

1

Instant

Alexa smiled as she looked at her housemates. The two were dancing seductively with the men they just met. They were inside *Dance Freedom*, a posh bar in Harvard Square. Pero kahit nakangiti siya at parang nag-i-enjoy, ang totoo ay inaantok na siya. Hindi niya alam kung bakit. Maingay naman sa loob ng bar at puno ng taong nagsasaya, pero inaantok pa rin talaga siya. She saw Michelle—her blond, Business Management roommate—roam her hands all over *her* partner’s chest and Alexa arched her brow.

Ang wild talaga ng babaeng ’to, she thought, looking away.

Alexa was a nerd and she loved being one. An ordinary 21-year old girl, mahilig siyang magbasa, mag-aral at masaya nang kumakain ng popcorn habang nanonood ng reruns sa TV. Mas gusto niya ang simpleng buhay, walang komplikasyon at walang sakit ng ulo.

“Attorney Lianna Alexa Carbonel, why so boring?” Michelle asked with a pout. “Girl, seriously, you look like an old maid sitting there by yourself!”

“Michelle, I’m having fun!” Alexa answered unconvincingly. Hindi talaga siya mahilig sa bar at parties. She was not a big fan of clubs, noise and crowds, but she thought one night of clubbing wouldn’t hurt her. “Go back there and dance, your man’s waiting for you!” she shouted over the noise with a smile.

“Jeez,” Michelle grumbled, sashaying back to her partner.

Ano ba ’to, kelan ba matatapos ’tong gabing ’to? Alexa thought, feeling bored.

She saw Sheila, her Comparative Literature roommate, nearly choked on her juice when her partner's hand crawled under her roommate's skirt.

Mas wild pa pala 'tong isang 'to, she murmured to herself.

Alexa and her roommates were as opposite as night and day but she and the girls were actually very close—they let her study and she let them party and borrow some of her shoes and clothes.

“Alexa, what the hell, girl? Come over here and shake some booty!” Sheila shouted.

She just smiled and shook her head.

“You sure?” Sheila yelled again.

Alexa nodded this time.

Sheila rolled her eyes, left her partner on the dance floor, walked over to where Alexa was sitting and slid on the booth beside her friend.

“Alexa, baby, I know you're Filipino and you have your values and whatnots, but you'd just topped the Bar! Gracious, girl! Get laid and have fun. Lose that virginity, for Pete's sake! You're bound to lose it anyway. Why not lose it early?”

“I want to lose it to someone special,” Alexa replied with a wink.

Sheila rolled her eyes heavenwards. “Girl, someone special? No man is special; all they want to do is lie between your legs and f*ck your brains out! You might as well enjoy the experience!” she lectured, lighting a cigarette. “That's why they invented condoms, girl, so women like us can have fun, fun, fun!” She grinned, puffing the smoke away from Alexa's face.

Fun, fun, fun until you get attached at wala ka nang gagawin kundi umiyak pagkatapos.

“Come on, I like it when you don't care. Why the sudden

change?” Alexa teased, and Sheila made a face.

“You’re the only pretty girl sitting alone, you look pitiful,” she replied as they watched Michelle walk towards them.

“Don’t nag her too much, Sheila angel, she might sue you,” Michelle said, laughing as she took a gulp from her glass.

“This girl is no fun!” Sheila complained for the millionth time since they began sharing a flat, and Michelle laughed.

“Let her, she’s purity’s last stand. Ain’t you, Alexa baby?” Michelle joked, smiling seductively at the guy sitting across from them.

“Now that’s mean,” Alexa replied. “I should just have stayed home and packed.”

“What else is there to pack? You’ve packed like weeks ago! But I do love you for giving me that white and pink *Louis Vuitton* bag I adored!” Sheila muttered, laughing gaily.

“You’re so easy to please,” Michelle said, rolling her eyes. “But I can’t complain, Alexa gave me her boots,” she added, laughing as Sheila’s eyes nearly popped out.

“Not the *Casadei* with fur trimmings!” Sheila groaned. “I’m so jealous!”

Alexa was about to say something when her phone rang.

“Don’t leave without me,” she warned her roommates, walking towards the women’s restroom.

“Hello?” she answered her phone, covering her other ear with her free hand.

“Hello?” a hesitant voice answered.

Alexa frowned. “Who’s this? The number says unknown,” she said over the phone. She looked at the phone’s screen again and her brows furrowed. “Sino ’to?” she asked. She heard a relieved sigh from the other end.

“Miss Lianna,” the voice said, and Alexa grimaced.

She hated that name with a passion. “Yes, this is Alexa. Sino po sila?”

“Miss Lianna, si Edgardo po.”

“Manong Edgardo, bakit po kayo napatawag?” Alexa asked, remembering her father’s faithful assistant.

“Yung daddy po ninyo, Ma’am. Kailangan n’yo na po talagang umuwi.”

“Dadalawin ko talaga siya. My flight’s in three days,” Alexa answered. The word ‘Daddy’ felt like a knife brutally driven into her chest.

“Hindi po pwedeng three days, Ma’am. Kailangan n’yo na pong umuwi ngayon at hinahanap po kayo ng Daddy ninyo. Emergency po ito, Ma’am, kailangan n’yo na po talagang bumalik dito.”

“What do you mean my father’s looking for me?” Alexa asked in an astonished voice. *My father is looking for me? He left Mama and me when I was six and fifteen years later, he’s looking for me?* Alexa’s thoughts raced as a picture of a very handsome man with laughing chocolate brown eyes flashed in her mind.

Within those fifteen years, she only saw him thrice—twice on the television and once when she graduated from secondary school. He didn’t even approach her then.

“Malubha po ’yung kalagayan niya, Ma’am.” The voice on the other end sounded strained and sad and Alexa could not help feeling sorry for the old man who used to fetch her from school. Manong Edgardo personally delivered her and her mother’s monthly allowance during those days.

“But he’ll be okay,” Alexa said in a cheerful voice, trying to soothe the old man’s obvious distress. “Huwag kayong mag-alala, si

Atty. Carbonel pa, walang makakatalo d'un."

"Umuwi na lang po kayo, Miss Lianna. Kailangang-kailangan niya po kayo dito," Manong Eduardo said, his voice quivering.

Alexa looked at her cell phone in puzzlement.

He needs me? Since when did Atty. Leandro Carbonel start needing someone? Alexa thought, trying to swallow the lump in her throat. Thinking of her father brought back many memories, mainly about her mother who died with a broken heart waiting for the one she loved to return to them.

"Miss Lianna...?"

"Okay," Alexa finally relented, tucking the sadness away.

Dadalaw naman talaga ako sa kanya. It's not going to hurt if my visit is three days earlier than planned. Besides, huling kita na namin bago ako lumayo sa anino niya nang tuluyan, she thought inwardly.

She gave herself a break after the bar results came out. Gusto niya ng bagong start. Gusto niya na ayos na siya at napatawad na niya lahat ng kailangang patawarin bago siya magsimula sa bago niyang career. She didn't realize that it would take months. Hindi niya akalaing buwan ang gugugulin niya bago siya magkaroon ng lakas ng loob na bumalik ng Pilipinas.

"Nakapagpa-book na po kami ng flight para sa inyo, bukas po ng ala-una ang lipad n'yo pabalik dito, check-in n'yo po, Ma'am, alas diez. Na-send ko na po sa email n'yo 'yung flight confirmation, ipi-print n'yo na lang po 'yun, Ma'am. Pagdating n'yo po dito, may sasakyan na pong naghihintay sa inyo sa airport," Manong Edgardo said in a relieved voice.

Alexa could not help the smile that tugged at her lips.

Manong Edgardo—always organized and prepared. Some things never change, she thought.

"Thank you po, Manong. I'll see you tomorrow then," Alexa

said.

“Miss Lianna, hinihintay po kayo ng daddy n’yo. Inaasahan po namin ang pagdating ninyo, Ma’am.”

“Alam ko po. I’ll fly to Manila tomorrow,” she replied before ending the call.

She stayed inside the restroom to brood over the news. Her father, the one who left his wife and daughter for another woman, was sick; the one who made her mother a broken woman was looking for her; the one she didn’t care to see needed her.

Daddy, Alexa thought, and as usual, the word brought uneasiness to her system.

Her mother’s last words rang in her mind: *“He may not be a good husband, Alexa, but he is a good father.”*

A good father? A good father would never leave his family for another; a good father would never miss birthdays, graduations, and other important events; a good father wouldn’t *bribe* you with a car when you passed the Law Entrance Exams because he couldn’t be there to congratulate you himself.

Good and father didn’t belong in the same sentence if they would be used to describe Atty. Leandro Carbonel.

Sighing, Alexa exited the restroom and smiled at the other girls she passed by. The news dampened her spirit and she walked towards their table despondently. She sat down and motioned to the waiter, thinking of ordering a glass of iced tea.

No, not iced tea. I need something stronger, she thought, opting for a double scotch on the rocks.

She gulped the contents of her glass in one go and shivered at its bitterness. She ordered another.

Sana nalulunod ng alak ’yung sama ng loob ng isang tao, siguro mas masaya ang buhay, she thought gloomily.

She toyed with the napkin holder in front of her unaware of the eyes that followed her every movement. She glanced at her watch and groaned.

Eleven-twenty na at ala una ng hapon ang flight ko! Nasaan na ba 'yung mga babaeng 'yun? she mumbled to herself, craning her neck to look for her roommates.



Alexander snorted in disgust as the girl beside him let her hand linger suggestively on his thigh. He was more disgusted that the nitwit was only sixteen and game.

Mga kabataan talaga ngayon, he thought, shaking his head as he ordered another glass of brandy. Lumipat siya ng puwesto, iyong malayo sa babaeng mapagsamantala.

His brother had given him a week off to relax but knowing Nickolai, it was his way to make Alexander forget the 'incident'.

More like the accident, he silently grumbled.

Alexander had already decided to leave when someone caught his eye. The girl was wearing a snug-fitting plain white shirt, a pair of faded denim jeans and she looked as bored as he felt. Wala sa loob na pinaglalaruan ng babae ang custom printed napkin holder na katabi ng scotch glass sa harapan nito. Tumingin ito sa suot na relo bago tila inis na bumaling sa dance floor.

Mukhang may hinihintay 'to, he couldn't help thinking as the girl's shoulders drooped after she had finished scanning the dance floor again. *Sino kaya ang kasama niya? Mukhang naligaw lang yata dito sa loob ng bar*, Alexander observed, trying to see the features of the girl as much as the dim lights inside the club would allow.

He glanced at his watch and noticed that he'd been observing the girl for more than an hour.

Shaking his head, he walked towards the club's exit and saw

her bow her head in what looked like a sign of obvious defeat. Changing his mind at the last second, he turned and walked towards the girl's table.

"Hi," he said and nearly laughed when the girl scowled.



Alexa was cursing her housemates in her head as she continued to wait for them. Her irritation tripled when a jerk approached to ask her if she wanted to have a good time. She nearly whacked the guy upside the head with her scotch glass. Her agitation rose when she glanced at her watch and saw the time.

Ano ba 'to, mag-a-ala una na! She sighed loudly as she gathered her things, intending to leave. *Magta-taxi na nga lang ako!* She was about to stand when a man sat beside her. *Ano na naman?*

"Hi," the man said and Alexa glowered with displeasure.

"Look, I don't want to have fun and I'm tired so just leave me alone," she mumbled.

"I just said hi," the man replied, smiling.

"Hello," she sarcastically replied with a wave of her hand.

"Nice to meet you. Bye," she added, rising to her feet.

"Do you need a ride?" he asked.

He got to his feet and Alexa looked at him. *Ano'ng akala nito sa akin? Poor?*

"I can afford a car. I actually have one but I hitched a ride with my housemates on my way here and stupidly left mine at home," she answered haughtily and the man laughed.

"I don't doubt that you can afford to buy a car," he said in an appeasing tone.

Alexa bristled at his confident air. She walked quickly towards the bar doors but he followed her. She turned around to face him, arching her brow.

“Are you following me?” she asked.

He smiled and shook his head.

Rapist pa yata 'tong isang 'to, she quietly mumbled to herself and walked away from him faster.

“Wait!” he called.

She ignored him. They reached the swing doors at the same time and both came to a halt. The guy bowed his head a little before opening and holding the door for her.

“Thanks,” she murmured, and then groaned aloud.

Of all the nights to rain, it has to be tonight, she thought in exasperation.

Alexander smiled as he saw the corners of her mouth droop.

Nice lips. The thought drifted casually in his mind and he nearly rolled his eyes. *She doesn't look a day over eighteen, you dirty old man*, he admonished himself quietly.

He smiled at the uniformed valet that delivered his rented car to the entrance.

“Do you need a ride?” he asked the girl.

“No,” she stubbornly replied.

Alexa glanced quickly at him before she trained her eyes on the very wet street. *Bwisit talaga 'yung mga babaeng 'yun! Makatikim talaga 'yung mga 'yun sa akin! Paano kaya ako urwi nito? Dapat dinala ko 'yung kotse ko!*

“Are you sure?” The stranger asked again, quelling the urge to smile at the indecision that was visible on her face. “Come on, I won't bite,” he cajoled. “I have a sister, too...” he lied.

Alexa shot him at uneasy glance. *Mamaya manyakis ka, kabit ba gwapo ka. Ang dami kayang manyakis dito sa Boston. Pero paano ba ako makakaurwi?*

Kahit nasa Cambridge ang Law School ng Harvard ay mas

pinili niyang mag-drive ng thirty minutes araw-araw at sa Boston manirahan. Mas sanay kasi siya sa Boston dahil doon sila unang tumira ng mommy niya. And Boston reminded Alexa of her mother.

“Yes. Thanks for the offer though,” she answered and looked away.

“I promise I won’t do anything. I’ll give my card to the guard and if something happens to you, he can look for me,” Alexander said and then caught himself. *Why would I do that? Ano naman pakialam ko sa babaeng ‘to?* he thought to himself as she worried her lower lip.

Pag pinatay mo ako mumultubin talaga kita, Alexa thought, starting to feel dizzy. The alcohol was already affecting her and she shook her head, trying to clear her mind. *Bakit ka ba uminom, Alexa?!* she scolded herself. *Kailangan ko nang umuwi!* She peeked at the stranger’s face again and sighed. *Babala na. Kung oras mo na, eh, di oras mo na.*

She went to the guard and gave him her name.

“If you read that they found my dead body somewhere, he’s the culprit,” she said, pointing at her persistent pursuer.

The guard laughed and nodded. “You came with Michelle and Sheila, right? They’re regulars,” he informed Alexa and she felt a little relieved.

“I’m their roommate and I’ll be hitching a ride with...” She looked at the handsome stranger and he immediately came forward.

“Alexander Sandoval,” he recited.

Sandoval? Pinoy ba ‘to? Alexa wondered. *Alexander. Hmm... Kabawig ko pa ng pangalan.*

“This is the hotel where I’m staying at and this is the receipt

of the car I rented,” he added, showing the said credentials to the guard who took them and wrote something down in his log book.

“Sure thing,” the guard said with a wink, handing back Alexander’s card key and receipt. “Make sure that the lady gets home.”

“I will,” Alexander replied with a smile.

Alexa’s drunken mind nearly sighed. *Ang gwapo naman nito.*

“Let’s go?” he asked.

“I’ll kill you if you try anything funny,” she seriously said and his smile widened. *You’re one good-looking fellow,* she thought with a sigh and frowned. *Great. I’m really drunk.*

“Scout’s honor,” Alexander said with mock seriousness.

She ignored the hand he offered and got into his car. With a shrug, he went to the driver’s side and climbed in.

“Just drive me to where the taxis are plenty,” she said as soon as the engine roared to life. “And again, don’t try anything funny because I’m a black belter and I can kick your ass,” she added.

He laughed. They drove in silence and Alexander looked at the woman beside him without being too obvious.

Soft features... nice mouth... lovely eyes... great curves... He shook his head and looked away.

“Do your parents know you’re out this late?” he joked.

Alexa snorted. *No, because my mother is dead and I have not seen my father in fifteen years...*

“Nice try,” she said instead. *Ito na ang mga pick-up lines,* she thought to herself. *Pasalamat ka gwapo ka kung di baradong-barado ka na sa akin ngayon.*

“How old are you?” he continued.

Alexa looked at him. “Twenty-one.”

“Good,” he replied.

She raised her brow. "If you take advantage of me no matter how old I am, it would still be rape," she said.

Alexander laughed, his deep voice sounding so warm that Alexa felt like it actually caressed her skin.

She shivered involuntarily. *I should have stayed away from the scotch. Now I feel funny.*

"What's your name, by the way?" he inquired.

She smirked. *Typical male.* "Julia," she replied with a straight face.

"Julia...?"

"Roberts," she answered, trying hard not to laugh.

"Hmm..." he thoughtfully murmured. "What a coincidence, Alexander Sandoval's just a screen name, my real name is Richard."

"Redford?" Alexa guessed, a giggle bubbling inside her.

"No, Gere," he replied. She laughed. "How could you forget when we had two movies together?" Alexander teased. His heart lifted at the sound of her laughter.

"Oh, my bad," she flippantly replied, smiling at him. "Stop here; this is where I leave you," she ordered, pointing at a waiting shed.

"This is where you live?" he kidded.

"No. But nice one," she replied, rolling her eyes at him.

"Let me drive you home. Please. I would feel really bad if I leave you here in this weather."

"Are you sure this is not some scheme to get me to sleep with you?" she asked frankly and Alexander coughed.

"Is it working?" he asked.

"No."

"Then this is not a scheme because my schemes usually work," he said charmingly and she narrowed her eyes at him. "Please, I

would just like to drive you home. It's not safe for any woman to be outside at this hour."

"I know Karate and I have pepper spray."

"And I shall not give you a reason to use those tonight."

"Okay," she finally replied after a minute of just staring at him as if to peek inside his mind. She gave him her address and he smiled.

"I'm honored to take you home... Julia," he teased and she bit her lip to stop herself from grinning.

They drove in silence and Alexa did not even realize that they had arrived until she saw the familiar maroon gate. She did not wait for him to open the door for her but immediately got out of the car and walked to her door after thanking him. He got out of the car, too, and followed her.

"Thanks again," Alexa said as she inserted her key.

"The pleasure is mine," he answered, tilting his head as she opened her door.

"Bye, Richard," she said, smiling. "And thanks for driving me home," she added.

"Good night, Julia," Alexander whispered, his face moving closer to hers.

Alexa's heart jumped to her throat as she tried to make a hasty retreat by stepping back. Alexander anticipated her action, however, and he moved forward, his hand going around her waist. Her breathing hitched when she felt his soft lips on hers.

Not bad for a first real kiss, she thought as she sighed against his lethargically moving lips.

Alexander swallowed her sigh and his tongue ventured out to tease her lower lip. She moaned against the assault. She tried to push him away, but his grip was firm.

“Wait,” she whispered and Alexander took advantage of her open mouth, inserting his tongue in her mouth. She couldn’t help gasping as a different kind of sensation overtook her. She groaned softly when he drew his head back to stare at her. He smoothed her bangs off her face. His head dipped again to claim her lips and alarm bells started ringing in Alexa’s head.

“Stop,” she said after she managed to wrench her mouth away from his. She could hear her blood rushing to her head.

“No,” Alexander said, pulling her closer.

“No. Stop,” she whispered, putting a hand against his chest. “Stop,” she repeated, trying to catch her breath. She was tingling all over and her hands were shaking. She put her other hand against her chest to steady the erratic beating of her heart. *Ano ba ‘to?* she thought, looking away from him. *What the hell?*

“Please,” he whispered back and Alexa closed her eyes when she heard the desperation in his voice.

Lianna Alexa Carbonel, did you just let a total stranger kiss you? she thought, closing her eyes but only to open them again when she felt him gently push her inside her flat. Her eyes widened in alarm when he stepped inside with her and locked the door behind him.

“No,” she said and swallowed hard.

“Yes,” he replied. “I want you and you want me,” he declared and her head buzzed.

“I think you should leav—” she started to say but was cut off when she felt his lips on hers again. She struggled at first but eventually sighed against his mouth in total surrender.

2

Inevitable

He walked towards the center of the large, pristine white receiving room and Alexa clung to him desperately. She had no idea what she was desperate about. She was unsure which was more alarming: the fact that his mouth on hers was wreaking havoc on her senses or the fact that he didn't even know her real name and she's letting him kiss her.

"Wait, wait! My God!" she groaned as some of her sanity returned.

As if sensing her hesitation, Alexander intensified the kiss, leaving no room for rational thought as Alexa tried to summon some inner strength that she must have left at the bar earlier.

Alexa, ano ba—mag-isip ka! her mind screamed at her, but her body had other plans as her arms wrapped around his neck to bring him closer. *Teka lang. Teka lang! This is not how your first time is supposed to be!* her logical mind shouted and Alexa groaned, pushing him away from her.

"Why?" he asked, putting her down.

She shakily took a step backward. *Anong why? Nagtanong ka pa di mo nga alam kung ano'ng pangalan ko!*

"Wait..." she replied breathlessly as he moved towards her. She held up her hand to ward him off. *Alexa, what the hell! Paalisin mo 'tong lalaking 'to ngayon na!* "Umm..." she started to say, wetting her parched lips with her tongue.

He looked at her expectantly and she inwardly groaned.

"What's wrong?" he asked, tilting her face up.

Alexa shivered when his breath hit her face. Even his breathing had become an aphrodisiac that further addled her already muddled mind.

Give in, Alexander commanded silently, not taking his eyes off her. Hindi pa niya naranasang mamilit o mang-seduce ng babae, much less twenty-one-year-old women claiming to be Julia Roberts. *Yet here I am, using all sensual arsenals just to get her to say yes.*

“This isn’t right—” Alexa started to say, but his mouth swooped down on hers. *Oh no, oh no, oh no!* she thought as he lifted her up before lowering her onto the apple-green sofa that her housemate Michelle bought at a local bazaar.

Uncertainty clouded Alexa’s brain when her back touched the soft, cotton-covered seat and Alexander raised his face an inch off hers when the necessity to breathe became too painful to ignore.

“You want this. We want this...” he murmured and she swallowed hard.

“I’m not so sur—” she tried to deny, but he silenced her again with his mouth. *Ano ba, pagsalitain mo ako!* Alexa raved in her head as his soft lips nudged her mouth open, drawing a beleaguered sigh from her.

She felt his hand move under her shirt and she moaned with need. The trail of his touch felt almost too sinfully delicious on her bare skin.

“I need you...” he whispered against her mouth and her mind went blank. “I need you tonight...” he murmured, moving her lacy bra aside to cup her breast.

“But...” she began to protest, trembling.

“Please...” he said.

Alexa moaned aloud as his hand moved to her other breast.

Think, Alexa, think!

“My housemates...” she started to say, and stopped when she felt his mouth on her neck, his hand moving lower to unzip her pants. *Stop!* her mind screamed as her hips bucked against his hand.

Alexander knew he wasn't playing fair, but the desire to possess her was too strong that it overpowered rational thought. He pushed her shirt up and placed small kisses on her stomach, eliciting a moan from her. He traced the edge of her navel with his tongue.

Alexa's toes curled.

Oh my God! she screamed in her head as his mouth moved lower until it reached the edge of her white underwear. She started to recite the *Philippine Constitution* in her mind...

Kami, ang nakapangyayaring sambayanang Pilipino, na humihingi ng tulong sa Makapangyarihang Diyos, upang bumuo ng isang makatarungan... maka... tarungan at makataong ... lipunan, at mag... ta... tag ng...

Shit, he's too good at this... Alexa thought as he pulled her pants lower. *My first time is supposed to be on top of a large bed covered with white satin sheets, with mood candles scattered in romantically strategic spots, and a bottle of champagne perched on the bedside table...*

Her eyes fluttered close when she felt his hot breath on the apex of her mound.

Okay, enough of this torture! she decided, pushing him off her.

Alexander was taken aback by the action, feeling terribly disappointed at what he thought was rejection. His jaw dropped however, when she sat up and took her shirt and bra off. Then she stood to discard her pants, leaving the immaculate white lacy panties on. The entire time she was standing before him, he did

nothing but stare.

Holy mother of... he cut off the silent profanity, swallowing convulsively as he feasted his eyes on the vision in front of him.

Feeling a little embarrassed perhaps because he continued to do nothing, she automatically covered her breasts with one arm. The abrupt movement snapped him out of his daze.

“Don’t,” he groaned, pulling her arm gently off her chest. “You’re beautiful,” he said, tugging her closer. His mouth sought hers as he brought her down to straddle his thighs. Her hands moved to his chest, slowly unbuttoning his shirt.

Alexander’s fingers joined hers impatiently, nearly ripping the clothing off. They broke apart long enough for him to remove his shirt. He moaned aloud when he felt her bare skin on his chest.

Alexa splayed her hands on the hard muscles of his back and felt them jerk involuntarily against her palm. She gasped and threw her head back when he sucked on her nipple, his right hand cupping and gently massaging the other.

Unconsciously, Alexa ground herself against his crotch as a need she had never encountered before left her panting for more. Alexander’s control snapped when he felt her move against the bulge in his pants. His left hand moved to cup her bottom as he guided her movements, creating a pace that added fire to their blood.

“I want you now,” he whispered against her ear.

Alexa nodded mutely, forgetting that she had never done it before.

He lowered her gently to the sofa and then stood up to remove his remaining clothes. He was amused when she blushinglly averted her gaze after taking a quick look at his manhood. Kneeling before her, he slowly slid her underwear down

her shapely thighs; intentionally brushing his knuckles over her long, creamy legs.

“Look at me,” he said and she obeyed. “You have nothing to be embarrassed about,” he said, reading her thoughts and Alexa’s mind formulated a thousand and one rebuttals in her head. But they all remained in her head.

“Oh...” she gasped, closing her eyes when his hand, which was moving up and down her thighs, inched higher and cupped her warmth.

Alexander’s pride swelled when he saw how his touch could render her helpless, her breathing uneven. He teased her some more as he opened her legs wider, kissing the insides of her thighs. He groaned when he felt the wetness in her crotch as he tested her readiness with his finger.

Alexa bit her lower lip to prevent herself from screaming as his finger moved in and out of her. She moved against his hand sinuously and something inside her grew taut. He moved his face closer to hers, inserting another finger in her. She opened her eyes and met his dark stare.

“Let go...” he whispered, kissing her forehead.

Alexa screamed as wave after wave of sensation drowned her. He held her close to his chest as she shivered helplessly. He was murmuring words that did not make sense to her. Lethargy overtook her as the pleasurable tingles ebbed away. He sat on the sofa and positioned her, spreading her legs over his. She straddled his thighs once more. He kissed the top of her head gently.

Alexa smiled at his gentleness, letting her head fall on his sturdy shoulder.

“Hmm...” she mumbled in the crook of his neck.

He let out a soft chuckle.

She felt him trace her outer ear with his tongue and something in her was awakened again. Leaning away to look at him, she took his hands and placed them on her breasts. Her nipples instantly hardened at his touch.

“Soft and firm...” he whispered, massaging the mounds.

She wet her lips, aware that he was watching her face. “I like it when you touch me...” she whispered, her hands moving up to trace the contours of his chest.

“And I like touching you...” he whispered back, his manhood twitching at her confession.

She moved her face closer to his and teased the outline of his lips with her tongue. He cupped her softness as he opened his mouth over hers, enticing her tongue to play with his. Alexa opened her mouth willingly, wrapping her arms around his neck and reaching behind his head to deepen the kiss. He lifted her up a little and poised his manhood at her entrance before lowering her abruptly onto his hardness. She cried out in pain, her nails biting painfully into his shoulders.

Alexander stiffened, his eyes flying to her lovely face. The pain he saw in her eyes confirmed his suspicion.

“Oh, hell!” she hissed, trying to get off him but he held her still.

“This is your first time?” he asked. The incredulity in his voice was very much apparent.

She nodded. “And by the feel of it, this will be my last,” she replied, grimacing in pain. She tried to keep her lower body as far away from his as his hold allowed.

“Don’t move...” he whispered in a soothing voice. He wiped the sweat off her forehead with his hand. “Why didn’t you tell me?” he asked gently.

She raised a brow at him. “I don’t remember you asking,” she retorted, relaxing a little as his hand moved up and down her back in a comforting manner.

He tilted her face with his index finger and kissed her softly on the lips.

“I’m honored,” he said, nuzzling her neck.

He slowly drove himself deeper inside her, his heart bursting with an unexplainable emotion as he looked at the woman in his arms. A moan escaped his lips as her walls clenched and unclenched around his manhood, fueling the burning sensation in his loins. He watched her close her eyes as he slid even deeper. He smoothed her bangs off her face before kissing her mouth fervently. Soon she was moving along his length on her own, extracting a tortured moan from him. He let her set the pace, quelling his own urge to pound her hard and fast.

She whimpered with need, quickening their pace. Her skin glistened with sweat as she repeatedly impaled herself on his length. His hands moved to her hips, helping her speed up her movements even more. Her waist-length hair had become unbound, caressing his knees. She threw her head back, moaning loudly.

Alexander soon realized that he’d been holding his breath—he’d never seen a more erotic sight. His hand moved to knead her breasts. He felt himself nearing his release.

Alexa felt his gaze on her and she opened her eyes to look at him. His mouth was slightly open, his eyes dilated with passion. His face contorted with pleasure as he repeatedly surged up to fill her. She pulled his face nearer for another kiss as something built up inside her—something wild, unnamed and feral. She panted heavily and leaned her forehead against his. His thrusts became

urgent, more demanding. She gave freely, not holding anything back. She felt his mouth on her breast and she arched closer to his touch, offering her flesh to his seeking mouth as the fire in her veins consumed her. Alexa felt like she was going to burst into flames.

Alexander was defenseless against her tightening walls. He allowed himself to be swept into a sea of pleasure as he thrust into her one last time, filling her womb with his seed. She fell against him in a boneless heap. He wove his fingers through her silky hair. He groped for her plain white shirt and covered her back with it.

“Sleep...” he said.

She yawned widely. “Bedroom...” she murmured, pointing towards the stairs.

He gathered the rest of their scattered clothes and deposited them on one end of the sofa. It was not an easy feat with him sitting down and his other hand supporting her. He eyed his shoes and socks, which were too far for him to reach, and decided to take care of them later. The woman in his arms stirred, burying her face against the side of his neck. It drew a hiss of pleasure from him. His manhood throbbed inside her warmth and he grimaced. He didn't want to disturb her but he couldn't seem to leave the comfort of her sheath.

Sighing, he slowly slid out of her. He propped Alexa's back against the sofa to make her comfortable and stood to put on his clothes. He was leaving, he decided, because that was one of the unwritten rules of one-night stands.

She stirred to find a more comfortable position and the peaceful look on her face tugged at his heartstrings. Also, she was bare and exposed, and it wouldn't be fair to *his Julia* if her roommates found her in that state. He heard the guard asking her

about two other girls.

Dalhin mo man lang siya sa kwarto niya, his conscience dictated.

He automatically stooped down to sweep her up in his arms. He headed for the stairs she'd indicated, intending to carry her to the bedroom. Alexander was confused for a while upon seeing three doors.

"White door," she mumbled.

Alexander smiled; it appeared that she could read his mind even in her slightly intoxicated and well-pleasured state. He deftly turned the knob with one hand. Pushing the door to step inside the room, he strode towards the queen size bed and laid her down gently. He was trying his best not to stare, but something caught his eye. He felt guilty when he realized that the red smudges on the insides of her thighs were her blood. He smoothed her bangs off her face and then stood to leave.

"Lock the door when you leave. Please," she said sleepily, covering herself as she tried to sit up.

"I'll take care of it. Lie down and rest," he chided gently and sat back down on her bed.

"I need to bathe. I feel sticky," she said. She winced when she tried to get off the bed.

Sighing, Alexander picked her up.

"What are you doing?" she asked.

"I thought you needed to use the bathroom."

"Yes, but I can do it on my own," she replied, glaring at him.

He carried her into the bathroom. "You're sore," he stated matter-of-factly.

Alexa opened and closed her mouth, trying to think of a reply that might daunt his coolness.

He deposited her to her feet when they reached the shower/toilet partition, turned the shower on, and tested the water temperature by placing his wrist under the spray. Alexa could only watch him wordlessly as he pushed her gently under the shower and proceeded to bathe her as if she were a child.

After a few seconds, she realized that he was already fully clad. He'd obviously considered leaving. She looked down and unconsciously smirked.

He's only barefoot whereas I'm buck naked! The injustice—

She caught her breath when she felt his hands soaping her upper body. "Excuse... excuse me," she spluttered, water and all.

He raised a brow at her. "Yes?" he asked, as if bathing her was an everyday occurrence. He simply reached for the shampoo and poured some onto his palm.

Alexa's face flamed with indignation. She stood immobile as he proceeded to spread the shampoo on her wet hair, soon generating a rich, fragrant lather. He rinsed her head thoroughly before taking his clothes off and going under the shower himself.

Okay, we had sex and now we're sharing a bath? Alexa ranted silently. She was frowning at the back of his head. Part of it was still soapy and Alexa didn't know why she was itching to wash it for him. Clicking her tongue, she grabbed the hand-held shower head from him, tiptoed, and then thoroughly rinsed his hair.

Alexander stilled when he felt her soft fingertips on his scalp. He initially thought that she was feeling cold and that she needed the comfort of the lukewarm water on her skin. Turning around to face her, he bent down to kiss her lips and smiled triumphantly when he felt her arms snake around his neck. The shower cord made a short sound before hanging upside down on its side of the wall. She sighed against his mouth as he lifted her off the slippery,

tiled floor, her legs wrapping around his hips automatically. He hastily grabbed the towel hanging on the rack as he walked out of the bathroom and back to her room...



Alexander stirred and immediately felt a dead weight on his chest. Moaning, he looked at his watch. Six thirty in the morning?

Ang aga, he thought. Still sleepy, he thought about lying on his side but stopped when he felt something move on top of him. He lifted the blanket that covered him and saw a mop of black hair. He blankly stared at the silken tresses for a second before memories swamped his mind and blood flooded his groin.

Chocolate brown eyes; soft, pink lips; flawless, porcelain skin...

Alexa roused, unsure what woke her up. She rubbed her face against her pillow and stopped when she heard someone moan. Looking up, she felt herself blush when she saw black orbs regarding her with interest.

"You're awake..." he said, almost breathless.

Mas gwapo pala 'to pag umaga, she thought.

Planting her palms on his chest, Alexa raised herself away from his body. She blushed some more upon discovering that they were still... connected. And if his stare was anything to go by, he had no intention of releasing her.

Alexander gazed at the girl's face closely.

She looks familiar, he thought.

He swallowed a sudden lump in his throat when her fidgety movements woke up a part of him that he'd rather not wake.

Interesting, he mused as he felt her gasp, making his member twitch *inside* her.

Now, this is embarrassing, Alexa thought.

She once again tried to slide her lower body away from his,

but the pleasure brought about by the movement only made her bite her lip.

“Shit...” he muttered, reversing their positions. He started to thrust inside her, not taking his eyes off hers. He watched her face as he slowly moved in and out of her.

She moaned aloud when his unhurried strokes brought her to the brink once again. He followed her shortly, slumping against her.

“Good morning,” he said, and then kissed her forehead.

“I’ll burn in hell for sure,” she mumbled.

He eased out of her completely, lay beside her, and then hugged her to his chest.

“Sleep. Let’s talk about hell later,” he replied, smiling as he closed his eyes and drifted off to sleep.



Alexa suddenly sat bolt upright in bed. She looked at her alarm clock and almost shrieked when she noticed that it was way past nine in the morning. She ran towards the bathroom to take a quick shower. She dressed in record time.

Her phone rang and she answered it at once. “Hello?”

“Miss Lianna, nasa airport na po ba kayo?” the familiar voice on the other line asked.

She flinched guiltily. “Papunta na po. Paano po’yung mga gamit ko dito pati ang kotse ko?”

“Kami na po ang bahala d’yan, may tauhan ang daddy n’yo na pupunta d’yan para ayusin lahat.”

“Okay po,” she replied, running a comb through her hair. She grabbed her *DKNY* shades and used the designer glasses to keep her bangs off her face.

“Huwag kayong mag-alala, Miss Lianna, may mag-aasikaso ng

lahat ng kailangan n'yo.”

“Thank you po, Manong Edgardo,” Alexa said before ending the call. She looked around to see if there was something she forgot to pack and her eyes fell on the man sleeping on her bed.

Alexander... Or perhaps she should remember him as Richard.

“Hey...” she said, nudging his shoulder.

He only turned his head and grabbed a pillow to cover his ears. She groaned as she looked at her wristwatch.

Ten in the morning na, mali-late pa yata ako! she thought, panicking. “Hey...” she tried again, pulling the pillow away from his head.

“Nick, stop it!” he grumbled.

Alexa arched her brow. *Sinong Nick?* she wondered, shaking her head. She didn't have time to think about who Nick could possibly be. She's already running late. She hastily scribbled a note and pinned it on her headboard.

“Bye,” she softly said against his cheek, her heart breaking at the idea of not seeing him again. “Thank you, Richard,” Alexa whispered. She kissed the top of his head and left.