms. Blonde Big Tits riding him in my bed dressed like Mrs. Claus, screaming, “I’ll be a good girl, Santa... yes, yes... I’ll be a good girl!”

Merry Fucking Christmas to me.

I yank his hand off my ass, “Um, not so much.”

He knows I have to catch a flight. Why does he endlessly disrespect my time? Maybe the better question is, why would I think he’d ever change? He can’t even be a grown up for 10 minutes. Our son has more maturity, and he’s only five.

David slithers his hand between my legs and squeezes, “You’re gonna grow a new hymen if you don’t get something hard in there, Doll.”

I can feel myself swell. How can this feel good? Have I lost my mind? I really need to find a man. Any man but him.

Tossing a trusty vibrator into my suitcase, I snarl, “I’ve got that covered.”

I race to my closet, snatching clothes. I am nothing but an object to him. Would it have killed him to notice I had feelings, a heart, a mind, and ambitions of my own? All he ever cared about was if I was thin enough and the perfect Stepford wife. If he finished the orange juice at breakfast, he expected a new bottle in the fridge by nightfall. Perfection was not only expected but demanded — physical, sexual, and domestic flawlessness. Now that I work, the judgment never ends, especially his claims that I neglect our son. But oh, how he loves to see me in a business outfit and heels at part-time parent dropoff. Now that he doesn’t have me, all he wants is to conquer me. Where was all that desire for me while Barbie’s boobs were bouncing on top of him?

He is an endless stream of contradiction. He exhausts me.

Holding my vibrator, David chuckles, “I always thought you’d end up with our divorce lawyer instead of a dildo.”

“Stop going through my things,” I snap and grab my toy from his clutches, squeezing it back in my bag.

I should have listened to my mother and gotten a sperm donor instead of a husband. At least then, I wouldn’t have to protect my son from seeing this as an example of love. Leaving my precious boy with him every other week is excruciating. Half the time, he has his Barbie-doll girlfriend taking care of him, and the other half, he pays the local teen boys to amuse him with video games too complicated for David to understand. Then again, David barely understands

PacMan.

I fumble with my suitcase as I race toward the door.

Jerry trots toward me, “Mommy, let me help!” He grabs the handle, trying to wheel the bag. I can’t help but beam. He is nothing like his father. At least I did that right.

“Jerry’s backpack is all set for tomorrow. Don’t forget to give him lunch money and make sure you take him in. I don’t want him on the bus his first day of kindergarten.”

David sneers, “Then maybe you shouldn’t be going away, Nina. You know, maybe it’s time I take custody of the little man.”

I glance toward my precious boy, who is too busy with my suitcase to hear.

I lean in and angrily whisper, “I will not be bullied by you or your lawyer again, David. You’re lucky I was generous enough to give you visitation.”

“Damn, you’re hot when you get angry.”

“I mean it, David. Don’t push me.”

“Doll, all I think about is pushing you... right up against a wall.”

He pulls me in for a deep kiss. One hand on my ass, the other on the small of my back. He knows how to get me. The kiss. It’s always the kiss.

I desperately want to slap him, but I can see Jerry watching from the corner of my eye. I slowly push him back as a fake smile forms, “Nice try.”

I’ll never admit my knees are weak. My panties wet. My heart pounding. I need to get out of here before I do something I regret.

I lean down to Jerry and wrap him in my arms, “I love you, Buddy.”

He whispers in my ear, “Mommy, I think Daddy loves you too.”

The next generation’s warped perception of love is born.

The conference table bulges with expensive cheese, crackers and wine as well as papers, spreadsheets and posters. Clients are like men. According to Julia Childs, the way to a man’s heart is to feed him, fuck him and flatter him. I never fuck a client, but I have the feeding and flattering down to a science.

I flip through storyboards, showcasing the concept of the TV commercial, but my client pays more attention to my legs than my advertising brilliance. After years of being intimidated by men, I’ve graduated to “handler.” I allow him a look at my legs, not because I’m using sex to sell. That’s not my style. But as he stares at my toned limbs and realizes my work impresses him just as much as my calf muscles, he then gives my mind his full attention. I know exactly how to get to the complicated Mr. Kyle Berger.

If only I had known how to handle the men in my personal life as well. I’m thirty-five, divorced and sexless. How did this happen to the girl voted “most likely to live behind a white picket fence”? I did have the happily-ever-after life once. It seems so far behind me now, replaced by lonely nights in yoga pants consuming a bottle of wine in one sitting while watching *When Harry Met Sally*. Maybe I should get a twin bed and start wearing flannel.

When David and I met, he was all smiles and exuded a positive energy, romance, and love. He worshipped me. Something happens to a man when his wife bears his child though. You’d think it would only make him love her more, but not David. He was jealous of the

attention I gave Jerry. Jealous of his own son.

It's not that I blame Jerry for my marriage failing. I don't. The childish behavior of David was always inside him. It just took me having *his* child to finally set it free... and to admit David wasn't the man of my dreams. Not by a long shot. Maybe I'm not meant to be a wife. For now, I'm going to focus on Jerry and my work. That's it. Business and money, full steam ahead.

Kyle Berger, tall, dark and wannabe stud, chimes in, "Gorgeous, you've outdone yourself, as always. How about we talk this over at the bar?"

If I had a dime for every time Mr. Kyle Berger hit on me, I'd be set for life. He's handsome with chiseled features and a pearl-white smile. Wonder how much that cost him. Funny, in his own way, but pushier than Walmart shoppers on Black Friday. I feel like the last flat-screen TV available, and he's going to fight to the finish to get me. Despite his lack of tact, Kyle's my number one client. I have no choice but to suck up my distaste for his bluntness and plaster on a gleaming smile worthy of a pageant queen.

"You're gonna need the company card tonight, Kyle. After the week I've had, there isn't enough bourbon in the world."

All smiles, Kyle's feeling he might actually have a chance. "Baby, if the bar runs out, my personal bar is always open."

I stuff my storyboards in the portfolio, knowing I may have to use them as a weapon in a few hours.

"Business, Kyle. Let's keep it pure business."

He ever so gently places his hand on my waist and pulls me in, whispering, "Oh, I got business for you... maybe more than you can handle."

His soft lips near my ear as his whispers send a warm pulse through my body.

Kyle collects my portfolio cases, "Allow me, Gorgeous. Where are you parked?"

I have a feeling there's another side to this man. One I might actually like.

Four empty shot glasses collect on the hotel bar. Two full shots next to them. What's one more?

"To kindergarten."

I toss back another shot of Jack, the burn sliding down my throat. My face winces from the sting.

Kyle guzzles his down and chuckles, "Gorgeous, I got something that will soothe that throat of yours."

"I gotta ask you, Kyle."

"Ask away."

"You've been hitting on me for years and never letting up. Doesn't it get tiring being turned down so many times?"

"Nina, in business, the pitching and hustle never ends. You sell my products using commercials. I sell them with charm, persistence and patience. Love isn't that different. You find the one you want; you pitch her; she rejects you. You have a choice: Give up or keep trying. If you were one of my products and I gave up on the first miss, I wouldn't be where I am today, now would I? I want you Nina Patterson, and one day, all it's going to take is one yes, and I will be the happiest man alive."

No man has ever told me he wants me before. He *wants* me. He's fighting for me. He's willing to make himself look like an ass time after time just for the hope that one day I'll say yes. Maybe it's the Jack talking, but fuck it. He's waited long enough. He's earned it.

"Yes."

Kyle's eyes twist with confusion.

I shrink, "Oh God, did I just say that out loud?"

"Indeed you did, Gorgeous, and there's no take-backs."

"Yes, yes, yes!"

Kyle has me pressed against the elevator, one hand holding my wrist above my head, locking it to the wall. The other hand around my waist, sliding down the small of my arched back, finding my ass and tenderly squeezing it as his tongue explores my mouth with such hunger. I wonder if it's been as long for him as it has for me.

I kiss him back with a desire I thought I had lost forever. Suddenly, I am alive after years of hibernation. Thighs tingle as he kneads my ass in his strong hands, pulling me into him. I can feel my essence swell. My panties moist. His tongue deeper in my mouth.

Ping.

The elevator halts and the door spreads open.

I know we should stop, but I can't. I'm either too drunk or too in lust to care - or maybe both.

But as the stranger steps into the tubular love den, Kyle pulls back.

"Don't stop," I whisper to him, pulling him in for another kiss. Starved for my lips, he obliges.

My eyes open, and I peek at the back of the stranger, donning an old leather flight jacket, years of wear and stories behind the tears and dimples of the jacket's skin. It's a masterpiece. His baseball hat covers his face, but I can see enough to know he's unfazed and content to watch the floor numbers rise instead of turn around to see our public display of lust oozing on the wall. How could he rather watch numbers than sex? Aren't all men voyeurs?

I kiss Kyle harder. Moaning as I do. Surely that will get The Man to turn around.

Not a budge.

I groan louder, moving Kyle's hand to my breast. He cups it in his hand, massaging it. My nipples hard. Aching. Pulsing.

Ding.

The doors open. Kyle takes my hand and pushes past The Man. As I pass, my body brushes against his. I can feel his warmth through his jacket. I've never felt a body temperature that hot before. It takes my breath away. I try to catch a glimpse of his face before the doors close, but he's looking down with his hat covering his face. All I notice is the scruff of a day-old beard growing over his strong chin.

Just before the doors nestle together, his face rises, revealing eyes bluer than the bluest crayon. He catches my stare, returning a look of sadness. Loneliness.

It was as if I was looking at my own reflection.

Then, he was gone.

Kyle's hand pulls me toward him, lips engulfing mine, "Give me your key."

Clothes strewn about the room, I stand in nothing but my blouse and panties in front of a naked, hard Kyle. Slowly, he unbuttons one pearl at a time. With each release, he kisses the newly exposed spot of flesh until my top falls to the floor. My body trembles as he releases my breasts from my lace bra, unhooking it and tossing it to the side. He kisses down my body, licking my already erect nipples, suckling them with his tongue as I clutch his head in my hands, pressing my breasts deeper into his mouth. He works his way down my belly, tongue dancing, finally grabbing my bikini strings with his teeth, slowly peeling them off, sliding them over my legs.

What am I doing? This is my client. A man who has only seen me in a position of power. Poised. Professional. I cannot lose control. I *can't*. I relinquished my force to David and look where that got me. Broken.

“Kyle... stop. Please. I can't do this.”

He rises and pulls me close. I can feel his hardness. Every inch of his length. Throbbing. Dammit. I want him. I need this. We're adults. We can handle this... complication. I need to let go. Why can't I let go? It's just sex. Sex. I can do this. Shit, I need to do this. I deserve a night of unleashed inhibitions.

His lips find mine. We kiss. This kiss is different than the others. Playful. Tender. Trusting.

He pulls back and looks me straight in the eyes, “Gorgeous, it's OK. I'm not your ex.”

With that, he sweeps me up in his arms and softly lays me on the bed. Our tongues tangle. My body squirms under his, aching to feel his skin against mine. His warmth. His sweat. He spreads my legs apart with his hand and thrusts a finger inside me, then two. My legs shudder as he enters me over and over. I raise my hips to meet the movement of his strong hand, helping him get deeper. As I do, he slides his other hand under my ass, pulling me into him. I swear his digits graze my cervix. My slit swallows his fingers, pulling them deeper until I scream out, “I'm coming, Baby, I'm coming.”

My entire body quakes under him. My eyes slowly open, breath heavy, heart pounding. I see Kyle watch me with satisfaction.

“I don't recall giving you permission.”

“Permission?” I ask, completely confused, barely able to breathe.

“To come. You didn't ask if you could.”

“You didn't seem to mind watching me,” I playfully giggle.

With a swift, practiced movement, he flips me up and over his knee, delivering a solid series of slaps to my buttocks. I wiggle and scream protest, “What are you doing?”

Is he spanking me? Seriously? Holy shit... he is! When did Kyle get so... dominating?

“I... (*smack*)... am... (*smack*)... teaching you... (*smack*)... your place,” he warns me.

Each sting of his hand tantalizes me in ways I never expected. Maybe I do want a man's firm hand. Is that wrong? I'm so tired of always being in control. Always being the one to fix things; the one to have to take charge. In all areas of my life, I'm the person who turns disasters into miracles — with David and with my clients. I'm the handler. Even before my divorce, I took charge of everything.

But being in charge is exhausting. I'm physically exhausted, emotionally exhausted and

completely drained from having to be “strong” every second of every day.

Could losing control bring me a level of liberation I hadn’t experienced before?

I don’t know, but I’m willing to try. Everything I’ve done in the past hasn’t exactly brought me happiness. Maybe David is right. Maybe I am too controlling. Besides, Kyle isn’t really hurting me; he’s just playing. Screw control. Time to walk on the submissive side.

I feign fear as I wiggle, trying to free myself, “Stop!”

Kyle smiles with pleasure, “Did you just tell me what to do?”

SMACK... his hand slaps my butt cheeks harder, the sting of my skin more intense.

I peer around to view my backside. It’s pink. I reach for my tinged skin, but Kyle grabs my hand, blocking me.

“Let me,” he whispers.

He gently strokes my cheeks, easing the burn. “Better?”

I whimpered, “Almost.”

He raises me off his knee, laying me facedown on the bed, kissing down my back until his lips and tongue graze the tender evidence of his strong hand. The heat coming off me as the blood pulses through my skin seems to excite Kyle, who moans as he slides his hand between my legs and inside me. My back arches.

“Now ask me... ask me if you can come.”

His hands are magic. I swear, I’ve never felt such pleasure as he drives his digits into me. “Mmmm... don’t stop.”

He immediately ceases, “Are you telling me what to do again?”

With his fingers still inside me, I squirm to make him manipulate them again, aching for him to keep exploring me. “Please, please, don’t stop.”

My back arches, my legs spread wider as I push myself against his hand.

Finally, he moves his fingers faster, probing deeper. I’m moving with him.

“Can I?” I mewl.

Despite knowing exactly what I’m asking, he teases, “Can you what?” Fingers plunging into me.

“Come... can I come?” My wet canal squeezes his hand, throbbing, tingling, about to explode.

“Ask nicely,” he asserts.

“Please... can I come... please?” My body shakes as I try to hold back.

He pulls his hand from between my legs, spreads me wider and thrusts his cock deep inside me as he proclaims, “Yes... come for me.”

Moving in rhythm, raising my hips to meet him, I can feel his breath on my back, his lips on my neck. He pulls my hair away from my ear and ever so sweetly murmurs, “Come for me, Gorgeous. I want to feel your pleasure.”

With that, I release, feeling my flesh shudder, the heat radiating from my groin throughout my entire body. My limbs quaking. Breath heavy. I moan louder while he continually pounds into me, making me come harder, longer. I can feel my pussy squeeze him until he spills his cream into me, groaning, “Nina, Nina.”

We lie panting and sweaty. Without leaving my body, he rolls me to my side, spooning me from behind and strokes my hair. Turning my face toward his, his soft kisses meet my lips.

Kyle smiles at me with pure joy in his eyes, “You are more than worth the wait,

Gorgeous.”

Me? Worth the wait? I’ve never thought of myself as worth anything other than to put food on the table, clean the house, take care of my son, or bring a paycheck home. But to be worth waiting for?

I chuckle, “I’m lucky you’re such a stubborn man.”

“Prove it,” Kyle demands.

“You prove it,” I can’t help but challenge him, almost daring him to take me back over his knee. But this time, he doesn’t dominate. He kisses me like a lover who hasn’t seen his woman in months. We sink into each other and get lost for hours.

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