

Chapter 5 - Sweet Addiction

Tara was dancing to the rhythm, too lost in the music to feel the eyes that were following her around. She was half inebriated half delirious with happiness and didn't see him approach until it was too late for her.

She finally opened her eyes the moment he reached out for her wrist and brought her body flush against his strong one.

Tara gasped in shock and her eyes shifted upwards to his strong defined jaw, and then to his deep green mesmerizing eyes.

"Happy birthday, kitten," his husky voice did wonders on the butterflies in her belly. "We meet again." he let out sarcastically. "Missed me?" He said, eyes hooded with unmistakable desire.

Well, tough!

"Pardon me, do I know you?" She flung his own scathing words from two years back at him, a smug smirk tugging at the corner of her mouth, right before she realized he had called her kitten.

Kitten! Kitten? She thought to herself, eyes wide, now almost completely sober again. Sure, she had had a slight hope that he might be the one behind the roses each year, but the rational side of her told her Antonio De La Cruz could have any woman he'd fancy, and didn't need to wait for anyone.

Snapping back from her musings, she saw his already narrowed eyes darken at her tone.

Uh-oh!

"Hey! We were dancing," the man whom she had been dancing with yelled in an exasperated tone. "Go find yourself another woman."

"Only this is my woman you were dancing with, boy," Antonio's claim did nothing to quell the lust she felt for him.

How could it be that after four long years she still felt for him as strongly as she did back when she was but a seventeen year old teenager? She had thought it was just her raging hormones' doing.

"Come again!" The man said as he grabbed Antonio's collar angrily.

Oh no! She inwardly gasped.

“Don’t intervene, kitten,” was the only warning she got before all hell broke loose.

In one swift move, he had twisted the man’s hand at an odd angle and he was making a show of his perfect calm. “Look, boy, if you dare touch me or my woman again, I won’t be satisfied until your blood covers the floor. Do I make myself clear?”

The man who was wailing in pain wailed some more as Antonio applied some more pressure on his hand. “I believe I asked you a question.”

“Yes, sir, to whatever you say,” the man said pathetically while trying and failing to free himself.

“Antonio, please,” Tara said in a meek voice, not liking being at the center of the attention, seeing as the music had stopped and people were gathered around them partly in awe partly in shock.

“Are you defending him, kitten?” His tone was deadly cold and yet it only brought her great delight.

She must be sick, she reasoned. In lust, like the school girl she no longer was.

“No, I’m not,” she denied immediately. “I just don’t want this kind of attention,” she chose her words carefully and tilted her head to the side, where another guy was recording what was happening.

“Let this be a warning to you, buddy,” Antonio said while eying the guy in question. “If you want to keep walking on this earth, you wouldn’t post that video on the net.”

“You don’t know me,” the man all but squeaked out in fright.

“I don’t know you, yet,” Antonio let out matter-of-factly as he released the man Tara had been dancing with. “But believe me, you don’t want to be on my list.”

“What list?” The man visibly gulped down.

Antonio merely smirked at him.

“Hand me the phone,” Tara commanded in a shaky voice as she extended her hand.

He obliged silently, mouth slightly agape, and she did quick work of the video he had recorded, deleting it immediately.

“There you go,” she told him with a fake smile, “you’ll be on nobody’s list.”

“Kitten,” Antonio let out in a warning.

“Antonio, I...” she called meekly and almost breathlessly.

“Let’s go,” he brought her body close to his with his arm over her shoulders... and then, they were on their way out.

Happy 21st birthday, Tara, she told herself as she left the club and probably her old dull life behind.

You’re getting the man of your dreams. You should be happier, she said to herself as she walked with shaky legs towards his black sleek car.

Black, one of her favorite colors, or lack of as some would argue, never looked more sinister as it did at the moment.

Heavens help me! I don’t want to die young.

“What are you thinking so hard about, kitten?” He asked in a husky voice.

“Nothing,” she squeaked out, her heart thudding loudly in her ears, her breathing labored almost as if she had run a marathon.

“Tell me,” he commanded softly.

“This is all too sudden,” she said, looking him straight in the eyes, “I don’t know what to think. You’re like a violent tornado.”

“That would be accurate, I guess,” he said, his words coated with some humor.

“What are we doing? Where are you taking me?” She asked as she rested her back against the car door.

“I’m going to introduce you to my world,” he said, his voice a few tones deeper - huskier.

She bit down on her bottom lip in nervousness. He hadn’t really asked her a question and yet she felt compelled to think about what he was offering.

“You always have a choice, kitten,” he told her as he leaned forward until their noses were almost brushing together.

She closed her eyes on instinct, holding her breath before parting her lips in invitation.

His thumb brushed her bottom lip slowly, sensually, and she opened her eyes, to find his transfixed by the sight of her parted lips.

“Do you not want me, kitten?” He asked softly, his breath tickling her lips, and she felt the need to wet them.

She kept quiet, not knowing what to say. She was truly threading on foreign territory, and she didn't know how to respond to what he was saying.

"Say the word, kitten, and I'll be out of your life," he told her.

Good god, he drove a hard bargain!

Instead of pushing him away or saying no to what he was offering, she grabbed his collar and brought his face closer to hers.

"Shut up and kiss me," was the only answer she gave him.

Naturally, he obliged her. And what a fist kiss they shared!