

Chapter 3 - Sweet Addiction

“Who was that?” Chloe asked, putting emphasis on the last word and wiggling her eyebrows. The two girls were in the bathroom, fixing a make-up that didn’t need any fixing.

“Who was who?” Tara wanted to play the innocent card.

“The man you were talking to... or should I say the Adonis who was chatting you up?” She wiggled her eyebrows some more.

And Tara couldn’t help but laugh at that. “Nobody,” she said, and at the disbelieving look on her friend’s face, she added, “just one of my dad’s numerous clients.”

“Oh, how I would not mind having him as a client,” Chloe observed dreamily.

“Ew!” Tara exclaimed. “You’re putting dirty images in my head.”

“Didn’t you think of it?” Her friend challenged.

“What? My dad with his client? No, god no!” She shook her head in an attempt to chase the images away, as a shudder wracked through her.

“Oh, bitch, please get your head out of the gutter,” Chloe giggled, “I meant either you or me having him as a client. Why did you have to think of your dad doing the nasty with him?”

“Oh damn, just shut up, please!” She pleaded with her. “You have scarred me for life... I’ll have nightmares.”

“You’ll get over it,” Chloe then rolled her eyes at her.

And then, they exited the bathroom of the ground floor of the hotel and went back to the wild party.

Tara caught the eye of one of the most popular boys at school. She almost felt his eyes travel up and down her body. She shivered in delight, almost forgetting all about the oh-so-tempting Antonio De La Cruz - keyword here being almost.

Her eyes scanned the big room briefly, looking for - yes, you’ve guessed it right - none other than Antonio, and she found him staring back right at her, an eyebrow jutting in a challenging manner.

She walked confidently towards Mr. Popular, her eyes shifting back and forth between Antonio and Mr. popular. A playful smirk danced on his lips before he brought a drink to his sinfully good lips and then turned to leave.

Tara's heart drummed in her ribcage. Would this be the end of her infatuation already? But she wanted more of him, so much more... why wasn't he stopping this nonsense? Why wasn't he stopping the boy's wandering hands?

Indeed, Mr. Popular, also known as Eli Jefferson, didn't take the hint. She was doing her best, trying to put a distance between their upper bodies but he was having none of it and was bringing her closer.

"I have never seen you around before, beautiful," his breath tickled her earlobe... but instead of being overcome with lust, as she was sure she would have been had it been Antonio who was so close to her, a shiver of pure disgust went through her.

She glared at him and said, "I am the birthday girl, and I was the one to invite you last week."

"Oh," he said, obviously surprised. "Of course you are," he then tried to sound confident.

She could only roll her eyes at him before she freed herself from his hold.

"Hey, we were having a good time," he whined, sounding half annoyed half saddened.

She just shook her head at him, "No, you were having a good time. I was not," she deadpanned and then turned to leave.

Boys her age were not all that. Was it that bad that she would fancy having Antonio freaking De La Cruz who was all man? She couldn't get him out of her head.

Soon enough, Chloe's voice reached her, "Where were you?"

"Over there," she pointed towards the center of the dance floor, "dancing."

"Having the time of your life, I see?" Her friend teased her.

"I wouldn't say that," she pursed her lips in dismay.

"Well, I have the perfect remedy for that," Chloe said in an excited tone.

"And what would that be?" Tara's eyes narrowed suspiciously on her bestie. She knew her, from the year she had gotten to befriend her, to be a hot head.

"Booze, hun. What else?" She wiggled her eyebrows at her.

"Are you out of your damned mind?" Tara chastised her. "It is my seventeenth birthday..."

“Exactly,” her friend cut in in a duh-tone. “What would be a birthday party without some alcohol?”

“We can’t, Chloe,” the birthday girl was quick to say, eyes wide, “What if we were caught?”

“We won’t be,” she rolled her eyes at her. “Don’t be a worry wart.”

“But what if they do catch us?” She bit on her bottom lip nervously.

“Well, we’ll probably be grounded till our graduation or something,” she said rather dismissively, and Tara had to admire her for her courage... or was it recklessness? She wasn’t sure. Nevertheless, she liked this wild side of Chloe. “Are you in or am I in this alone?”

Tara had always been a good-two-shoes. But then, remembering the strong masculine cologne of one very mesmerizing and tempting Antonio De La Cruz, she could only nod at her friend her agreement. “I’m in.”

Chloe beamed at her. “Let’s get this party started,” she said, and Tara wondered what she had gotten herself into.

Only she needn’t have worried. They only sneaked to the bathroom and there under the sink two bottles of beer were waiting for them.

“How did you manage that?” Tara asked, half curious, half worried.

“I have my ways,” her friend told her cryptically, a smirk tugging at the corner of her lips.

“Oh, I believe you there,” she smiled before taking a sip.

It might have been only beer. But even so, it was almost too strong for Tara to handle. It wasn’t just that she was a light weight. She just had never drunk before.

So although they were not caught in the act of drinking itself, it was hard to miss what they have been up to in the bathroom with the way Tara staggered forward when they emerged from the restaurant’s bathroom.

“What’s happening?” Her mom sounded somewhere between angry and disappointed.

“I’m sorry, mom,” Tara slurred.

“Chloe?” She then demanded. “Both of you reek of beer.”

And the wild girl that was her best friend twisted the truth at that moment, “Well, she insisted. And with her being the birthday girl, I just couldn’t resist.”

Tara turned to glare at her friend... instead, the only thing that resulted from her moving her head so quickly was her getting violently sick on that beautiful sequined golden dress... which was rendered hideous.

“Oh! Ew!” Chloe exclaimed half disgustedly half angrily.

“You’re grounded, Tara,” her mom said.

“Until you go to college, there will be no more parties for you,” her dad, who had just arrived, supplied.

“Yes, dad!” She mock saluted.

She couldn’t remember much of the rest. Between the whispers and the stares that followed her, it was all but a blur... the only bright side of her fiasco of a party was her meeting that oh so alluring man named Antonio freaking De La Cruz.