



They were only supposed to have dinner...

On a Friday night, dressed to impress, Sherry Westbrook gets stood up. She could go home, but why waste a new outfit and well-done hair? She decides to dine alone, but then her boss shows up, and now she doesn't have to.

Alex Barraza takes the place of Sherry's date, and at the end of dinner, they spend the night together—bringing to life a fantasy that has played out in his mind over the past two years. One night together isn't enough, and before long they embark on a secret affair that takes them both by surprise. But Alex hasn't been completely honest with Sherry, and when she finds out the truth, he knows he'll lose her. So instead of the truth, he stays silent. Because now he's in too deep, and he can't let her go.

A Powerful Attraction by Delaney Diamond

Copyright © October 2018, Delaney Diamond

Garden Avenue Press

Atlanta, Georgia

ISBN: 978-1-940636-76-4 (Ebook edition)

ISBN: 978-1-940636-77-1 (Paperback edition)

This book is a work of fiction. All names, characters, locations, and incidents are products of the author's imagination, or have been used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons living or dead, locales, or events is entirely coincidental. No part of this e-book may be reproduced or shared by any electronic or mechanical means, including but not limited to printing, file sharing, and e-mail, without prior written permission from Delaney Diamond.

www.delaneydiamond.com

Chapter 1

“Any questions?”

Alex Barraza, one of the owners at Newmark Advisors, looked around the conference room at the staff gathered for the usual end-of-week meeting. He stood with his legs shoulder-width apart, his broad-shouldered height dominating the room, and surveyed the group through a pair of silver-framed glasses. Several people shook their heads, but everyone remained silent.

“Okay, if there are no questions, let’s get back to work.”

Sherry Westbrook stood, grabbing her pen and notepad at the same time.

“Sherry, could you stay behind for a bit? I need to talk to you.” Alex smiled briefly and then started erasing the charts and figures from the dry-erase board at the front of the room.

Sherry eased back into the chair as the rest of the staff filed out. Her gaze lingered on him, and she slowly took air into her lungs and shifted. She loved the way he said her name. He made it sound exotic with his rolled Rs and accented pronunciation, which never failed to make the hairs on the back of her neck stand at attention.

She really shouldn’t have the hots for her boss, but Alex was the kind of man fantasies were made of. His wavy black hair glistened under the lights and curled against the collar of his dark jacket, while his solid-looking jaw, covered in a scruff of hair, screamed for a modeling contract. She’d been drooling over him since the first day she set foot through the door and he interviewed her.

Alex turned away from the board. “This won’t take long.” His voice was low, faintly accented because of his Colombian nationality, and smooth as silk. He resumed his position at the head of the conference table. “I know you’re wondering why I asked you to remain behind, and it’s for a very good reason. As I mentioned in the meeting, we signed a new client to the firm, Ovation Printing Company. The good news is, we have the business. The bad news is, they want us to conduct in-person meetings with their staff to assess their portfolios and offer advice.”

“All thirty-five employees?” Sherry asked.

“That’s correct.”

“But why in-person meetings? We can do the assessments virtually.”

“True, but the last investment firm they worked with didn’t give the level of customer service they wanted, and that’s why they decided to move their business.”

He removed his glasses, setting them carefully on the table, and her stomach tangled into

tighter knots at the better view of his face. His looks were why their female clients practically swooned at the sound of his voice and heaped hair-twirling, eyelash-batting adoration on him. Sherry had come close to doing the same on many occasions. She wished he didn't have such a nice mouth, with lips that were not too full or too thin, and hazel eyes whose light color was an attractive contrast to his dark hair and swarthy features.

Alex continued. "We want to show them why we're one of the fastest-growing investment firms in the country and make sure they understand we'll take good care of their personnel."

"That's a lot of meetings, which will take a lot of time," Sherry said.

Alex nodded. "That's why I've decided to have you work with me on this project. I want to make sure they're happy. Normally we'd do a simple rollover, but this time we're giving them the full treatment—analyzing each employee's current portfolio, conducting risk sensitivity, and recommending investment products."

"Why am I included on this project?" Sherry asked.

That was not a self-deprecating question. Alex was not only an owner, he managed some of the highest-performing portfolios in the company. He didn't need her. He could just as easily ask one of the admins to assist him.

"Because ever since you joined the staff two years ago, you've received the top customer service scores in the company," he replied. "With the two of us working together, I expect the transition to be a breeze."

Now she understood. Sherry considered customer service to be her strength. In an industry where seventy-five percent of the financial advisors were men, she differentiated herself by taking extra time to listen to her clients and establishing a rapport with them that put them at ease. She did her best work with the older crowd—seniors, widows—who could get confused by the unfamiliar terminology and overwhelmed by the figures and calculations. They were cautious and trusted her to take care of them, and she took great pride in doing so.

That Alex trusted her enough to pull her into the Ovation Printing Company project was huge. Unfortunately, that meant she'd be stuck working closely with him. A man whose very presence spiked her blood pressure and made her heart race out of control. This should be interesting.

"When do we start?" she asked.

"Monday. We'll meet in the small conference room at nine o'clock to review the transfer of information. We'll decide then how to divvy up the work, that kind of thing. Gina will be helping us

with some of the paperwork. Any questions?”

“I can’t think of any. But I’m sure I’ll think of something later.” Sherry gave a slight laugh.

He smiled, but hardly. When she first arrived, he used to smile more and had been more relaxed. Nowadays, he seemed more driven and less animated. He still smiled and was friendly, but the spark was gone.

“If you do end up thinking of a question later, feel free to reach out to me.”

“I will.”

“All right, that’s it.”

Sherry stood and gathered her belongings again and headed toward the door.

“And Sherry?” Alex called out to her.

Halfway across the room, Sherry turned to face him.

He rose from the chair to his imposing height, at least five or six inches taller than her. “I’ll have Gina send over the rest of the details sometime this afternoon so you can review them before we get together on Monday.”

“Oh.” Sherry glanced at her watch. “I’m leaving work in a couple of hours to get ready for a full weekend. I have...big plans and, well, you don’t want to hear about that...” Flustered at the intent way he’d started looking at her, she let the words trail off.

“Big plans? A...date?”

“Um, yes, actually.”

Alex’s eyes narrowed slightly, and an odd silence overtook the room. “New boyfriend?”

“Um, yes.” His questioning made her uncomfortable and oddly, aroused at the same time.

He picked up his glasses but didn’t put them on. He stared at them in his hands. “He’s taking you to dinner, I suppose?”

“Yes. Dinner at my favorite restaurant and then a picnic on Saturday.”

Alex put on his glasses. She couldn’t read his expression, but his jaw had firmed and his eyes—they glinted with unexpressed emotion as the tension increased between them.

This wasn’t the first time there’d been tension between them. It appeared from time to time. In Sherry’s mind, it was from an unacknowledged attraction. Alex never touched her or made inappropriate remarks, but there were times when he looked at her in a certain way that made her wonder—did he feel it too? That surge of heat and longing that tormented her in his presence. Two years ago, within minutes of meeting and going through the interview process, that tension raised its ugly head, inexplicable and very present, like a shadowy specter between them.

“It’s been what, a year since the last guy, hasn’t it?”

Sherry blinked. “Yes, it has been,” she replied, embarrassed and surprised he knew anything about the breakup from her cheating ex a little over a year ago.

How could he possibly know any detail about her love life? She didn’t know anything about his, nor did anyone else on the staff, from what she could tell. No ring, so he was unmarried, and Sherry was close with his admin, Gina. She’d never divulged details about him sending flowers or other gifts to girlfriends. If he did, he took care of those tasks himself. There wasn’t even a whisper of a woman in his life.

“Have fun,” Alex said, though he didn’t sound or look like he meant it. His face remained expressionless.

“Thank you. I will.” Sherry turned around and hurried from the room.

Alex watched Sherry from his office window as she left for the day. She glided down the cement steps in front of the building, turned left, and disappeared from view.

So, she had a new man. He was surprised it had taken so long. She was an attractive woman, with sensual brown eyes and a broad, slightly upturned nose. Her skin was a lovely shade of light brown and always glowed like she’d recently come in out of the sun.

He’d known from the beginning that she’d experienced the same tug of attraction he did, but he’d feigned indifference as best he could, transforming into a stoic statue every time she came near. Pretending that her close proximity didn’t unnerve him, or that the scent of her perfume didn’t release a primal need to grab and claim her.

The pencil in his hand snapped, and Alex looked down at the two pieces. Sighing, he tossed them into the trash can beside his desk and took a seat in his executive chair. He removed his glasses and pinched his nose.

What had he been thinking? Common sense dictated that he steer clear of her, but he was clearly a masochist, because he’d assigned her to work on this project with him. Working with her was a bad idea. He wanted her too much, and nothing should happen between them.

So what if his loins ached every time her round hips wiggled by him in one of those hip-hugging pencil skirts? So what if he’d fantasized dozens of times about all the ways he could fuck her?

Alex groaned and stroked his semi-erect penis through his pants. He’d never before been tempted to sleep with an employee, but Sherry Westbrook tested his resolve every weekday from

eight in the morning to five in the evening.

“Forget her,” he muttered.

There were valid reasons why they couldn't cross the line, the most obvious being that she worked for him. Now she was seeing someone else, and frustration at his inability to act tensed his shoulders and made him want to punch the wall.

But what could he do?

Not a damn thing.

More Stories by Delaney Diamond

Royal Brides

Princess of Zamibia

Princess of Estoria (coming soon)

Quicksand

A Powerful Attraction

Brooks Family series

Passion Rekindled

Do Over

Wild Thoughts

Love Unexpected series

The Blind Date

The Wrong Man

An Unexpected Attraction

The Right Time

One of the Guys

That Time in Venice

Johnson Family series

Unforgettable

Perfect

Just Friends

The Rules

Good Behavior

Latin Men series

The Arrangement

Fight for Love

Private Acts

The Ultimate Merger

Second Chances

More Than a Mistress

Undeniable

Hot Latin Men: Vol. I (print anthology)

Hot Latin Men: Vol. II (print anthology)

Hawthorne Family series

The Temptation of a Good Man

A Hard Man to Love

Here Comes Trouble

For Better or Worse

Hawthorne Family Series: Vol. I (print anthology)

Hawthorne Family Series: Vol. II (print anthology)

Bailar series (sweet/clean romance)

Worth Waiting For

Stand Alones

A Passionate Love

Still in Love

Subordinate Position

Heartbreak in Rio

Other

[Audiobooks](#)

[Free Stories](#)

About the Author

Delaney Diamond is the USA Today Bestselling Author of sweet, sensual, passionate romance novels. Originally from the U.S. Virgin Islands, she now lives in Atlanta, Georgia. She reads romance novels, mysteries, thrillers, and a fair amount of nonfiction. When she's not busy reading or writing, she's in the kitchen trying out new recipes, dining at one of her favorite restaurants, or traveling to an interesting locale.

Enjoy free reads and the first chapter of all her novels on her website. Join her mailing list to get sneak peeks, notices of sale prices, and find out about new releases.

[Join her mailing list](#)

www.delaneydiamond.com

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Pinterest](#)