

The Queen of Spades

4 Queens, Volume 1

Dana Littlejohn

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THE QUEEN OF SPADES

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Written by Dana Littlejohn.



4 Queens:
The Queen of S.P.A.D.E.S
By Dana Littlejohn

DAVINA INGRAM IS ONE of the developers of SPADES, (southern people against detrimental environmental studies) an organization that develops the land for future generations. She moved back home to open the new location to take her mind off her broken heart...but the plan went out the window when she met Xavier



Chapter One

GENTLE KISSES ROUSED Davina from a deep sleep. The bold touch of a strong hand caressed her breasts. Tantalizing shivers raced all over her body. The tender connection of soft lips continued over Davina's shoulder and neck. A hand glided over her hip before the undeniable feel of a fingertip pushed between her nether lips waking her fully.

"Mmm, Sean, we just made love before we went to bed," she stated sleepily. "You can't be ready to have sex again so soon," she added on a yawn.

"I know it's only been a few hours, baby, but damn. I swear I can't get enough of you. I close my eyes and I see you in those yellow shorts and, mmm..."

Davina looked over her shoulder. The glowing face of the radio on the nightstand gave Sean's pale skin a soft blue hue lighting up his mischievous grin. Gorgeous green eyes stared back at her, sparkling with desire. That look always made her feel wanted and loved. Davina leaned forward putting a gentle kiss on Sean's lips.

Sean rolled Davina onto her back and rose to his knees to quickly discard his T-shirt and pajama bottoms. The dim light illuminated Sean's staff as it sprang free of his clothing, reaching for the ceiling. His balls hung low, looking heavy as if they hadn't been emptied only a few hours earlier. Sean leaned over to give Davina's panties a fast yank to remove them.

"Babe, those are my cute panties," Davina said with a giggle.

"They sure are and they've done their job. Don't worry, if they're too beat up, I will replace them."

Davina laughed again. Anticipation caused perspiration to coat Davina's skin. A shiver ran up his spine leaving chill bumps behind. Sean settled between her legs and lowered his hard-on to touch Davina's wet opening. Sean bit his bottom lip as he slid his erection between the wet folds. A stuttering moan passed through his lips and his head fell back.

The friction of the delicate flesh rubbing together excited Davina as well. She enjoyed the building sensations growing inside her. After a while, Sean lowered his head to the crook of Davina's neck nuzzling him lovingly. The heat from Sean's heaved sigh tickled Davina's throat.

"I love you so much, Davina."

Davina wrapped her arms around Sean's back and sighed. She loved when Sean spoke terms of endearment while they made love, but she didn't need to hear it. Every touch, each whisper, every action in and out of their bed told her so.

Sean's mouth moved over her skin again leaving a trail of hot kisses until he hovered over Davina's left nipple. Sean licked the responsive bud, then breathed his hot breath over it, sending exciting zaps of pleasure through Davina's system. When Sean finally took the tip between his lips the sensation ripped a cry from Davina's throat.

"Oh!"

"Mmm," Sean responded.

After sucking and licking the sensitive area into a tight pebble, Sean moved over to give its twin the same treatment. Davina squirmed as her husband sucked her right nipple and pinched the left. Sean left a kiss on Davina's chest and changed position again.

Davina raked her fingers through the dense mass of curls on Sean's head as he descended.

"Damn! I love the way you smell when you're hot and horny," he growled against Davina's groin.

Before Davina could find her voice to comment, the wet heat of Sean's tongue entered her core. His lips closed around the sensitive bud and hummed audibly. Erotic vibrations raced from up Davina's spine. An almost violent shudder followed the pulsing and shook her body. Another shameless moan of pleasure escaped Davina's throat.

"Oh yesss," Davina hissed.

Sean's naughty fingers slipped past her lips back into her body. Davina nodded frantically.

"Do it, baby! Push it in," she begged.

Davina gripped the sheets and bore down when Sean gave in to her request. Rotating her hips, she aided Sean's exploring digit. Sean continued the amazing finger and tongue combination until a quick orgasm washed over her senses. Incoherent words rode her screams of delight.

"I know that felt good but, I know what your body really wants," Sean said, eagerly climbing back up Davina's body. "You ready for me, baby?"

"Oh God, yes! I am *so* ready," she answered breathlessly.

Sean took Davina's mouth in an all-consuming kiss and pushed his rod into Davina's drenched core with one smooth stroke. Davina lifted her hips accepting the full invasion. Sean dipped and rolled his hips delving deeper into Davina's tunnel. Each precise movement snatched another scream of elation from deep within Davina's throat as she rode a wave of rapture. Sean's joyful noises joined Davina's. Suddenly, Sean threw his head back and shoved Davina's knees to her chest.

"Fuck!"

A jumble of words followed Sean's declaration, but the ramblings weren't anything Davina could interpret clearly. Sean continued driving into Davina's slick passage pushing them both to the brink of an incredible climax. Groaning loudly, she fell over the edge to paradise. Moments later, Sean's limbs locked, his grip on Davina's calves tightened and he shouted his release before he finally collapsed gasping desperately.

"God, I love you so much."

Davina panted against Sean's neck holding him tight. Sean let out an exhausted but happy chuckle. He shifted his weight to rest on his forearms as his spent cock slipped from Davina's body.

"And I love you."

"You think you can get some sleep now?"

Sean dropped a kiss to Davina's forehead and reached over to snatch two wipes from the nearby container.

"Let me clean you up first."

Gently he wiped between her legs and the sweat from her stomach before he flopped onto his pillow.

"I never get tired of tasting you, baby," he added on a sigh.

Sean lifted his arm in invitation. Davina returned to his side and relaxed into his embrace. Sean's fingers glided leisurely along the contours of her shoulder. Davina's breathing slowed and her eyes closed again as the tender touch eased her lovingly back to sleep.



AS SOON AS DAVINA'S eyes opened, tears fell from them and her spirit ached.

"Even after more than two years, I still miss your touch," she murmured.

Davina slapped the top of the screeching alarm and stretched. Throwing the rest of the sheet from her legs, she pushed himself from the bed with a long stretch.

"Time to rise and shine, Davina. Another day of your new life awaits."



Chapter Two

DAVINA WALKED INTO the bakery. The smell of brewing coffee and freshly made donuts wafted over her making her smile. Just as the woman came to take her order Davina's purse shook.

"Hello. This is Davina Ingram."

"Davina, what the hell! Where are you?"

Davina recognized the panic-stricken voice immediately and chuckled.

"Good morning to you too, Nicky. What can I do for you?"

"Davina, where are you?"

"I stopped at Morning Glory before going into work."

Nick sputtered. "Okay, but you're not supposed to be at the bakery. You're supposed to be here with me at Hart Web Designs," he said in an urgent whisper.

Davina frowned. "What? Why?"

Nick groaned in her ear. "Come on, Davina. Tell me you didn't forget."

"Uhh..."

"Davina...the meeting."

Confusion kept her silent.

"Girl, you really need to get it together. The meeting, Davina...with Xavier Hart, the computer guy I told you about."

More silence.

"For the website!"

"Oh!" Davina exclaimed as comprehension dawned. She held a finger up at the woman behind the counter. "Yeah, I remember that, but why are you there now? That meeting isn't until the twenty-second," she continued on the phone.

"Today *is* the twenty-second, Davina. You were supposed to be here an hour ago."

Davina's eyes widened. She quickly pulled up her calendar on the phone. The event was noted on the day, but no reminder had been activated.

Shit!

"Is he still there? I can come right now."

"Yeah, you're good. I've been covering for you. Just get your butt down here."

"All right. I'll be there as soon as I can."

Davina shoved the phone back into her purse then turned to the woman. "Sorry about that. I will take a Sunrise Basket and a large coffee."

Moments later she slowly drove along the strip mall looking for Hart Web Designs. Davina parked outside and rushed into the building. She spotted her brother sitting at a table in the back of the small office with another man who had his back to the door.

Nick waved her over. Davina smiled, smoothed her blouse then took a deep breath and approached. The man sitting with Nick turned around and Davina stopped in her tracks. She managed to keep her mouth from dropping open but couldn't prevent the gasp from escaping. The computer guy had the brightest, most sparkling brown eyes Davina had ever seen. They reminded her of a freshly poured cup of cola sitting in the sunlight. The man's deliberate gaze felt like a physical touch gliding over her skin making goosebumps rise.

He and Nick stood to greet her. No hair obstructed the view of the man's strong-looking square jaw. Sensual, full lips and a dimple in his left cheek were prominent when he smiled. His broad shoulders and muscular stature couldn't be hidden beneath the expensive-looking suit he wore. The jet-black material over the beige shirt fitted him too well to be off the rack and complemented his caramel skin tone beautifully.

Davina swallowed to wet her suddenly dry mouth while she gathered her wits and continued across the room.

"Davina, I'm glad you made it," Nick greeted, kissing her cheek. "Xavier Hart, this is my sister Davina Ingram. Xavier owns Hart Web Designs," Nick added.

Davina took the stranger's outstretched hand. The skin-on-skin contact sent tingles up her arm as Xavier jerked it up and down.

"It's a pleasure to meet you, Davina."

Xavier's smooth, baritone voice vibrated over Davina's skin sending an erotic pulse to her groin and lightning strikes of pleasure to her nipples. The realization surprised her. No one's voice had ever turned her on before.

"I—I apologize for the delay. Thank you for waiting for me, Mr. Hart."

"It was no problem. Nick and I are old friends. We just chatted until you came and please, call me Xavier. I think that's okay if we're going to be working together," Xavier said, offering her a seat.

Davina put the basket in the center of the table and sat down. "Thank you. I bought a peace offering. Is it alright if we eat as we talk?"

"Of course. This doesn't have to be a formal meeting if you're not comfortable with that kind of thing. I want to make this as easy for you as possible."

"I must admit that I'm not very techy at all. That's why I asked Nick to find someone to help me. He knows all about that kind of stuff."

Xavier angled his head to look into the basket. "Are these from Morning Glory down on Eighth Street?" he asked, removing a Danish.

"Yes, that's my favorite bakery."

Xavier's eyes danced happily, and an exuberant grin spread across his face. Davina's heart fluttered at the sight.

"Really? I love that place, too. Making a website for you will be easier than I thought," he said, opening his laptop. "Food inspires me."

Davina nodded. Xavier held the cheese Danish between his lips as he typed. Taking a bite, he used one hand to complete his task.

"Mmm, these are so good, my favorite actually. I used to stop by there on the way to work to get one every morning."

Davina's eyes widened. "Really? So do I."

"Oh yeah? I'm surprised we haven't run into each other."

"I would have remembered if we did. I wouldn't have missed someone like you in the store."

Xavier's gaze shifted toward her.

A rush of heat quickly filled Davina's cheeks.

"No!" she said, shaking her hand in the air. "I just meant I wouldn't have missed a man as big as you."

Xavier turned to fully face her with an amused smile.

"Wait! That's not what I wanted to say," Davina rushed out. "I'm just trying to say that I usually notice when good-looking men come around," she expressed more slowly. Davina gasped, then pressed her lips together. She groaned and closed her eyes.

Oh my God. Just shoot me.

Nick's abrupt laughter made her jump. Davina's eyes popped open, and she turned to glare at him.

"I, uh—" Xavier cleared his throat to swallow his own obvious titters. "I used to go by there earlier this year on the way to work to get a cherry-cheese Danish and coffee," he explained waving the Danish slightly. "I did it for a few months, but, as the weather warmed, many of my clients requested early morning meetings so I got out of the habit."

"Oh, I see."

Nick didn't bother to muffle his continuous laughter.

Davina kicked him under the table.

"Oww! Oh...look at the time," he corrected, quickly looking at his watch. "I'm going to go and let you good people handle your business without me." Nick stood and extended his hand. "Xavier, you know I will always keep you in mind when someone mentions they need a website. Give me a call when you got some free time."

"Thanks, Nick. I will."

"Davina, I'll call *you* later," he said with a wide grin.

Davina rolled her eyes and nodded. "Uh-huh."

Davina's cheeks warmed more as Nick left the table still laughing. She turned to Xavier with a sigh.

"I'm sorry about that."

"No apology necessary," Xavier said, waving his hand. "Nick has always been a jokester." He turned his computer screen toward Davina and smiled. "Shall we begin? I was thinking since you're not a computer person," he paused, doing quotations in the air. "I should walk you through my process. First, I'll show you a few of the sites I have already done, so you can see my past work. Next, we can look up some websites of other businesses similar to yours. This way you can see what the competition has out there. Between the two, we should get some good ideas of what to do for your site. How does that sound?"

Davina appreciated the way Xavier graciously turned the dialogue. Instead of lingering on Davina's embarrassing moment, he steered the conversation toward the task at hand. Davina's cheeks felt cooler as her muscles relaxed and her heart rate slowed down.

"That sounds great," she answered with a smile.



DAVINA TAPPED HER EARPIECE and continued to dig through the drawer at the bottom of the refrigerator.

"Hello."

“Hey, Davina, what’s up? How did it go with Xavier?”

She retrieved a bag of baby spinach, a baggie with a chicken breast in it and red peppers then pushed the drawer closed.

“I’m still mad at you, Nicky,” she said, slamming the door.

“What! Come on, girl, you can’t be mad at me. I’m your big brother.”

Davina scoffed as she put the ingredients on the counter. “Yes, I can and I am. I looked like a stammering fool today in front of that man and your laughter didn’t help.”

“Come on now, Davina. You’re usually Ms. Calm, Cool and Collected. You took one look at Xavier Hart and got flustered enough to stumble over everything you tried to say! That shit’s funny!” he exclaimed, guffawing in her ear.

Davina rolled her eyes before looking through the countertop drawer. “Oh yeah, only the best big brothers find joy in their sister’s most embarrassing moment ever.”

“Whatever, Davina. You would’ve laughed your ass off if that shit had happened to me and you know it.”

“So, is that what you did, Nick? You searched for the finest webmaster in Indiana on purpose to throw me off my game?” she ranted, snatching a red onion from a basket hanging near the window.

“Nope, that wasn’t my intention at all,” her brother assured her. “How do I know what you think is good-looking or not?”

“Hmm, okay, I’ll give you that one.”

“Xavier is good at what he does. We started at Falcon Tech together back in the day with me. He left the company a couple of years ago to start his own. Xavier was one of our best designers. I told him if I came across any small businesses that needed a website, I would send them his way. The fact that you found him attractive was just a perk,” he added, letting a few more laughs slip out.

“Uh-huh, so you were just hooking a sister up?”

“Yup, in fact, I was hoping I could hook up a friend, too.”

Davina heard the excited innuendo in her brother’s voice and immediately understood its meaning. She chopped the stems off the spinach leaves, making a face.

“I’m hanging up.”

“Don’t be like that, Davina. I’ve known Xavier for seven years and he’s a great guy.”

“If he’s so great, why don’t you date him.”

“I would but he’s not really my type. I’ve got this thing for boobs and a coochie. Turns out that he has neither.”

Davina giggled. “You’re so silly.”

“Yeah, I’ve heard that before. Xavier may not have the things that I like, but he does have his own place, a motorcycle, and he bowls and chugs beer, and he—”

“Nicky, thanks, but I’m so not in the mood for this conversation.”

“Davina, just kick it with him a few times. Who knows, you may find out he is just what the doctor ordered to perk up your life.”

Davina groaned. “Nicky...”

“Okay, fine. I was just putting it out there for an FYI.”

“And we thank you for that public service announcement,” Davina said.

“You didn’t use to be so cynical.”

Davina heaved a deep breath.

“Come on, Davina. Don’t make this harder than it has to be. Obviously, you were attracted to the man or your tongue would’ve worked better. What harm could it do to spend some time with him? A little dinner, maybe a few drinks, and bada-boom. You come out with a new friend that isn’t online.”

Davina stiffened before pulling the onion closer to her. “That was below the belt, Nicky.”

Nick sighed in her ear. “My bad, Vina. You know I didn’t mean anything by it. You’re my baby sister. I just want to see that happy spark back in your eyes.”

“I know, Nicky, and I appreciate it, but I’m not ready for another relationship. I need you to understand that.”

“All right, Vina. I got it. I’m just looking out for you. That’s what big brothers do.”

The disappointment in Nick’s tone came through loud and clear. Davina stifled a groan.

“Well, on a lighter note, are you free Friday night? Rob is out of town on business this week. We were supposed to hook up with the fellas for a bowling night.”

“Yeah, I can do that, but you’re buying the beers.”

Nick laughed. “Of course! It’s the least I can do for a guaranteed win. You know the guys hate it when we partner up. We’re a killer team, girl,” he added excitedly. “See you then.”

“All right, bye.”

Davina shook her head and cut the onion in half. “I wonder if he harasses his friends about their love lives like he does me,” she muttered.

Making quick work of the onion, she pushed the chopped pieces into a colander sitting in the sink beside a bowl of already cut mushrooms. Sputtering, she pulled the red pepper closer.

“And yes, I do have friends that aren’t online. I meet people all the time. I do run a nonprofit for children. I meet all kinds of people every day, you know,” she said aloud, using more force than was needed to cut the pepper. “New people come in there all the time,” she added, sliding the minced pieces to a strainer. “Stinking Nick thinks he knows me so well. Well, news flash, Nicky. You don’t!”

She rinsed and dried the cutting board, then flipped it over before setting the chicken from the other side of the counter onto it. Just as she grabbed the knife out from the sink, the phone rang again.

“Yeah, hello.”

“Hello, Davina?”

Davina gasped. A shiver went down her back at the sound of the voice.

“Yes, hi Xavier. This is Davina.”

“Hi. I hope I’m not interrupting anything.”

Davina dropped the knife and pushed the chopping board away from her. “No, nothing important. I was just getting dinner ready. What can I do for you?”

“I apologize. I was hoping to catch you before you ate. I can call back later or tomorrow.”

“No!” Davina screamed.

Shit!

“Sorry about that. My earpiece was, umm, fuzzing out. I didn’t think you could hear me.” She bit her lip, hoping Xavier wouldn’t question her lie.

“Uh, okay.”

“Yeah, so, I haven’t *started* eating yet. I’m still fixing it. What can I do for you?” she repeated.

“I was working on ideas for your site, and I had a few questions for you.”

“Oh, okay, that’s fine.” Davina walked over to the table and sat down. “What’s up?”

“Well, I was hoping that you could come by the office. It would be much easier to show you something on the screen rather than try to explain things to you.”

“Oh.” Davina’s stomach growled as she looked around her kitchen. The pan was on the stove, she had just cut up the vegetables and was about to tackle the meat, she didn’t want to leave them sitting. “Well, will it take long?”

“You know what, never mind. I don’t know what I was thinking of calling you this late. I’m sorry.”

Davina turned in the opposite direction to view the clock on the wall.

Since when was seven-fifteen late?

“No, Xavier, this is fine. It’s not too late to call at all. I’m actually almost done with dinner and well, quite frankly I’m starving. Would you mind coming over here instead?”

There was a pause on the other end of the line. Davina’s heart rate surged as she waited.

“Are you sure? I don’t want to impose or—”

“No imposition at all. I promise. I tend to make more than I can eat in one sitting anyway. So yeah, just come on by and we can eat and work...again,” she added with a smile.

Xavier chuckled. “Okay. Thanks. Give me your address. I’ll be right there.”



“HI DAVINA,” XAVIER said when she swung the door open.

The suit and tie ensemble were gone. In its place, a pair of faded blue jeans and a sky-blue and white striped shirt. The lightweight denim and loose cotton accentuated his physique just as nicely as the suit had.

Davina’s jaw dropped when she saw Xavier again. Quickly shutting her mouth, she shook her head.

“Are you all right?” Xavier asked.

“Huh? Oh! Yes, I’m fine. Come in,” she said finally, stepping to the side.

“I hope you don’t mind my attire. Although we’ll be working, it *is* after normal business hours.”

Davina shut the door and faced her guest. Xavier stood with his arms up to display his outfit. The computer bag held by his fingertips didn’t waver. His torso had girth and symmetry without being bulky. The short sleeves showed long sinewy muscles flowing smoothly from his forearms into the biceps adding to the roundness of the shoulders beneath. Davina had the feeling a back view of Xavier would look as good as the front but shook off the urge to confirm his notion.

“I’m fine with it. Like you said, it’s after work hours.”

He smiled, dropping his arms. “You didn’t mention if I should bring anything, but my mama always said you should never show up to dinner empty-handed.”

Xavier thrust a brown paper bag at her. Davina accepted the gift and removed its covering.

“I hope you like it. It’s one of my favorites.”

“Sparkling Pomegranate?” Davina read off the bottle. “I’ve heard a couple of my coworkers say this is really good, but I haven’t had the chance to try it. Thanks.”

"You're welcome. It's the least I can do since you offered to feed me."

"It was no big deal really. I was about to eat anyway," Davina said leading the way through the living room. "Have a seat. I'll make the plates and bring some glasses," she offered, putting the bottle on the dining table.

Davina went into the kitchen to prepare the plates then abruptly looked over her shoulder when the door opened.

"You know what just occurred to me?" Xavier asked, holding the swinging door wide.

"What?"

"You've only got two hands."

Davina blinked. "Uh, yeah. Doesn't everyone?" she asked in a humorous tone.

Xavier chuckled. "Yeah, they do. The question that followed that realization was how is she going to carry the plates, the glasses, and an opener too with just those two hands?"

Davina continued to stare at him. Xavier released the swinging door and closed the distance between them.

"So here I am to offer more hands," he said holding his hands up.

Davina chuckled. "Umm, okay. The glasses are in that cabinet over there on the top shelf and the corkscrew is in the drawer by the sink."

Davina continued to fill the plates while Xavier followed her instructions.

"So, not to be funny, but how do you get to these from the top shelf when no one is here? I mean this shelf is definitely out of your reach," Xavier said with a wide grin.

Davina laughed. "Yes, it is, but miraculously I found a fantastic new invention that has made my life so much easier. Perhaps you've heard of it. It's called a stepstool."

Davina walked into the dining room to put the plates on the mats in front of two chairs. Xavier appeared behind her seconds later laughing.

"Yes, I've heard of a stepstool. I just haven't had to use one in a long time. I've been this size since I was a sophomore." He put the glasses beside the plates and reached for the bottle.

"That must have had some perks back then."

"Not as many as you would think. Being six foot four at sixteen years old is not all it's cracked up to be. It took me a few more years to really learn how to use my size well."

"Hmm, I wouldn't know anything about that."

"Why do you keep them that high anyway? Wouldn't it just be easier to rearrange a few things to put them on a lower shelf?" Xavier asked, stabbing the opener into the cork.

"Yeah, I guess it would. I just haven't moved them since—"

"Since what?" Xavier asked with a grunt as the cork popped free.

"Well, Sean used to put them up there. I guess it's just a habit now. I know where they are," she added with a shrug.

Xavier sat down and filled their glasses. Davina sat beside him.

"Ahh, so, there's a *Sean*. Where is Sean tonight? Should I get another glass down? Maybe he can give some input on the website."

"Oh, no. He—He's dead."

Xavier turned wide eyes to her. "I'm sorry to hear that, Davina. I wasn't trying to—"

“No, no, it’s alright. You didn’t know. It’s okay. Let’s eat before it gets cold.”

Davina lifted her fork, but then stared at her food for a long while.

“You still miss him, don’t you?”

Xavier’s voice was soothing and full of concern.

Davina nodded. “Yeah, sometimes I do.”

Xavier patted her hand and offered her a consoling smile before turning to his plate.

“How long has he been gone?”

“Two and a half years.”

Xavier pointed to a picture across the room on the table. “That’s him in the pic with you, huh?”

Davina looked at the picture of her riding Sean’s back piggyback style. Their joyful smiles were captured in time by a street vendor. Davina smiled at the memory as she nodded.

“Looks like you guys were having a great time. Was that at a fair?”

“Yes, it was the last picture we took actually.”

“Oh. Can I ask what happened?” he asked, taking a bite.

“Umm, well, we were leaving that very fair when someone ran onto the back of our car leaving the fairgrounds. When Sean got out to check the damage, he yelled at the other driver for driving too fast. When the man got out of his car, we thought he was going to exchange insurance info with him, but instead, he shot Sean and drove off.”

“Damn.”

“Yeah, they chalked it up to a road rage incident. They never found the guy.”

“That’s messed up. You had to drive him to the hospital?”

“Yeah, but he only lived long enough to get there and tell me he loved me,” Davina said, blinking back tears.

Xavier reached for her hand. “That had to be horrible to go through. I’m sorry for bringing up painful memories.”

“It’s okay. It’s less painful after two years.”

Xavier nodded and scooped a forkful of food. “This is fantastic. Your cooking is very good.”

Davina smiled. “Thanks. It helps when you like what you do.”

“I eat out a lot mostly because I’m afraid to eat my own cooking.”

Davina muffled her laughter.

“When you own your own business, your hours aren’t really nine to five. My laptop goes everywhere I go so I can work anywhere. I end up working crazy hours so fitting in a home-cooked meal is hard. This is a rare treat.”

Xavier ate heartily and drank the wine with appreciation. Davina turned back to her own food and had to agree with her guest. The stir-fry had turned out to be one of her best. She lifted her glass to finally taste the wine.

“Wow, that is good. I can see why everyone is talking about it.”

“Mmm-hmm,” Xavier said between mouthfuls.

“I never tasted anything like this back home.”

“That’s right. You guys are from Atlanta. I know Nick has been here for years. How long have you been up here in Indy?”

“Officially just a few months, but I was going back and forth for more than a year to help build up the organization. You know, meeting with people and looking for a suitable building. I finally stayed in January once our house was sold.”

“So, how long were you and Sean together?”

“We were high school sweethearts.”

Xavier suddenly burst into laughter.

Davina narrowed her eyes at him. “What?”

“Sean saw you in your *awkward phase* and still wanted to be with you? Yeah, that’s true love for sure.”

Davina blinked a few times and then burst into laughter herself. “I wasn’t that bad back then,” she said, wrapping her arms around her chest.

“Davina, I can see how a man could fall for you now with your soft-looking lips and those incredible brown eyes working for you, but back then...”

He paused to shake his head negatively and Davina raised a brow to Xavier’s nonchalant description of her.

“Uh-uh, we *all* were looking crazy back in our younger days. Buck teeth, braces, growth spurts throwing everything out of proportion, wild ninety hairdos. You end up with long gangly limbs and big hands and feet while you wait for everything to catch up to each other for at least three to four years.”

“Yeah, I remember doing all that. Well, everything except the growth spurts. I didn’t have many of those.”

Xavier’s merriment roared again. “See, that’s what I’m saying. Your Sean saw you like that with his eyes but looked past it to your soul and loved you. Don’t you see how amazing that is? He hung in there and got to see the finished product,” he said waving his hand toward her. “You...like this. All grown up and beautiful like you are now. That’s love all right.”

Davina smiled.

“It doesn’t seem like relationships are like that anymore. I believe technology has taken away basic intimacy. I look forward to one day having one like that of my own.”

The intense look Xavier gave her made her turn away to finish eating. They fell into silence until their empty plates were pushed to the edge of the table. Xavier retrieved his laptop from the neighboring chair and sat it before him.

“Remember when I pulled up Ye Olde Bakery’s website at our earlier meeting? The one with those dancing clogs and Lederhosen at the top of their page that you just *loved*,” he mentioned in a teasing tone.

Davina rolled her eyes. “Oh yeah, the *cheesy* site with the yodeling.”

Xavier chuckled. “Yeah, well the client loved it. Anyway, I wanted to use some animation at the top of yours, too.”

Davina frowned.

Xavier chuckled. “Okay, maybe this will make it a little clearer for you. I did a mockup to show you.”

Xavier pulled up another page and turned the computer toward her. Her eyes widened when the page came to life.

“It’s, umm, a little *busy*, isn’t it?”

“I wanted it to be user-friendly for all walks of life.”

“What do you mean by *all walks of life*?”

Xavier pulled up a blank screen on his computer and typed in another web address. He pointed to the webpage when it appeared.

"I volunteer at the Dexter Center a couple of nights a week teaching a boxing class. The people there have different types of disadvantages. Some are deaf, a few have dyslexia or other reading challenges and others have physical limitations. They tell me all the time how frustrating it can be trying to get their needs across to others. If we use specific pictures as well as sound to let the customers know what you have to offer it would be pleasing to the eye, fun, and informative for everyone who visits."

Wow. Nick was right. Xavier really is a nice guy and good at what he does.

Davina smiled then poured the wine into their glasses.

"I think that's a great idea. Do whatever you feel will work for the company. I will defer to your professional expertise."

"Okay cool. Tell me about," he paused in thought. "Southern people against—"

Davina chuckled. "SPADES. We just use the acronym and call it Spades."

"Alright because the real name is a mouthful. Spades, it is. What do you guys do?"

"Well, our primary goal is to educate young people on the environment, how to keep it flourishing for their benefit, and those that come after them. We will take them out into nature and teach them how to live off the land and how to grow food and foliage for medicinal purposes. They will also learn how to recycle so that we don't have to destroy the environment for resources."

"Wow. That's impressive."

"Well, we figured if we catch the children early, they will share the knowledge as they get older and pass it to their own children."

"That's a great concept. I work with kids, too, but we don't do stuff like that. I will definitely let the kids know when you open so they can take advantage of what SPADES has to offer."

She handed him a glass.

"Please do."

"To SPADES." He touched the edge of his glass to Davina's and then took a sip. "Holy cow!"

"What's wrong?"

"I'm so sorry, Davina. I had no idea it was well past eleven." Xavier switched his wine to his other hand and gave his watch a longer look. "It wasn't my plan to monopolize your evening like this." He guzzled the rest of his drink and pulled something from his pocket as he stood up.

"It was no problem, really. It's not like I had anything planned. What's that?"

"It's my jump drive. After I save my work on the computer, I save it to an external drive too. This way I can use it on my desktop at home as well as at work. It also serves as a backup to my backup." Xavier pulled the device from its port and shoved it back into his pocket. "I have everything I need, Davina. I do have a few other clients who have projects ahead of yours, but I will get it done soon as I can and get back with you."

Davina watched as Xavier gathered his stuff. Following him to the door, she reached out to touch Xavier's arm when he opened it.

"So, umm, how long does it usually take you? I'm not rushing you by any means. I was just wondering when I would see you again. I mean, if there was a window, I should look for your call."

Xavier looked down at her with those incredible sparkling eyes and offered her a small smile.

“You will hear from me very soon,” Xavier said, then pulled the door closed behind him.

Davina smiled as she stared at the door. “I guess Nick was right. It wouldn’t be so bad to add another *live* friend to my life.”



Chapter Three

DAVINA PULLED INTO a parking spot across from Nick's SUV, grabbed her ball, and went inside. Almost immediately she spotted his friends.

"Hi guys," she greeted.

Three other men sat at the table with Nick. They groaned aloud when they turned to face Davina.

"Oh hell, no!" one exclaimed.

"Uh-uh, that's not even going down," another one said.

"Well, that's a pleasant greeting, Mike. And what's your problem, Antonio. Maybe I should go out and come back in and you'll be in a better mood," Davina said, wrapping her arms around her chest.

Mike laughed. "My bad, Davina. I didn't mean it like that. What's up, girl?"

"That's better." Davina hugged him then everyone else around the table.

"It's good to see you, Davina, but this ain't about to happen."

Nick gave Mike a laughing grin as he greeted Davina. "What's the problem, Mike?" he asked, leaning on Davina's shoulder.

"I didn't come out to spend the evening getting my ass kicked by you and Davina, Nick."

"I told you guys Rob wouldn't be back in time."

"Yeah, but you didn't say Davina was filling in for him. I thought you guys bowled on a different day."

"We usually do, but he asked me to fill in for Rob tonight," Davina explained with a shrug.

"Uh-huh, I bet he did. What happened to your other friend, Xavier? I thought you were going to ask him."

Davina froze as she took her shoes off. *Xavier?*

"I was, but Davina said yes so..."

"Yeah, I don't know, Nick," one of the other guys chimed in. "I'm with Mike. You and Davina whooped our ass last time you were partners."

"Damn, Antonio, you jumping on that bandwagon, too? Look, tonight might be different. Davina might have a bum finger or something," Nick suggested, unable to stop a few titters from escaping.

Davina laughed, reaching for her bowling shoes.

"Why don't you take Ramon? He only came to watch, but he knows how to play," Antonio said, nodding his head to the man beside him.

Nick shook his head and returned to his chair. "Yeah, I'm thinking no. No offense to you or your man, Antonio, but he's still green. He's been playing for what? A whole *two* months? Thanks, but no thanks."

"Well, I'm not getting slaughtered by you and Davina again," Mike said adamantly. "Y'all been playing together since you were kids. It's all good when we're a team playing somebody else, but uh-huh." Mike sat down and lifted his beer.

"Okay so if I don't play who's going to be Nick's partner?"

"Better get on the phone and call Xavier back, Nick. See if he can come through anyway," Mike suggested.

Nick blew out a breath. "Fine." He pulled his phone out and walked away. "Pussy."

"I heard that!" Mike said over his shoulder with a light-hearted laugh.

Davina watched Nick as he spoke on the phone. She couldn't hear anything he was saying, but his body language looked easy and jovial as he conversed. Nick returned to them shortly with a smile.

"All right, crybabies, Xavier is on his way. Now because of you, we have an extra person," Nick announced, sitting heavily in his seat.

"Me and Ramon will partner up, Nick. He needs practice and we don't mind losing as long as we're together," Antonio interjected with a shrug.

"Oh God, how lame was that moment," Nick said, shaking his head.

Mike gestured his beer at Antonio. "See, there you go, problem solved. Antonio and Ramon will be partners, me and you, and Davina and Xavier."

"All right. You good with that, Davina?"

Davina stared at him.

"Davina? You all right?"

Nick's gentle nudge shook Davina from her thoughts.

"Huh? Oh, yeah, I'm fine with that."

"You look a little pale, girl. You alright?" Mike said with a laugh.

"Here, have a drink. It'll put some color back in your cheeks." Nick pushed a bucket of beers from the other end of the table toward her. "You'll feel better."

Davina laughed, grabbing a bottle. "Yeah, thanks. Nick, I didn't know the guys knew Xavier too," he said, leaning closer to Nick.

"Oh yeah. Xavier has kicked it with us a few times before."

"Oh."

Davina drank her beer in silence as the other men talked among themselves. When she reached for another, Nick jumped to his feet, startling her.

"Yo! We're over here!" he yelled, waving his arms wildly.

Davina looked over his shoulder and smiled. Xavier strolled his way with a casual yet powerful gait. This time he wore a black T-shirt with the words WHO DAT in large gold letters on the front. The black jeans fit loose around his hips and legs, but not enough to hide the bulge in the front of the pants. Every time she saw the man, he looked better than the last time.

Nick greeted him with a handshake and a rough hug. "What's up, X? Thanks for coming out on such short notice."

"No big deal. I was just at the house watching a movie."

"You remember the fellas," Nick said, extending a hand across the tables.

Mike, Antonio, and Ramon stood one by one either slapping his open palm or shaking his hand as they spoke. Davina pushed her chair over to give Xavier room, then smiled up at him.

"And my sister, of course," Nick said, nodding toward her.

"Of course. How are you, Davina?"

"I'm good, Xavier. How are you?"

"Great. It's good to see you again."

Davina sat back in his seat. Xavier parked his bowling bag near him and clapped his hands loudly.

“So, what’s the plan, Nick? How are we partnered up?”

“Me and Mike, Antonio and Ramon, and you and Davina,” he explained, pointing to everyone in turn.

“Really?” Xavier looked down at Davina with a mischievous smirk before plopping into the chair beside him.

“Did you know that we were partners, Davina?”

A light musky scent drifted over Davina on the chilled air. The smell tickled her nose and sent a shiver down her back.

“Umm, yeah, Mike just put us together.”

“Uh-huh, so you’re okay with us being *partners*?”

Davina thought she heard a double entendre on Xavier’s words, but decided otherwise and nodded.

“Yeah. I know how to play. I’ll be a good partner for you.”

Xavier’s smile spread and his eyes twinkled. “I bet you would,” he muttered, looking over Davina’s shoulder.

“So, who’s up first, Mike?”

Davina always had a good time with Nick and his work buddies when they went bowling, but tonight seemed exceptional. Xavier played great. He put up just as many points as she did. They were on the last frame. Davina stood at the ball lineup letting the air blow on her fingers as the mechanical arm dragged away the pins Mike just knocked over.

Davina reached for her ball and glimpsed Xavier walking toward her as she straightened. He stood close behind her, rubbing her shoulders.

“Now relax, Davina. You got this. You’ve been busting out strikes and picking up spares all night,” Xavier said close to her ear. “One more and this game is ours.”

Davina gasped as the bulge in Xavier’s pants brushed against her.

“Hey! No sweet nothings over there! My girl ain’t here to encourage me like that,” Mike yelled out. “Cut that shit out, Xavier.”

Davina jumped away from Xavier’s touch.

“Whatever, dude. I was merely instructing my partner to relax because the win was in the bag,” Xavier explained with a laugh, returning to his seat.

“Uh-huh, sure you were.”

“Chill out, Mike,” Nick told him. “Even if he was, none of that lovey-dovey talk helps. Ramon and Antonio have been whispering and giggling like little girls all night and they’ve been in last place the whole damn night,” he pointed out with a chuckle.

“See, there you go,” Xavier agreed. “Besides Davina and I are just friends. Right, Davina?” he added in a louder tone.

“That’s right,” she agreed over her shoulder.

“Oh yeah? My bad, man. I thought you were trying to get in with Davina,” Mike said.

“Nah, we’re just friends,” Xavier confirmed.

Davina turned her attention back to the lane before her. She walked up to the line and inhaled deeply. Focusing on the front pin, she took two quick strides and then a tiny hop before smoothly releasing the ball. At a

nerve-racking slow pace, the ball rolled in down the lane before crashing into the pins, knocking them all over. Davina turned a wide grin to the men and Xavier erupted in a cheer.

“Yeah!” he exclaimed. “That’s how you do it!”

Xavier left his chair to scoop Davina in his arms and spun her around. Davina was shocked, but not displeased.

“Whoa. Sorry about that,” he said, returning Davina to her feet.

“Oh yeah, just friends,” Mike murmured beside them.

Davina let out muffled laughter. “It’s okay.”

“We’re just happy that this impromptu game wasn’t a loss on our side of the scorecard, Mike,” Xavier explained.

“Yeah, that’s cool. I don’t mind getting beat. I just don’t like getting *beat down*. It’s all good.”

“Good game, X,” Nick said, slapping him five. “We have to do it again.”

“Yeah, I’m with that. So, what’s up? What’s everyone got planned for now?”

“We’re going dancing. You guys are welcome to tag along,” Antonio offered.

“Nah, I’m good. I’m going to meet up with my girl. I’ll see you guys later,” Mike said with a wave.

“All right, man. What about you, Nick?” Xavier asked.

“I’m going to see my girl, too. If I play my cards right, I might get me some tonight,” he added with a lecherous wink.

Davina rolled her eyes.

Xavier laughed, slapping Nick five again. “Well good luck with that. I’ll call you tomorrow.”

“All right, man. See you later, Davina,” Nick said, putting a kiss on her cheek.

Davina looked around to find that she and Xavier were alone. Her pulse raced at the thought. She looked up into the big man’s smile.

“It’s just me and you left, Davina. Do you have plans too?”

“No, I was just going home.”

“Well, it’s only ten o’clock, how about we go somewhere and grab a victory drink.”

“I’d like that.”



Chapter Four

“HEY DAVINA, ARE YOU busy?”

Davina’s heart skipped a beat when she heard Xavier’s voice. She smiled as she adjusted the phone and sat in her chair.

“No, I’m not. I was about to leave work in a few minutes. What’s up?”

“I just wanted to give you a call on your anniversary and congratulate you.”

Confused, Davina turned to scan the calendar on the wall nearby. “My anniversary?”

“Your *cyberspace* anniversary, Ms. I’m Not Very Techy. It’s been a whole month since the launch of your website.”

“Oh yeah,” she laughed.

“Have you been able to see a difference in your numbers since the website has been alive?”

“Actually, I have. New people come in often and some have even mentioned they’ve seen the website. We’re up to fifty-one children and another company has partnered up with us for sponsorship.”

“That’s fantastic. I see another cause for celebration. “

“What did you have in mind?”

“Well, I know what a big-time partyer you are so what about I come over with a bottle of Sparkling Pomegranate. We can live it up by watching a movie,” Xavier said in a humorous tone.

Davina laughed again. “That would be perfect.”

“I’m at the center finishing up. Do you mind meeting me down here since you’re already done?”

“No, that’s fine. Give me the address and I’ll leave now.”

Grabbing her jacket, Davina left her office for The Dexter Center. She walked in and looked around. An older, casually dressed man noticed Davina looking around and approached her with an extended hand.

“Hello, I’m Mr. Dexter. Can I help you?”

Mr. Dexter spoke slowly, and his words were strangely muffled. He stared directly at Davina as she shook his hand.

“Umm, yes, hi. I’m looking for Xavier Hart. I was supposed to meet him here.”

“Oh yes. You must be Davina. Xavier asked me to look out for you. He is in the gym. Come with me.”

Mr. Dexter led the way through the establishment. They passed administrative offices, classrooms, and a gym where a group of children played basketball. Mr. Dexter pushed the door to the stairwell open and walked up to the second floor. When he opened the door the hard-hitting rock tones of *Welcome to the Jungle* blared from an unseen source washed over her. Davina cringed and fought the urge to cover her ears. She turned to Mr. Dexter who didn’t seem disturbed by the loud noise at all.

“Xavier is in the ring,” Mr. Dexter said, pointing the way.

Davina turned in the opposite direction to see a large boxing ring on the other side of the room.

“Thank you.”

Pictures of famous boxers decorated the walls as she headed across the room. Males ranging from teenagers to the elderly took turns using the speed bags, heavy punching bags, and free weights situated on the left side. A cool breeze blew through the room, enough to tickle her skin giving her a small reprieve from the heated room and a distinct man smell that permeated the air.

Xavier sparred with another man wearing nothing but a pair of black shorts and boxing boots. As he walked around the ring, the thick defined muscles of his back and chest flexed with his movements. The stretchy material of his shorts outlined the corded muscles of his thighs and ass. Davina continued toward the ring.

Davina watched intently as Xavier bobbed and weaved out of the way of the punches thrown by his opponent. Xavier's upper body glistened with perspiration. Each swing he threw made his muscles ripple delightfully. The other man dipped left. Xavier's fist sailed past him. The man quickly countered with his own left, and then a hard right. Xavier's head turned to the side and snapped back as the blows connected to his face. He stumbled back a few steps.

Davina bit her lip to stop a retort from slipping out.

Xavier shook his head and retaliated swiftly. He distributed a three-punch combination to his opposition, knocking him to the canvas.

Davina's eyes widened at the display. She exhaled and then smiled.

Xavier walked over and helped the fallen man to his feet. They hugged and hit gloves before they went to their separate corners to gather their things.

"Hey, Xavier."

Xavier pulled his headgear off as he turned and smiled at Davina. The two hits Davina witnessed busted his lip, but she saw no other damage to his face. Xavier ducked through the ropes and then hopped down in front of her. His sweaty aroma, wild, musky, and manly, wafted up to engulf her. It was almost euphoric as she breathed it in.

"Hey, I'm glad you found it. Sorry, I'm not ready. Marco wanted another round to make sure he got the tips I had given him down. Hope you don't mind."

"No, that's fine. It gave me a chance to see you box a little. You're good."

"Thanks."

"Have you ever done it professionally?"

Xavier laughed. "No, nothing like that. I did the Golden Gloves for a little while back in high school and I was on a team in college."

"You didn't want to try it professionally?"

"Not really. I went to the Army instead. I do it now to keep in shape and help these guys mostly."

"Oh. Well, you look good, and the other guy looked great too, so I guess it's working."

"Would you be interested in coming back and checking out one of the matches they put on? I won't be fighting. I'll be in the corners."

"Sure, sounds like fun."

"Terrific. Come with me to the locker room. It'll only take me a few minutes to clean up, and then we can go."

Davina nodded and followed him. She sat on the edge of a table in the corner as Xavier continued through to the swinging doors to the showers. The waiting proved to be harder than Davina had anticipated. Thoughts of

Xavier's sweaty, undulating muscles played over in her mind's eyes. The blasting sound of the showerhead reminded Davina that the same fantastic body now stood naked under the rushing water in the next room. A short while later the room went silent, and Xavier re-entered the room.

"Okay, I'm ready."

"Your lip is still bleeding."

Davina snatched a tissue from the box on the desk. She approached Xavier and reached up to gently dab the oozing blood.

"You have a very loving nature, Davina, but you don't need an excuse to touch me," Xavier said in a teasing tone.

Davina gasped. She stepped back and looked away from Xavier.

"I—I didn't mean anything—I was just—"

Xavier chuckled and took her hands, closing the gap Davina had created.

"It's okay. How about I take you out to dinner instead and we can really celebrate."

Davina smiled and let out a relieved sigh. "I'd like that."



XAVIER HAD HIS ARM draped around Davina's shoulder as they watched a movie. She snuggled closer to him and sighed.

"Davina, I'd like us to be more than friends," Xavier blurted out.

Davina stiffened. She turned wide eyes to him. "What do you mean? I thought we *were* more than just friends, Xavier. We're together all the time. You're my *closest* friend other than Nick."

"Well, Nick is your brother, so I don't think that really counts. I'd like to be closer to you."

"How much closer can we be? I mean, we do everything together."

Xavier smiled and cupped her face. "Not *everything*."

Davina felt heat fill her cheeks as she comprehended his statement. "Oh, well—"

"Davina, I want us to be exclusive. Friends don't have sex, boyfriend/girlfriend relationships do."

Davina lifted a brow. "Is that the only reason you want to be more? So, we can have sex?"

The change in Xavier's eyes was immediate. He dropped his arm and sat back on the cushions.

"I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said that. I didn't mean it like that."

"No, that's a valid question. Do I want us to be more than friends just so I can have sex with you? The answer, of course, is no. If all you can truly offer me is your friendship then I will gladly accept it, but I would like to be more."

"Xavier, I—"

"If it's not for the sex then why do I want to be more, is the appropriate follow-up question," he continued, cutting her off. "So, I will answer that one, too. My life has improved tremendously since I met you four months ago. You are, for real, the light of my life. I look forward to seeing you and being with you whenever I can."

Davina's heartbeat accelerated at his words, but she said nothing.

"Don't you get it? I want to be the one you turn to when you need a shoulder to cry on. I want it to be me you tell when you're so happy and feel like you're about to bust if you don't share your news with someone. I want to

hear about all the trivial details of your day that drive you crazy and the ones that remind you why you love what you do.” He paused to take her hands. “I want to grow old with you. I love you.”

The sincerity in his eyes captured her spirit, but still, she hesitated.

“I don’t know, Xavier.”

“I don’t know a lot of things either but let me tell you what I do know. I want to make love to you for the rest of my life, not have one-time sex with you,” Xavier continued. “I want to feel your feet resting on my shoulders while I drive my cock into you. I want to hear you say my name on a moan as you orgasm that would sear a place in my soul. I want to hear the sex sounds unique to you when you come. I want to feel your body on top of me as you ride me all night long. I want everything you’ve given me up until now, everything I mentioned before, all that I just and so much more.” He paused again to kiss the top of her hands. “What do *you* want, Davina?”

Davina gasped. The bold words poked at her dormant senses. Excitement rushed to all parts of her body. Xavier slid a thumb over her trembling lip as he waited for her response. Davina’s extended silence made him sigh. Xavier dropped his hand and leaned on his knees.

“I don’t get it, Davina. From what I hear, your Sean sounded like a great guy. You guys must have had something special.”

Davina nodded. “He was, and we did.”

“I can’t speak for the man, but I know that if it were me, I wouldn’t want the woman I loved to be alone. I would *want* my wife to be happy again. If I couldn’t be there to make her happy, I’d want her to have a good man in her life.”

Davina sighed. *Xavier is right. Sean would want me happy again.*

“You’re an incredible woman, Davina. I’m not Sean, but I can make you happy if you let me. Moving on doesn’t mean you have to forget him. It’s not uncommon to have room in your heart to love more than one man in your lifetime.”

Xavier angled his head and slowly moved toward her. Davina closed her eyes and met him halfway. Xavier’s soft and gentle kiss sent shivers along her spine. Never before had such a simple peck left her wanting more. She was almost disappointed when Xavier pulled away. Abruptly, he stood and walked toward the door.

Davina blinked rapidly touching her lips.

Wait. What just happened? Was that goodbye? We’re over before we even started? Is this what I want?

The questions bombarded her mind one after another. She rose with every intention of stopping him, but her feet wouldn’t move.

“Xavier, I—”

When he reached the door, Xavier spun unexpectedly, landing a burning gaze on her. Davina almost jumped back startled by its intensity. With swift strides, Xavier retraced his steps. Before she could say a word, Xavier wrapped his arm around her waist and yanked her up into his embrace.

Another kiss silenced Davina’s stunned intake of breath. Only her toes touched the floor as the strength in Xavier’s arm held her to him. Xavier’s tongue forced Davina’s lips apart. They battled briefly until Davina gave in to his lead. Xavier kissed her hungrily, holding her body against his blatant erection. The savage possessiveness of the connection overwhelmed her.

Dormant sexual urges within her came to life responding to Xavier's wanton aggressiveness. A rush of heat infused Davina's being leaving her skin electrified. Her nipples pebbled and her core throbbed at the feel of Xavier's hard-on pressing between her legs. The thrilling sensations were over far sooner than Davina wanted. Her knees wobble when Xavier lowered her to the floor. Xavier left the house without a backward glance. Davina's knees gave way as she slid down the door to the floor.

"Holy shit," she breathed.



Chapter Five

DAVINA SCRIBBLED HER signature at the bottom of the paperwork then closed the envelope before reaching for another beside it. As she looked through the papers her phone shook the table. She hit the speaker button.

“Yes, hello.”

“Hey Vina, where are you? I came by to take you to breakfast and you’re not home.”

“Hi, Nicky. I’m at SPADES. I’m putting together a few projects for the children to do next week.”

“But it’s the weekend. You never go in on the weekend.”

She shrugged. “What else is there to do? I don’t have a life so I might as well focus on my work.”

“You can have a life, Davina. A *life* is waiting for you right down the street. Just go see him.”

“For what? He hasn’t called me all week, Nick. He’s over it. I was lucky enough to have another friend, someone close enough to love and I blew it,” she said dejectedly.

“You know, Davina, sometimes we’re given special things in life to familiarize ourselves with the things that are special. This way if we ever lose it or it’s taken away from us those qualities can easily be spotted again.”

Davina looked at the phone with a raised brow, then brought it back to her ear.

“Huh? What was that?”

“Hey, that wasn’t my saying. I was channeling our auntie.”

Davina chuckled. “Yeah, I know. It was kind of creepy hearing you say it.”

“Okay fine. Here a tidbit that is all Nick Thompson, okay? Wake up, Davina, and smell the donuts!” he shouted.

Davina pulled the phone away from his head and scoffed. “Nick! What the hell—”

“Davina, listen to me. I’m going to make this crystal clear for you. I’m your brother and I love you. Xavier might be your friend, Davina, but that ain’t brotherly love you got for him. Think about it, and then do something about it. I’ll call you later.”

Davina pressed the end button then pushed her chair back. She rocked her chair back and forth going over Nick’s words for long moments. When Xavier’s face appeared in her mind’s eye she smiled.

“Damn, I hate it when he’s right,” she said, picking up her phone and keys.



“HI, XAVIER,” DAVINA said when the door opened. “Is it okay if we talk?”

“Of course. Come in.”

Xavier stepped to the side and extended his hand in invitation. Davina followed as he led the way into the living room. The t-shirt Xavier wore clung to his broad shoulders and fell loose around his narrow hips. Ever since seeing him in the boxing ring, no matter what he wore she only saw his bare chest. Davina’s heart pounded in her ears.

Xavier sat on the sofa, turned off the TV then patted the cushion beside him.

“Thank you, but I—I think I need to stand. I may even pace if that’s alright with you.”

Xavier gestured for her to continue.

Davina blew out a slow breath and started walking. “I was on a *no-boyfriend* thing for a long time. I put all my attention into building up SPADES for the kids. Even after I moved here and opened SPADES Indiana that was still the plan. That idea was easy to maintain until, well, until I met you. You kind of threw a monkey wrench into my well-laid plans and what I thought I knew,” she added with a chuckle.

Xavier smiled. “Was that a bad thing?”

Davina paused in her movement to think a moment. “I don’t think it was a bad thing, but it definitely threw me off balance. See, I was attracted to you from the first moment I saw you. That had never happened to me before.”

“Kind of like love at first sight, huh?”

Davina stopped at the end of the sofa and turned to look at him. “Yeah, but that’s just it. I never believed that really happened to people. I do believe that there is someone for everyone out there.”

“And since you already had your someone this couldn’t be it?”

She stopped before him. “Yes! I mean, does that sound horrible. I thought you only fell in love one time in your life, and everyone has that one true love, someone just for them, but...” She shook her head and started moving again. “Don’t get me wrong, Xavier. I appreciate how good-looking you are and how good you smell—oh my God. You always smell so good.”

Xavier chuckled.

“You were always so nice to me. I was completely aware of how you make me feel, but it never clicked that we could have nothing more than a great friendship. It was so different with Sean. Everything is so different. I didn’t realize I was in love with you until I didn’t have you near me anymore. I didn’t think we could be more than friends.”

Xavier pulled Davina down to sit beside him when she came by him again.

“What makes you think we can’t be more than just friends?”

“Well, Sean was my first. He was my first real boyfriend, first lover, everything. Experimentation and new-found passion united us. Over time, love grew and kept us together. If he was my one special love how could you be?”

“So, you have no experiences with anyone other than Sean?” Xavier concluded. “You haven’t dated anyone else at all?”

Davina shook her head. “No. After Sean died, I put my time and energy into SPADES. I know now that what we have is different from what me and Sean had, but I don’t know what to do with that.”

Xavier grabbed her hand. “Oh, Davina, there are so many more firsts you can have. You have no idea how good it could be between us. Surely you know that all men are not the same in and out of bed. Our friendship will only get better when we take it to the next level as lovers.”

“If you still want it, I—I want us to be closer, too.”

“Of course, I do. What made you come to see me today?”

Davina chuckled. “It was Nick. He made me scrutinize how I really feel for you.”

Xavier rolled his eyes mockingly. “Damn! So now I have to buy Nick a thank you gift.”

Davina snickered but sobered quickly. “My feelings for you aren’t like the ones I have for Sean, but they are there. I remembered what you said about there being enough room in my heart for both of you and it finally clicked. I think I love you, but I still love Sean. I don’t know how long that will take to go away, Xavier.”

“Baby, that’s not what I want at all. I don’t want you to lose anything that you and Sean shared. Those feelings may never go away and I’m cool with that. I just want my place in your heart, too,” he said, pulling Davina closer.

Davina nodded and eased into Xavier’s embrace until she suddenly pushed away from him to search Xavier’s face.

“Have you known for a while how you felt about me?”

“Yes, but I couldn’t act on it. Not really, anyway. When I finally broke down and told you how I felt it pushed you away from me. That was my biggest fear. I’ve been kicking myself all this week. It was so hard to wait for you to call or come by, but I had to wait for you to come to me. *You* had to be ready for us to be an us if there was going to be an us.” Xavier’s brows scrunched, then he shook his head. “Did that make sense to you because I don’t think I can say it again?”

Davina chuckled. “Yeah, it did.”

“Okay good.”

“I was confused and a little scared when I thought about us being us, Xavier,” Davina admitted. “I’m still afraid, but I want everything you said before and more. I want *us*. Let me stay the night with you.”

Xavier stared at her for a long time. Davina’s heart pounded behind her ribs while she waited for his reply. Finally, he smiled, and she released the breath she held. Xavier stood and pulled Davina to her feet. His hands covered both sides of Davina’s face and he leaned down to kiss her, a passionate claiming gesture Davina welcomed.

Xavier took Davina’s hand and led her from the room. Davina had not been outside Xavier’s immaculate living room before. She barely had time to notice the pictures on the walls as Xavier guided her down a long hall to his bedroom. They stopped by Xavier’s king-sized bed and he positioned her to sit.

Davina shivered as Xavier kneeled before her to unbutton her shirt. After discarding the garment, he undid her jeans and pulled them to her feet. Another tremor raced over her body having nothing to do with the chilled air in the room. Xavier gripped her hips to ease her to stand.

“Mmm...” Xavier said as his hands glided over Davina’s breast and belly, openly looking her over. “Damn, I knew you’d be gorgeous. I’ve been waiting to see and feel you like this since the day we met.”

His confession excited her, even more than his lust-filled voice. Shock managed to push its way through the erotic haze engulfing.

“You—you wanted—”

“Oh yes. You were out of breath from rushing to our meeting, breathing hard, and blowing air through those pretty lips of yours. I remember thinking how cute you looked. I also wondered if your face would look the same when you were trying to catch your breath after you came, too.”

Xavier’s hands continued to glide slowly over Davina’s heated skin as he spoke. Her nipples tightened as goosebumps pricked her chest, stomach, hips, and groin.

“But you can’t admit stuff like that to your *friend*. You can’t say those things, nor can you tell him how often you jacked off at night because you couldn’t get the vision of her out of your head during the day. *That* kind of conversation would be inappropriate between just *friends*, Davina, but things are about to be different between

us, aren't they? Now that we're about to be lovers I can claim you as my girlfriend—my woman. I can do that now, can't I, Davina?" he asked, ceasing all movement.

"Oh yes," Davina confirmed, licking her lips. "We are a couple. I'm your woman."

Xavier's hands resumed their roaming. He stroked Davina's breast leisurely, stimulating the nipples as he spoke.

"I've been waiting a long time to hear those words. Now that you're my woman, I can tell you how much I love your smile. Since I saw it, I've wondered if it would be the same one, I'd see after I got you off."

Davina gasped. *Oh my God!*

Davina felt herself swaying in Xavier's hands. She prayed her knees wouldn't buckle.

"Now I finally get to taste you and see."

Teasing kisses covered Davina's lower stomach before Xavier pressed his face into Davina's pubic area and sniff loudly.

"Yes," he hissed and sucked Davina's staff into his mouth.

A stuttering moan left Davina's lips as she gripped Xavier's shoulders to stabilize herself.

He stood up and took Davina's mouth in a commanding kiss, then gripped his shoulders and spun him around. "Lie down."

Davina scooted onto the bed while Xavier looked down at him as he quickly discarded his t-shirt and pajama bottoms. His massive organ sprang forward, and he turned to face Davina fully. Davina took a moment to indulge in Xavier's dark skin, immaculate symmetry, and handsome face as Xavier walked to a nearby dresser.

Suddenly fear rose within him. Davina hadn't had a lover in over two years. He used toys to satisfy his physical needs, but they weren't anatomically correct nor were they as big as Xavier. Approaching with a thoroughly used tube of lube, Xavier sat on the bed beside him. He looked down at Davina expectantly. Davina opened his legs and dug heels into the bed. A slick digit circled his opening teasingly. The tip poked in and out of the hole lubing the walls before the finger slid inside. After a few smooth movements, a second finger followed, and then a third. His body remembered the sensation and started to open. Davina closed his eyes and sighed. As he relaxed his arousal grew even more. Xavier gripped Davina's hard-on with his other hand. His hands moved in sync reminding Davina how good it could be when someone else handled your body.

"I can't stand it a moment longer, Davina. If I keep looking at that sweet pleasure-filled face of yours and touching you like this, I'm going to come all over you. I have to have you now," he growled.

Xavier stopped all movements and climbed over him. His preparation left Davina on the brink of eruption, his cock bobbing over his belly. Xavier positioned the tip of his cock between Davina's slick cheeks and pushed forward.

"Oh!" she moaned when Xavier buried himself to the hilt.

Davina dug her fingers into Xavier's upper arms. The air rushed from her lungs as Xavier's large body hovered over her. He lay unmoving for a long while giving Davina a chance to adjust to his girth. A thrilling wave of ecstasy rolled across his body from feet to the top of his head setting Davina on fire from within.

Oh God! I've missed this!

Xavier fell forward until his forehead touched Davina's.

"Damn Davina. You're so tight, so hot. I want to fuck you so bad but... I—I don't want to hurt you."

Davina let out a knowing chuckle. She gripped the solid muscle of Xavier's ass in each hand and rotated her hips.

"You're not hurting me, baby, believe me. You are, for sure, bigger and feel better than the toys I've had over the last few years, but I'm okay. I'm stronger than I look."

Xavier's erotic noises added to Davina's growing need for him. He moved with slow tantalizing strokes sending erotic tremors through Davina's body. Each back-and-forth motion brushed that special spot teasingly, pleasing her at the same time, promising more, and delivering.

Davina patted around her head until she found a pillow. Frantically, he pulled it beneath him raising his butt off the bed. The new position ripped another pleasurable sound from Xavier's mouth.

"More, Xavie. I need more."

Xavier's head jerked up. Brown eyes glazed with growing delight stared down at her.

"Davina, are you—I can't—"

Davina nodded and wiggled beneath him. "Yes. I'm sure. Do it, Xavie. Fuck me."

Xavier's deliberately gentle movements quickly turned into fast, frenzied pounding. Unbelievable enjoyment flooded Davina's body, overloading her senses, and rocking her to her soul.

"God, yes!" he said with a sigh.

Xavier pumped into her grunting and ahing his pleasure aloud. Orgasmic exhilaration raced through Davina's body. The tantalizing scents of Xavier's cologne and something else distinctly *Xavier* overwhelmed her. The erotic journey they were on came to an end all too swiftly. Davina moved her hands to her lover's cheeks to hold him in place as she screamed blissfully.

"Yes, yes, *yes!*" Xavier cried.

Xavier's head fell back, and his mouth flopped open. A long gurgling groan left his throat as he rocked back and forth holding his jerking cock inside Davina's canal. Davina's muscle clenched around Xavier's emptying staff milking him more. His face twisted in obvious pleasure. Xavier held Davina's hips for a few moments longer before finally collapsing on top of her. Davina wrapped her arms around his wide back.

A sense of peace and warmth spread through Davina's body, something she hadn't felt in a long time. She smiled, welcoming the sensations. When Xavier's breathing evened, he rolled off Davina and positioned himself on the other pillow. He raised his arm invitingly and Davina scooted next to him. Nuzzling against Xavier's large torso, she exhaled. Xavier played leisurely with Davina's hair while they rested quietly in each other's arms.

"So, when did I become *Xavie*?"

Davina raised her head to look at him. "It just kind of came out, but, well, if we're going to be exclusive, I'd like to call you something a little more personal. Only in private of course, but if you don't like —"

"No, no," Xavier said, silencing her with a kiss. "It's not that at all. I liked it. You're right. No one has ever called me anything but Xavie. I like that you'll be the only one calling me Xavie." He was silent for a moment, almost hesitant. "I love you, Davina," Xavier confessed. "I can't picture my life without you."

"Xavier, I—"

Xavier shook his head and touched her lips with his finger to silence her.

"It's okay if you're not sure right now. I'm here for the long haul. It will come in time."

Davina smiled. “Obviously, I was wrong when I thought you could only have one great love of your life. I can feel you *and* Sean in my heart and there’s room for both of you.”

Xavier hugged her close, then chuckled.

“What?”

Xavier rocked to his side, grabbed Davina around the waist, and hauled her up and over to sit on top of him.

“I was just thinking that we’ve got a lot of catching up to do, sweetheart. I’ve wanted to be with you like this for months. I’m not done with you yet. I plan to be a very active lover, Davina. I have the stamina of a lion. Are you ready for that?”

Davina laughed joyfully looking down at her new man’s laughing grin. She adjusted herself over Xavier’s pelvis and gripped his already growing erection.

“Oh yes. I’m so ready and I’m looking forward to the experience,” she told him, sliding her palm up and down.

THE END

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About the Author

Where sensual erotic romance is always waiting for you.

I am Dana Littlejohn, author of sensual erotic romance. You will find that I write contemporary romances with just a hint of another genre to take it away from the ordinary. My stories will touch your heart and your soul and make your body feel like it's being touched, too.

Imagination will take you places your money can not. I invite you into my world with open arms to see my imagination run wild...

Come along for the ride as I go on an imaginary trip into my world. You'll enjoy every minute of this wild ride.

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