



# Return To Love

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**Category:** Erotic, Romance, Billionaire Romance

**Description:** Can one fantasy night rekindle their forever?

Tech millionaire Dominic D'Souza is blindsided when his wife of twenty-four years, Mona, demands a break. In his pursuit to provide her every luxury, he has ruined their precious connection.

Determined to woo Mona anew, Dom transforms from a workaholic nerd to an adventurous stud.

After months apart, Mona realizes she isn't ready to give up her marriage without a fight. To her surprise, the thrilling new version of Dom fulfills her every wicked fantasy on their Christmas Eve date. When the night is over, can she risk her heart again?

Dive into this spicy, later-in-life, marriage-in-trouble novella with red-hot role-play. First in a series of friends in their forties finding flirty, filthy love!

**Total Pages (Source):** 13

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## Chapter One

Dominic D'Souza checked his Rolex for the hundredth time and cast another anxious look out the large window by the plush booth. In the half hour since he'd arrived at his favorite French bistro, the ever-present PNW drizzle had turned into alarmingly fluffy snowflakes. Thick, powdery snow already blanketed the sidewalks and the parking lot, in a sharp contrast against the dark of the evening.

Around him, the mood around the bistro lifted, filled with exclamations of glee and wonder. Snow in December wasn't unheard of. But the last thing he needed was a natural calamity ruining his carefully planned evening.

He hadn't seen his wife Mona, or heard from her, in eight months.

After twenty-six years of being together—married for twenty-four of them—the last eight months had felt like an eternity.

He had moved through them like an untethered kite drifting in the sky without direction or joy. Even his IT company—the symbol of his success, had turned into a bitter fruit in his head, given it had become the means through which he'd lost her.

The break Mona had demanded had forced him to see he had treated her like his personal assistant and a hostess. Even a prize he had to keep earning, rather than as a partner. As a woman with her own needs and dreams.

That she had used the said break to travel through India, a vacation he had promised her for so long, made the truth sting more.

For an allegedly brilliant businessman who'd built an IT company from scratch, Mona's admission that she was miserable in their life had blindsided him. That he'd let her go through a major, life-changing surgery alone while he chased a milestone contract for his company...shamed him months later.

Rubbing a hand over his freshly shaved face, he sighed.

What if she'd realized she was better off without him and his workaholic, non-communicative ass?

What if she had found a man who appreciated her instead of being caught up in his own insecurities?

A husky voice speaking to the maître d' had him sit up straight. His heart thudded against his ribcage, as if rattling its walls with uncontrollable excitement.

Dressed in a chocolate-colored satin dress that clung to her big tits and fluttered over her knees, Mona looked like a decadent dessert he wanted to inhale in one gulp.

God, he had forgotten the effect her hourglass, pin-up worthy figure had on him.

Years ago, when they'd first started going out—he a skinny, bespectacled nerd and she a popular social butterfly—he'd waited with endless patience to worship those tits and that ass. Time and life had only made her hotter and brighter and wiser.

Pendant lights hanging in a cluster from the ceiling picked out copper-gold highlights in her wavy hair. Her make-up was subtle, making her rosebud mouth shimmer pink. Black stilettos and a black clutch complimented her classy look.

As if sensing him, she looked up.

Her brown gaze drifted over his features with swift greed, making his skin hum. God, he'd missed her gaze on him. He'd missed her wit, her laughter, and her soft, deep kisses.

A soft smile curved her lips.

Under the table, Dom patted a hand over his stomach, willing the roaring dragons inside to calm down.

She was here.

She was giving him, them, another chance.

And he would not waste it, would never take her for granted again.

Not this Goddess who had stood by him through near-bankruptcy, who had raised their twins from when she'd been twenty, mostly alone, who had acted as nurse and advisor and everything in between to him. The woman who had turned her back on her parents' wealth and an easy luxury life because she believed in him and loved him.

With each step she took toward him, maneuvering through the crowd and tables, his resolve firmed.

There was one thing Mona had always wanted from him that he hadn't delivered. Because he had been too busy and too tired, chasing wealth and status she'd never asked for.

So that's where he would begin tonight.

Chapter Two

Mona D'Souza felt her tummy roll and dive as she walked towards her husband of twenty-four years. Every inch of her thrummed as if she was embarking on a first date with a man she'd crushed on in secret.

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Which was ridiculous because Dominic was her first and only lover, had seen her give birth to their twins, and had transformed from a reserved, brilliant nerd to a dynamic, generous entrepreneur. Except somewhere along the years, he'd left her behind and forged on alone.

Breathing deeply, she slowed her stride and took in the intimate, rustic charm of the familiar bistro. Twinkling fairy lights draped across exposed beams and window frames, and a cheerful Christmas tree created a magical, festive ambiance. The scent of pine mingled with the aromas of freshly baked bread, rich sauces, and roasted meats.

She was glad Dominic had chosen this place for their reunion. For nearly thirty years, the cozy family-owned bistro has stood resiliently in this corner of Seattle, fighting against gentrification and evolving trends, a testament to quality and time.

Back then, they had to save their pennies for a year to afford an appetizer and a drink here. Now Dom could probably buy the restaurant if he wished. But the magic between them...was it gone forever?

For weeks now, she had been on tenterhooks about seeing him again, about leaning into his body and letting him hold her, about kissing him. About grabbing onto him and never letting go, ever again.

But this summer, being on her own for the first time since she'd been eighteen, had provided her with a clarity she hadn't known in years. That their marriage had become a stagnant wasteland, mired in resignation and complacency, was on them both.

She would do whatever it took to fix it, to get the Dominic she had once adored back. It had to begin with her telling him how much he had hurt her. Even though it was the last thing she wanted to begin their cozy Christmas eve dinner with.

\* \* \*

“Hey,” she said, reaching him, the word a husky croak.

For what felt like an eternity but couldn’t have been over ten heartbeats, Dom stared at her.

His deep-set gaze swept over her face, over the pulse frantically fluttering at her neck, lingering over her lips.

When he pushed to his feet, light limned the breadth of his shoulders, highlighted by the thick, faded red sweater she recognized. She’d knitted it for him nearly two decades ago when all they could afford were cheap, handmade gifts.

He looked both familiar and... foreign in a way she didn’t understand. But her body instantly responded, pleasure uncoiling deep in her belly.

Had eight months changed him drastically or was she just starved for the sight of him?

Eyes shimmering brightly and skin gleaming, he looked eons better than when she’d left him at the beginning of summer. His features had lost the pinching tightness he’d gained during her recovery and his chest looked like...he had filled out. He fairly radiated good health and happiness.

A jolt of juvenile anger shot through her, battling it out with the stringent awareness of him. Clearly, their separation had worked wonders for him while she had missed

him with a desperate ache.

“You look good,” she said sullenly.

“Mona, right?” With nearly a foot differential in their heights, she’d always felt small and dainty around him. And it hit her afresh, that sensation of being engulfed in his heat and the intensity of his gaze. “Your pic on the app doesn’t do you justice. You’re...so much more beautiful in person.” His deep voice reverberated with excitement.

Mona stared at him wordlessly. Had her husband achieved a new personality along with the smoking hot bod?

He stuck his hand out, ignoring her dumbstruck silence. “I’m Dom. I haven’t been on a first date in...oh God, twenty-odd years, I think.” His large hand, with its elegant fingers, hung in the space between them while her mind whirled. He pushed his other hand through his hair, making the wavy strands stand up. “Excuse me if I sound nervous.”

Her desire to touch him won out over the confusion.

She wasn’t just horny, but desperate for his touch.

The hard squeeze of his abrasive fingers sent a needy clench through her lower belly. Also, how had he grown calluses when he worked with computers all day long?

“First date?” she said.

His thumb traced the veins on the inside of her wrist before releasing her hand. This close, she could see the fine lines of tension bracketing his mouth.



“Yep.” His brown eyes held hers. “At the risk of TMI on a first date, I’ve been starting over in...life. This date is one of the new things I’m trying. Your profile said you’re looking for fun and adventure.”

A thrill jolted down her spine as his words sunk in. Along with a hefty dose of surprise.

Her husband excelled at designing new apps and technology, in holding a thousand details together in his computer-like brain, in forecasting markets and trends. Not in impulsive gestures and thrill chasing.

“Yeah, sure. I’m up for...anything,” she replied, staring at him anew. “And I understand the need to start over.”

His eyes shimmered with endless things he didn’t say. “Yeah?”

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She nodded and slid into the semi-circular booth until she sat on his left. Placing her clutch on the table, she rubbed her cold palms together and looked around.

Set over a small set of stairs and apart from the rest of the tables, the cozy booth had a nearly three-sixty-degree view of the restaurant and of the snow transforming the streets into winter wonderland. The cheery atmosphere made her keenly aware of the little bubble of tension between them.

When the waitress appeared, they chose a bunch of appetizers—a habit leftover from when they could ill afford expensive dishes.

“I’m glad you’re here,” Dom said, without meeting her eyes.

Nodding, Mona took in the familiar light brown flecks in his eyes, the sharp angle of his jaw, the dent at the end of his long beak of a nose that he had gained during freshman year at UW.

Then there were all the ways he’d changed in eight months. His thick wavy hair piled on top with the sides shaved. The designer cut suited him as did the contacts replacing his nerdy glasses. The red sweater sat snugly across his shoulders.

Apparently, her husband had gotten quite the makeover.

Had he thought she’d left him because she didn’t find him attractive anymore? Or was this the sustainable change she’d hoped for in his lifestyle?

She took a sip of her ice-cold water to arrest the questions piling up.

Arm thrown over the seat behind him, Dom faced her. “So, tell me about yourself.”

“Like what?” Mona demanded sharply, then sighed. “I’m not used to first dates either,” she said, aiming for honesty.

“I’ll go then.” He grinned, his enthusiasm apparently endless. “Recently, I’ve discovered carpentry as a new hobby.”

That explained the calluses on his palms. “You don’t look like the pic you shared on the app either,” she said, borrowing his idea.

His expression turned sheepish. “My life fell apart a few months ago. I lost something...precious, and it became a wake-up call. I’ve been focusing on eating better and working out and...on being present for those who need me.”

A tight ache clamped her throat, and she cleared it. “You look great.”

His grin bloomed wider. “Thanks.”

If curiosity was her first flaw, being competitive about everything was her second. No way was he going to show her up with his transformative summer. It was high time she shared her dreams and needs too. “My summer has been full of research and just plain fun for a project. It’s been challenging but also a dream come true. I’m finally doing something I’ve wanted to do for years.”

“A dream come true.” His grin dimmed. “Care to share it?”

“Far too intimate for a first date,” she said, shaking her head. “It’s a privilege to know all of me.”

His thick brows drew down into a frown. Slowly, something utterly wicked lit up his

gaze.

Their waitress appeared, her tray teeming with their drinks and appetizers.

When she left, Mona picked up the glass of red wine and held it up. “To starting over.”

Dom muttered, “Wait.”

He dove into the insides of the navy blazer lying on the seat and pulled out a package of the sulfite removing sticks she used to carry around before she’d gotten sick and stopped drinking.

Her wine glass shook as she stared at him. “You’re carrying those?”

“Don’t want you to get that blasted headache tomorrow,” he said, opening one and dipping it into the wine.

Mona looked away as tears prickled.

Not a big surprise that her responsible, super-protective, ultra-provider husband remembered she got awful headaches on red wine or that he would carry them in case she showed up tonight, and in case she wanted to drink her favorite wine. And yet, when she’d truly needed him...he had let her down.

“Mona?”

She swallowed her doubts and clinked her glass against his. “I don’t know what to say.”

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He shook his head and tucked the sticks away. “Nope. Not talking about the blip into that parallel universe.”

She laughed, a thousand feelings tangling up in her chest. With a lock of hair falling onto his forehead, his gummy grin wide and real, he looked achingly gorgeous.

Leaning close, he tangled his arm through hers. “Merry Christmas, fantasy girl. Here’s to starting over.”

### Chapter Three

She was playing along, thank God.

Dom swallowed a too large gulp of his scotch, the burn down his chest calming him.

Bringing out the wine sticks had been a near miss. But how could he let her drink the wine when he knew how badly she would suffer the next day?

Now he needed to get them back on the fantasy train.

He shuffled a little closer to her. Her gasp was sweet when his thigh pressed against hers. Suddenly, he wished he had arranged for them to meet directly at their hotel suite. He would have ravished that pretty mouth by now and...

No, his wife had always liked a little thrill in their sex life. While it had been regular for years—because he was a man who thrived on a routine—it definitely had been nothing close to thrilling. Worse, with his company going public in the last two years,

he'd had neither the energy nor the time even for scheduled sex. Then, with Mona falling ill...it had all come to a screeching halt.

"You're right," he said, running his finger over the plump veins on the back of her hand. "Who wants to share boring details when they can be teased out in a fun game?"

She took a sip of her wine, which left her lips glistening. He wanted to lick it off so badly that he shivered.

"A fun game?" She eyed him with such bloodthirstiness that Dom had to bite his lower lip to stop smiling.

"You could let me earn the privilege of learning your secrets," he said, lifting a piece of smoked salmon tartare to her mouth.

A soft moan escaped her as she chewed and the sound went straight to his dick. "It's on," she said. Then she clutched his wrist, made him pick another piece and feed her. The tip of her tongue licked the tips of his fingers while she held his gaze.

Lust slammed into him like a freight train. He gripped her chin. "Flirty or filthy for tonight?"

Her lips parted in a soft gasp. "Filthy."

"Private or public?"

Eyes wide, she looked around and trembled. "Public."

"Truth or dare?"

She pushed one silky shoulder against the paneled wood and considered him, the edges of her hair fluttering over the swell of one tit. The angle dragged on her neckline, presenting him with her cleavage. He got stuck on the decadent sight.

God, he'd missed her tits like no one's business. If things went well, he would bury his face between them tonight and not come up for air. Maybe he would do it for the rest of their lives. He had made enough money for them to live in comfort without ever working again.

How had he lost sight of what was important so badly?

"Eyes up here," she said, her lips glistening from the wine.

He swallowed, wriggled on the seat—with no relief to his thickening dick, and looked up. "Truth or dare?" he repeated.

She lifted her chin. "Dare."

He raised his brows in pretend surprise. "Do you want to know the question before you choose? I'm feeling generous."

"Nope," she said, popping the sound with an irreverence he wanted to kiss out of her. She knew damn well that he'd ask about her living her dream.

"Fine." He let his fingers drift over the silky swathe of her nape. Her eyelids fluttered close and she leaned into his touch. "I'll make you come right here, now."

Her wine glass shook in her hand so violently that a little spilled over her chest.

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Casting a quick glance around them—the bistro had luckily grown busier and noisier—Dom grabbed a napkin and pressed it against her pulse with his thumb.

Beneath its folds, he spread his fingers until the tips reached into the wide neckline of her dress. A band of heat sizzled down his groin as the tip of his finger found a plump nipple. He rubbed and tapped it over and over, then caught it between two fingers and tugged.

Mona jerked, her hips moving in a tiny arc, a breathy pant falling from her lips. She slapped her hand over the napkin, holding it there.

Leaning over her torso as if to check something, Dom snuck more of his fingers in. With a groan buried in his throat, he cupped and squeezed her tit.

Writhing on the seat, Mona pushed herself into his touch. “That feels...so good.”

“What I wouldn’t give to roll my tongue around these...” he said, flicking the taut bud one more time.

A sudden burst of applause from a table behind them had them jerking apart.

Head thrown back against the leather, eyes closed, Mona huffed. A small wet patch glimmered on the bodice of her dress.

Stroking her jaw, Dom leaned down. “God, look at you, fantasy girl. With your nipples poking out of that dress, you look so ready to be ruined.” He let his mouth flutter down to her neck and took a deep breath. “And I want to...so bad.”



Shivering, she arched into his touch. Notes of jasmine, warmed by her sweet sweat, hit his nostrils. He breathed in greedily, his body releasing months of tension. Please God that she let him take her to the hotel suite tonight. He'd spend all of it on his knees, worshipping every curve and contour with his lips and fingers. "You still up for the dare?"

Her eyes searched his, as if she was seeing him for the first time.

For just a second, they lingered over his lips and he bit back a groan. He would give up his soul to have her kiss him. Show him the passion she'd buried beneath disappointment and hurt.

"Is this turning you on?" she said, surprising him.

"Does it matter?" he asked, his heart jerking painfully against his ribcage. This was a fantasy for her, yes, but a part of him desperately wanted the emotional connection they had always shared.

"Yes," she said, smoothing her fingers over his jaw.

He grabbed her hand and brought it to his crotch. With a soft moan that only he could hear, she cupped him.

His cock thickened. Throwing his head back, Dom let her squeeze him for a moment more, then pulled her hand away. "Shall I proceed?"

Her chest rose and fell as she cast a self-conscious look around her. But the flush painting her cheeks and her neck was unmistakable. She ran a hand over her chest, giving her tit a quick squeeze.

"Fuck, that's hot," he said, planting his palm over her stomach. The satin rustled

under his fingers, warmth bleeding through from her flesh. “If you see stars, don’t be shocked.”

Another shiver wracked her petite frame. “You’re good at this.”

He ate up the surprise in her tone. “Keep your chin lifted and sip your wine.”

Her eyes widened in her face but the thrill of it shimmered in her taut body. “What if I...moan too loud?”

“I’ll stuff my fingers in your mouth. Later, you’ll be punished,” he murmured huskily. Why had they waited this long to explore this side of themselves together? How had he forgotten how much he adored her wild abandon in passion?

She licked her lower lip and grazed her fingers over the outline of his cock. It jumped, desperate for more. “Like stuffing my mouth with something bigger and harder?”

Lust coiled through him, every muscle lighting up like bulbs on a circuit. “You’re mine tonight then?” he said, sending his hand down her soft belly. “To do with, as I wish?”

Her thighs trembled as he found the hem of the dress and tugged it up. He trailed his fingers over the soft, warm flesh of her inner thighs. “I need an answer.”

“Uh...” she said, her mouth falling open. Her wine glass shook again.

“Careful, fantasy girl. If you spill anymore, I’d have to lick it off those gorgeous tits and we’ll get arrested.”

Her plump ass wriggled on the leather seat, trying to get friction, no doubt. “I’ll let

you do whatever you want tonight.”

“You would let me fuck you on a first date?” he taunted.

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Her teeth dug into her lower lip. “How are you so good at dirty talk suddenly?”

He grinned. “This old dog has picked up many new tricks. All for you. Just for you.”

“I...I don’t know what to say.” A moment’s hesitation danced in her eyes. She squeezed his wrist. “Or what to make of all this.”

“Don’t think. Just let me take care of you. Yeah?”

“You always have, Dom.”

“Not in the way you needed it,” he said, his own throat suddenly heavy with so many unsaid things.

“That’s on me too,” she said, fair to the last.

He rubbed his cheek against hers, his chest aching. “Right now, lift that peachy ass for me, sweetheart,” he said, taking a casual sip of his whiskey with his left hand.

When her dress loosened around her thighs, he sent his left hand exploring up them again. Silky-smooth skin and warm flesh met his questing digits. And then the damp spot on her flimsy thong.

His cock pushed against his trousers at the evidence of her readiness.

“X marks the spot,” he said, pressing his thumb against it.

Her breath hitched as he shoved the fabric aside and ran his finger-pad over the seam of her folds.

“Fuck, you’re wet for me.”

“I...it’s...for...”

He grinned. “Words not needed, fantasy girl.” Then he made a few passes up and down her silky, damp folds, spreading her wetness around, learning the map of her anew. Remembering what she liked, he circled her slit without penetrating.

Her lips fell open on a long, low gasp.

When he knocked at her clit with his knuckles, she gave a little thrust of her hips under the table.

“I missed you, baby,” he said, taking a sip of the whiskey for his parched throat. His body tightened, readying to explode with one hard stroke. “In our bed, in that damned house, in the...”

“No parallel lifetimes, Dom,” she murmured between rasping groans and rhythmic jerks. “Right now, all I care about is coming.”

He laughed and then thrust his fingers inside her.

She covered her mouth with her palm and buried her teeth in the fleshy base.

Bending close, he pressed his mouth to her temple and told her how hard she made him while he hooked one finger to hit the sweet spot deep inside her.

“Tell me what you need more of,” he demanded.

“That’s it. More on that spot please,” she whispered.

Two fingers pumping inside her snug sheath, he circled her clit with the pads of the others. The wet, slurpy sounds of her cunt swallowing his digits made every nerve ending in his body strain towards the edge.

“Do you know how pretty you look right now? Your nipples are fat and tight against that satin. Your lips are plump and pink. And here,” he caught her clit with two fingers and twisted it, “you’re so ready for me.”

She jerked and squirmed, sweat beading over her lip. “I’m so close. Please...”

On and on, he drove her, urged by her mewls and the tight clutch of her thighs locking around his wrist. “Then come for me, fantasy girl. So that I can chase this scotch with the taste of you.”

Her teeth buried in his bicep, she came with a keening sound that filled all the empty spaces inside him. He kissed her sweaty temple and slowly, pulled his fingers out of her.

She moaned.

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Holding her gaze, he licked them up.

Still trembling, she pressed the glass of water to her cheek. “Thank you,” she said primly, shying her gaze from his. “That was...fantastic.”

Tenderness filled his chest. Wrapping an arm around her, he pulled her close. Now, she smelled like sex and jasmine and red wine...a cocktail of scents that made his cock throb. “That was just the starter.” When she stiffened, he braced himself and gave her the out she might need. “If you don’t want to spend the night with me, I...understand.”

She faced him, emotions flashing through her eyes. “I do. But I don’t want to talk about...us. I want the fantasy to continue.”

### Chapter Four

The walk across half the block to the luxury hotel took them close to fifteen minutes on the snow-laden sidewalks. Around them, the world looked like the inside of a snow globe, all twinkling lights and iridescent snowflakes against a velvet-dark night.

Mona’s overheated body relished the biting crisp air while her heart...desperately needed a reprieve from the feelings overload. Tucked under Dom’s protective arm, her knee-length jacket pulled tight around her, she let her tangled thoughts take over.

Even with aftershocks making her core tingle, she couldn’t believe she had come like that in public, Dom’s fingers buried deep inside her. He’d strummed her like he played the guitar, with the confidence of a man who knew just where to pluck to

create what note.

It was the last thing she'd expected of tonight, of him. Clearly, the change in her husband wasn't just on the outside.

Not too late for them, her heart chanted hopefully.

For the rest of the dinner, they had fed each other the delicious appetizers and discussed fluffy stuff about their summers. When she'd probed, Dom had admitted to not just hiring a personal trainer to re-haul his physical health and hiring a new CEO for his company, but also to seeing a therapist to sort himself out.

Her illness and recovery, the break she'd insisted on, even their twins Sanjana & Sid—sophomores at UW and USC—hadn't entered the conversation. It was childish to not want to return to their actual lives, but she didn't care.

The last two years had chewed her up and spat her out, with the only saving grace being the admission that her marriage was in big trouble. Her best friends, Chaaru and Kash, had come through for her, propping her up on the days she felt low, encouraging her to see her recovery as a new chance, letting her vent about the state of her marriage without judgment.

Dom hadn't liked her condition to continue the fantasy for the rest of the night, but he was indulging her. Hope and worry warred within her.

This fantasy night was a splendid way to rekindle their connection and she adored him for it. Especially since the man was as stubborn as an ox about change. But there was...more to address between them. More that needed to be healed.

There was time for that, she told herself.



Right now, what she wanted was to make the night as mind-blowing for him as he'd done for her. Her heart thumped with extra verve as she delved through the annals of their sex life to figure out how to knock the socks off of him, to make him lose himself in her without thinking that she had to be handled carefully.

She needed to feel like the woman that fueled his deepest, dirtiest fantasy.

"You look happy," Dom said, plucking her out of her research reverie.

Cuddling deeper into his side, Mona stretched upward and dug her teeth into his chin. The sandalwood scent of his cologne seemed to fill the empty crevices of her very soul.

"Sweet and slow or hard and fast?" she said, mimicking his questions.

The flashing lights from the decorations around them cast fascinating shadows on his face. But she didn't miss how his throat bobbed up and down or how his nostrils flared with poorly disguised need.

"Tonight's about you," he said, rubbing his jaw against her cheek.

"About us," she said, pulling back, struggling against the sudden vulnerability that clamped her throat. "I want to, need to, feel like I please you, arouse you, as a woman." She was breaking her own condition, but she couldn't help it.

He shook his head, anguish swirling in the depths of his eyes. "Sweetheart, that's never been-

She pressed a finger against his stiff lips. "Answer the question, please."

Pulling her close, he traced the shell of her ear. "Hard and fast first. Then deep and

slow.”

“Greedy,” she said, warm despite the snowflakes kissing her nose. “I like it.”

He laughed and the sound—hearty and deep and as familiar as her heartbeat—stole through her, opening up a deep cavern of longing.

She tightened her arm around his waist, loving the rough nap of his sweater against her cheek. Suddenly, her life felt like it was full of colors and textures and new sensations. A kaleidoscope of possibilities—something she hadn’t imagined possible a two years ago—when she’d been bedridden and frightened out of her wits.

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But this night, this man, this moment, belonged to her now. This life, that had seemed so fragile and tenuous, was hers to live fully.

Sudden carnal inspiration made her dance through the sticky snow. His deep-timbered chuckle at her antics warmed her from the inside out.

Years ago, before they'd been twenty-year-olds stuck with an unexpected pregnancy and living in near-poverty, they had played so many fun sex games. Uninhibited and desperate for each other, without a penny to call theirs. Later, she'd lost herself in raising twins with zero support and stretching every single dollar Dom earned to feed them, while he had thrown himself into building a better life for their new family.

He'd worked hundred-hour weeks for years and succeeded beyond their wildest dreams, making his first million at thirty-six. But they had lost each other on the way.

"Real or role-play?" she said, eager to make new red-hot memories to rival the ones from the past.

"Role-play," he said, a deep hunger unwrapping in his answer. His palm cupped her hip.

Velvet heat uncoiled low in her belly as scenarios unraveled in her head. "On my knees or all fours?"

His curse rang out in the open spaces buffeted by the wind and tall buildings.

"Only one option at one time," Mona said, infusing her words with a stern note.

When he glanced at her, she caught the flush streaking his cheeks. And knew it had nothing to do with the cold. He pulled her to face him, powdery snow crunching sweetly under her boots.

She bunched her hands in his sweater as his mouth descended. Laced with the dark decadence of the scotch and chocolate cake, his breath danced over her in sinful invitation. Just as his lips reached her, she turned her head. “Kisses not allowed in this world.”

His lips skimming over her jaw, he groaned out loud. The sound reverberated through her willing, wanton flesh, pooling low in her pelvis and releasing a gush of dampness. “You’re killing me, fantasy girl.”

“You haven’t said how you want me,” Mona said, nuzzling into the warm cavern of his neck.

“I want to be surprised.”

“Right. Here’s the play,” she said, clutching a scenario from one of her favorite erotic romance novels she had immersed herself in all summer. It was both titillating and empowering. “I’m a naïve princess, abducted as a present for the alien overlord. She’s in what they call ‘heat’, which means she has to be serviced repeatedly, and he can’t resist the pheromones she’s putting out.”

“Fuck,serviced?” Dom’s words landed on her skin like a throaty growl. He shoved his fingers through his hair. “It mean what I think it does?”

“Yep,” Mona said, not letting him break their forward momentum. “Of course, the princess doesn’t know that her body needs this kind of...servicing, so she’s going to...resist. A bare minimum.”

Dom's filthy curse rang around them, spicing up the sweet Christmas carols pouring out of restaurants and radio stations. "Does she need it the whole night?"

"Her heat needs it," Mona corrected primly, just as they arrived at the hotel.

"Good thing the alien overlord came prepared with a blue pill then," Dom said with a dryness that made her giggle. He grabbed her ass cheek and gave it a tight squeeze before the doors opened with a quiet swish. "Let's get to it then. I'm dying to get inside the princess's pussy."

## Chapter Five

A damp breeze kissed Mona's shoulders, blowing down past her tight nipples and lower still, flowing from the small gap she'd left in the floor-to-ceiling glass doors. While it wasn't a hot flash, she was overheated enough to need it.

Not only had Dom booked them the luxury penthouse suite, he had also dropped off a bag in anticipation of tonight. Filled with lingerie he'd admitted he'd handpicked, tubes of lube, silk scarves and blindfolds, three sets of pink furry cuffs, and a vibrator, dildo and a clit stimulator, the bag had been a revelation.

The idea of Dom perusing the catalogue while his cock engorged in his pants, thinking of how he'd use them on her, made a hundred shivers spew over her skin.

For tonight, she'd picked body-oil with dark notes of cinnamon and jasmine, two pairs of cuffs, and a bottle of lube. After her shower, she'd urged him to have one, and then went to town with the oil.

The nearly meditative massage she'd given herself sitting naked on the bed had been blissful, drawing out sweet, sensuous heat from every inch of her. Then, she'd dressed in a gold-sequined lace thong and bra—apparently, he had been thinking in

themes already—and tied a silk scarf around her throat.

She let her hair fall around her shoulders. While it was thick, her extensions gave it density and length. She would be eternally glad that her friend Chaaru had dragged her to the hair clinic. It gave her back the confidence she'd lost while it thinned during her illness. Though soon, she hoped she wouldn't need the extensions outside of these fantasy nights.

Finally, Mona slid herself onto her knees on the plush bed with its cloud-like duvet. She used one set of cuffs around her ankles, then lathered her already sensitive folds in lube. The tight tug of the cuffs around her ankles as she shifted, with the lube warming her folds, sent hot tingles zooming over her skin.

The second pair of cuffs clicked shut on her wrists just as the door to the attached bath opened. Anticipation tightened her belly.

She felt Dom's gaze over her raised ass cheeks like a laser pointer before she heard the growly sound he made deep in his throat. "Are you my prize, Princess?" When Mona would have turned to see him, he made a forbidding sound. "Do not turn."

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Warmth from his damp skin beckoned her, and the cuffs at her ankles clinked as he tested them. Mona pressed her face into the duvet with a whimper, her muscles jumping with delight when his abrasive palms cupped her ass cheeks with relish. “I do not look at the face of my presents,” he said, easily faking a deep, formal timber. “It is only the pussy I’m after.”

Desire drizzled down her spine like warm honey, pooling at her core. God, the man was a natural.

Without meaning to, she rubbed her thighs together. Dampness seeped through her thong to coat them. Nearly two years of celibacy and hours of foreplay had her desperate to be filled up in every way.

“What do you mean, my lord?” she said, sounding appropriately whiny and scared.

In reward, or was it punishment, he kneaded the globes of her ass. “You speak too much. Wet holes are for being filled up,” Dom said, his rough, serrated breaths hitting her pulsing folds. Wait, where was he?

Dear God, he’d nudged his face between her thighs, right below her needy folds, balancing at the edge of the bed.

Anticipation drew her nipples painfully tight. Mona moaned long and loud when he licked her from her clit to slit before fucking her with the tip of his tongue. Sneaking up, his hands stroked and squeezed her breasts with a dominance that seared her.

Still, she needed more. “Please...” she whimpered.

“Please what?”

“My breasts and their peaks...ache,” she said, arching for his touch. “Won’t you suck them?”

His gravelly laughter echoed through her. When he twisted her nipple between his fingers, she nearly blacked out. “Like that, but more.”

He abandoned her breasts after one last squeeze. “I’m here for my pleasure. Not yours.”

She writhed and undulated, begging for more, the sounds that escaped her mouth erotic to her own ears. His wicked chuckles aroused her as much as his filthy words, her release a shimmering mirage just out of grasp.

On and on, Dom stroked and licked at her, slipping his clever tongue in and out of every crevice, making satisfied sounds that drove her out of her skin. “You taste sweet and tart. Just the way I like it.”

Her thighs trembled as she tried to lock him there, for eternity if possible.

His smug laugh as he slipped away echoed through her needy pussy, making her muscles clench on nothing.

“Please...I’m heating up,” Mona said, not needing to work at all to get into the role. As tightly wound as a coiled spring, all she could think of was the pressure breaking her apart. “They said I need to be pumped full of...medicine by you, my lord.”

“I’ll pump you full of it alright, Princess.” His fingers continued the assault his mouth had begun, dipping in and out of her pussy.



“Please, can I look at you now?” Mona begged, needing the face of the man she’d loved for so long to hold on to, even in the fantasy. After months of imagining Dom like this, she couldn’t bear to not see his face now.

“Then, will you shut up and take it like a good girl?”

“Yes, I’ll take anything you give me,” she said, pressing her cheek into the duvet so she could see him.

Dom’s smile was wicked and wild, his pupils blown with lust. His broad shoulders bunched tight, a damp sheen shimmering on his skin.

She struggled against the cuffs on her wrists, the lean sinews of his chest with a thick dusting of hair, inviting her touch. God, how she loved rubbing up her nipples against that, how she loved it when he sucked her tits.

And his denying her, bringing her to the edge and leaving her there, was making her delirious.

Still, pure joy cut through the frenzied desire as she noted the changes in his body. Even his abdomen had developed muscle definition now. Given he worked relentlessly with no consideration for his posture or energy or age, and both his parents had died very young, she’d worried so much about his health.

“You are a feast for my eyes, my lord,” she said in a simpering tone.

He drew a line down her spine, his touch feather-light when she needed firm. “You please me too, Princess. Every inch of you is...heaven I’ve forgotten existed.”

Pleasure rippled through her at his raw admission. “I’m...scared. Why am I bound like this?”

“For my use, what else?”

While she watched with wide eyes, he pulled his silk boxers over his tapered hips. His cock—fully erect and thickly veined—plopped into his palm.

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Mona's mouth watered and she wet her lips with a swipe of her tongue. His throat bobbed up and down at the sight. Remembering how hard she'd worked in those early years to suck his cock the way he liked, to deep throat him without gagging.

"My lord?" she said, excitement sending shooting sparks to her sex. She fought against the cuffs at her wrists and ankles, making herself wetter. "What is that thick length? What do you intend with it?"

"That's your medicine, Princess," Dom said, stroking himself from root to tip. A thick pearl of pre-cum oozed onto his fingers. He rubbed it over her folds, one finger drilling deep into her pussy. She clenched hard but yet again, he slipped out of her grasp.

She smacked her lips. "I'm ready to drink it up, my lord. Will it cure me?"

A thin sheen of sweat covered Dom's skin as he cursed at her offer. "I will fill your mouth later. First," he rubbed the tip over her damp opening, then up through her folds, his chest bellowing like a forge.

"My lord, it aches. This thing you do. Please, enough." She raised her spine and tried to shuffle her knees on the sheets, as if she meant to scoot away from him.

His rough hands gripping her hips, he pulled her back with a wicked sounding laugh that pinged over her skin. "Not getting away, Princess. Not before I cure you of this heat." Then, with a deep, rasping groan, he tapped the length of his cock against one buttock.

Again, Mona wriggled and flailed and made a show of escaping.

Fingers digging into her wanton flesh, Dom dragged her to the edge of the bed. When he wrapped his fingers around her hair and pulled, her scalp prickled, her arousal spiking to new, explosive levels.

His mouth pressed against her lower back, he licked a trail to the seam of her ass crack. “This pussy is mine, Princess. To be filled up and used any way I want. If you take it like a good girl, I’ll cure all your ills.”

And then, in one hard, smooth stroke, her alien overlord lodged himself as deep as he could go into her waiting, willing, wet sheath.

\* \* \*

His prize, his queen, his wife of twenty-four-years clenched him so tightly that Dom thought it was a miracle he hadn’t blown his entire load in one stroke.

His breath burned in his chest and his eyes nearly rolled back in his head as she wriggled and shifted, sucking him in deeper.

“Are we done, my lord? And yet, my pain is still there,” she purred, her thick lashes fluttering, her spine trembling under his palm.

“No,” he said, sneaking his hand under her belly and tweaking her clit.

She bucked and arched, thrusting herself into his touch with a sob.

God, how stupid had he been to neglect this divine sensation for his damned work? How had he not fucked his willing wife morning, noon, and night, glutting himself on her body until there was nothing but this bliss?

He pulled away his fingers just as her lower belly rippled and her orgasm neared.

“Please, please...” her whispers were frantic now, growing more desperate with each denial. “Please, my lord. I can’t take this anymore. I will break.”

“No, Princess,” he growled, stilling her frenzy with a soft slap against her ass. Her keening moan filled his tautly pulled balls. “And no, you aren’t breakable. Your cunt squeezes me like a fist, with such intensity. You’re here for me to slake my lust. For me to exercise my demons.”

Then he pulled back all the way and plunged into her with enough force to jerk her up on the sheets.

She cried out—the sound a cross between a moan and a scream—and it fisted his cock like a tight band, as if made for the exact purpose. Sweat drops dripped from his skin onto hers in fat plops.

On and on, Dom drove into her, changing up from short, shallow strokes to deep, lingering ones, just as she caught up to his rhythm. Fantasy and reality blurred as he exercised the pain and disappointment and ache of the last months out on her body. The fear of losing her, the shame of how he had let her down...the long nights of loneliness. He purged it all with each rough plunge into her pussy.

This was what he had desperately needed. And he could see clearly why Mona had come up with this particular fantasy. More than just his desire, she’d needed not to be treated as fragile or broken or less than his perfect woman.

The realization made his chest tight, and he increased his pace, falling over into an animalistic rhythm in his chase of that high. Of that redemption in her curves.

Mona caught up, her spine and hips falling and rising perfectly in tune with his

frenzied movements. His name on her lips, a thready whispering chant, caught his attention.

Her eyes wide and damp, hair sticking to her temples, sweat beading over her upper lip, she was all woman.

The only woman he'd ever loved and would always love.

"Please, Dom," she said, breaking their script. "I want to come."

## Page 11

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“In a moment,” he said, with a kiss on her spine. And then he continued his rough, quick thrusts. Soon, heat shot up his spine and gathered in his balls. When his climax was a breath away, he started stroking her clit.

She crashed and burned instantly, her core clenching and drawing out his orgasm, milking and draining him of every drop. Her long, husky moan joined his roar as he fell over her.

Dom continued thrusting until the tremors shaking him subsided. Draped over her silky back, he kissed her temple, hoping she could hear the thundering cry of his heart.

\* \* \*

Minutes, or was it millennia later, he undid the cuffs at her ankles and wrists. When she groaned, he rubbed at the sore spots, then wiped her down with a damp washcloth. When she excused herself and fled to the bathroom, he told himself to not read too much into it.

Later, still shaking from his explosive climax, he joined her in the bed.

Relief coated his skin in shivers when she embraced him.

“Are you okay?” he said, kissing his way down her neck until he could rest his face between her breasts. His orgasm had emptied him out in more ways than one.

“My pain has receded, my lord. For now,” she said, with a twinkle in her eyes. “How

about you?”

Dom groaned, his cock already half-erect and grazing her thigh, thanks to the pill. At least, his feverish need hid his crushing disappointment. “I shall use you again soon, Princess. For now, rest.”

She giggled and arched into his touch, a rippling sigh rolling through her kiss-smudged lips.

“I have missed these tits,” Dom said, to cover up the ache in his throat. He licked at one plump nipple and then wrapped his lips around it and suckled deep. For a while, they rested like that, the only sounds the pursing of his lips and her soft sighs.

Until fresh need built up all over again.

Her fingers buried in his thick hair, Mona tugged at him, asking for a rougher, deeper touch. He complied and soon, they were writhing against each other like teenagers.

Claiming hunger, he ate her out. And when she fell asleep, her tears drenching his bare chest, Dom hugged her tight.

Wishing for the night to continue forever and yet waiting for what the morning could bring.

## Chapter Six

Golden sunlight dappled over his wife’s silky back met Dom’s eyes when he opened them the next morning.

He shifted to his side to better appreciate his view and let out an old-man groan as his muscles and joints protested loudly against even minimal movement. A sweet ache he



hadn't known in his twenties or thirties. And this was after he'd worked on improving his physical endurance over the last eight months.

Thank the lord and the little blue pill that he'd been able to satisfy every one of his fantasy girl's carnal demands through the night.

Pushing sweaty tendrils away from her forehead, he kissed her temple before slowly rolling away from her without disturbing the sheets.

He pulled on his sweatpants, washed his face, ordered room service, and lingered at the foot of the bed, watching her. Tension gripped him as he wondered how the day, and the rest of his life, would unfold.

Her thick lashes cast crescent shadows onto her cheeks, her lips dark red and swollen. He ran his knuckles over the arch of her neck and shoulders, left bare by the neckline of his sweater. Sometime near dawn, after their third round, she'd pulled it on, claiming she was cold.

A wave of tenderness crashed over him as the rightness of her in his sweater settled deep in his gut.

Last night had been long overdue, but he didn't, for one moment, assume that it fixed everything. The thought of Mona wanting to continue her break—separate from him and their life together, or wanting to meet him for this slice of fantasy, away from real life...made him want to howl like a child.

She was his entire life, and without her, his millions, his company, his life had no meaning.

A band tightened around his chest as she came awake and glanced around in soft wonder and a haze of confusion.

Seated on the edge of the bed, he rubbed his knuckles over her cheek, unable to stop himself from touching her. “Good morning, fantasy girl.”

Her eyes swept over him greedily, her fingers clutching his wrist tight, as if he might be a dream that could disappear. A rough groan escaped her mouth as she tried to sit up.

Grinning at her soreness, he tucked his hands under her arms and gently pulled her up. Her soft breath danced over his jaw and neck.

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A signature cocktail made of sex and jasmine and the chocolate-flavored lube...all his. Just filling his senses with her grounded him instantly. He pressed a soft kiss to her cheek, even as he braced for her to push him away.

Instead, she clasped his cheeks with both hands and pulled him in for a kiss.

The first press of her lips against his made him gasp like a drowning man. Sliding his fingers into her hair, he pulled her head into the angle he liked and devoured her.

Her taste, so familiar and yet somehow new, exploded inside his mouth, sweeter after craving it for months. Just last night, he'd wondered if he would ever know the wonder of her kiss again. He stroked his tongue against hers, biting and nipping, allowing her breath only because she needed it. This way and that, he ravaged her mouth until she gasped.

Pulling back, he stared at her, his chest painful enough to crack open.

“Good morning, Dominic,” she said, palms cupping his shoulders, mouth turned up in a wide smile.

The band of tension rippled and released, making him breathe in deep lungfuls, at her use of his name.

When she patted the spot by her thighs on the bed, he jumped on it like a dog waiting for its master's affection. Grabbing her roughly, he hugged her tight.

Like he'd wanted to do for months, and last night. He nuzzled into her hair, his body

trembling. “I missed you, sweetheart. So much. I...I’m not good at words, Mona. You know that.”

“You did well enough last night,” she said, burying her face in his neck.

He shook his head, laughter lightening his ache for just a breath. “That was...something else.”

“You liked it though, right?” A sliver of hesitation danced in her words. “It wasn’t too much?”

He pulled back and stared into her eyes. Only now, after his initial fears and the haze of lust had cleared did he see the subtle changes in her.

Dark smudges cradled her eyes, and she looked thinner, leaner. But the pale, pinching gauntness she’d worn during the recovery was gone. There was a new confidence, an inward spark of joy, radiating from her very pores.

The thought lodged like a heavy rock in his stomach even as he was happy for her.

“I loved being the alien overlord,” he said with a fake smirk. “I’m thinking we should make it a monthly event, if you like. We could do this all over the world.”

“Really?” she said, teeth digging into her lower lip.

He nodded. “Mona, sweetheart, if you need a...” a boulder lodged into his throat as he tried to force the words, “longer break to continue traveling alone or if you want to live in a separate apartment and only meet for this kind of...stuff, I’m okay with it.”

Her gaze searched his, something flashing in it. “Like just use you for sex and a luxury lifestyle?” she said so softly that he had to strain to hear it.

Dominic wondered if she could hear the cracking of his heart. But he owed her whatever kind of happiness she wanted, even if it wasn't with him. "I want our life to be whatever you need it to be, Mona. Even if that means I get to be your stud, not your husband."

\* \* \*

"Do you love me that much then?" Mona asked, tears crowding her throat, making her words come out like wispy rasps of falling leaves.

Her usually stoic husband's eyes filled with tears for the second time in the twenty-six years she'd known him. His hand shook as he lifted her hand into his and pressed a kiss to the tips. "I love you. So much. Enough to give you whatever you need. Even if that means breaking my own heart."

She pulled her hand away, some of her tears leaking onto her cheeks. "I only ever wanted you, Dom. Even when I found I needed the hysterectomy, you employed a cook, a maid, a full-time nurse and a therapist. I was in unbearable pain with the constant bleeding, my hair was falling out and...you still didn't come home for weeks, chasing some big deal. You made me feel alone and unimportant. If not for Chaaru and Kash, I'd have...broken down completely."

Anguish made his eyes shine bright, and his stubbled cheeks were damp. "I'm so sorry, darling." His large hands patted her everywhere, as if he needed to make sure she was there. "When I asked and you said you were fine to go through it without me...I didn't give it second thought. Not that it excuses it."

"I was hurt that you had to ask, Dom."

He brought her knuckles to his damp eyes. "I'm sorry I lost sight of what we had and how precious and fragile it is. I'll say it a thousand times, for the rest of our lives, if

only so that your pain is lessened just a bit, sweetheart.”

“You abandoned me,” Mona said, the hurt she’d been pushing down for months bursting out of her. It crushed her and liberated her like a cleansing fire. “I never asked for millions or this lifestyle or...”

He gathered her to him, his own chest shaking. His arms were steel bands around her. “I know you never asked me for anything, darling. Not even when you were living in two pairs of sweatpants and shirts. But every big project and deadline I pursued, every milestone I chased, it was all for you, sweetheart. To show you how much I love you, how much I appreciated your sacrifice when you walked out on a cushy life with your parents.”

A half-gasp, half-growl escaped her mouth and Mona slapped his bare shoulder. “Dom, that was twenty-four years ago. You can’t still think you have to prove something to me...”

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He kissed each of her knuckles slowly. “Call it a poor man’s pride.”

“It nearly destroyed us.”

“But you didn’t let me.” He leaned his forehead against hers. The scent and warmth of his skin coiled around her, filling her with a fizzy, giddy joy. “You, my clever, strong, fantasy girl, saved not only yourself but me.”

Pulling her out of the bed, he went to his knees in front of her. “I love you, Mona D’Souza. More than I loved you before. More than I ever thought possible. Thank you for making my life so colorful and sexy.”

Mona half-shuffled and half-fell into his lap, tears and snot running rivulets over her face. “I...I loved being by myself, discovering who I was outside of being your wife and their mother and all the other roles. But...darling, I only needed that because I lost myself. I...stored away all this anger and hurt and it festered inside me and became something else. Turned me into this...bitter, angry woman who resented everyone around her. Not having you by my side turned me into that, Dom. And I don’t like her.”

“Shh...don’t say that, Mona,” he said, peppering kisses down her temple and cheek, to her jawline and the tip of her nose. “That angry woman saved me, saved us. I love her just as much as I love the sex kitten from last night.”

Then his mouth met hers and Mona abandoned herself to his taste, his claiming, his kiss.

They came up for air minutes later, somehow having rolled themselves onto the thick rug in front of the fireplace.

“Your dream, won’t you tell me about it?” he said, with a crack marking the words.

For a second, she considered teasing him but his earnest expression put paid to that. Pushing up on an elbow, she kissed his jaw. “I’m writing a book,” she said, on a soft whisper, her dream still a fragile thing. “A middle grade adventure novel. It’s mainly set in Mumbai and New York and I had a great time researching both locations.”

“Wow, that’s...wow,” Dom said, wonder filling his eyes. “Can I read it?”

She giggled, pushed him to his back and with a sigh, straddled him. “That’s a privilege you have to earn, Mr. D’Souza.”

He groaned and pulled her down to meet his lips. And Mona knew, in his soft kiss and hard pants that real love had returned to her.

## Chapter Seven

They spent the rest of the morning in the cozy hotel suite, indulging themselves with a round of slow, tender morning sex.

Having decided to spend a couple of days instead of returning home—at Dom’s suggestion, they soaked in the decadent claw-footed tub in the white marble bathroom, dressed in fresh clothes from the bag that Dom had left at the suite, and were discussing where to venture for a late Christmas lunch when a hard knock sounded on the door to their suite.

“Are you expecting someone?” Mona asked, running her fingers through her still damp hair. After the marathon sex of last night and this morning, she’d been too deliciously sore to do much more than sip hot chocolate and lounge about.



“Me? No,” Dom said, a twinkle in his eyes. With his hair wet and slicked back, dressed in a grey V-necked sweatshirt and dark denim jeans, he looked like her favorite fantasy come true.

Feeling like a newly-wed, she grabbed his hand when he passed her and pressed a kiss to the calluses on his palm. A sudden ruckus filled the airy suite when he opened the door.

Huddled at the entrance, her best friends Chaaru and Kash, wearing ugly sweaters and goofier grins, screamed ‘Merry Christmas’.

Mona pressed her palms to her mouth. Wonder and a giddy joy filled her eyes with fresh tears. While she had talked to them almost every day even while traveling, she’d never gone months without seeing them like this.

“I know this is supposed to be your romantic escape,” Char said, reaching her first, “but we couldn’t stay away. We missed you far too much while you were out there having adventures, darling.”

Mona sank into her friend’s strong embrace, her heart overflowing with affection. “I missed you both too.”

“Everything good?” Kash whispered, hugging her from the other side. “You don’t need us to beat some sense into Dom, do you?”

Wiping her tears, Mona laughed and shook her head. “No, he did good. Really good.” Heat streaked her cheeks, which, of course, didn’t go unnoticed by her besties.

Over her head—for she was small and petite while they were tall and graceful, their eyes met. Naughty grins and girlish giggles erupted. Mona could barely breathe—busy laughing at their demands to know how precisely Dom had done good.

Before he himself had to face her squad, Dom's own friends tumbled into the suite, rescuing him.

Surrounded by their friends and their loud laughter and shenanigans, Mona felt as if she had been inflated, pumped full of joy and abundance. They decided to order lunch in and celebrate the wonderful day, surrounded by love and affection.

Throwing her arms around Dom, Mona said, "Thank you for inviting Char and Kash, for knowing my heart."

"Always, sweetheart," he said, and then took her mouth in a kiss that spun her senses and elicited rowdy cheers from their friends.

Mona sank into the languid kiss, her limbs trembling, and her heart full.

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