



Blurb

Can he still be considered good, when his behavior is so bad?

An affair with the second most powerful man at Johnson Enterprises was not in Diana Cambridge's plans, but one night their smoldering attraction for each other culminates into an erotic kiss that leaves her aching for more.

For years, Xavier Johnson rejected his family's wealth and dedicated his life to helping others, earning him the nickname "the good one." Yet underneath the cordial exterior beats the heart of a Johnson, and this Johnson wants Diana Cambridge. As an employee at his family's company, she should be off limits, but everybody knows, whatever a Johnson wants, a Johnson gets...

Good Behavior

by Delaney Diamond

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Atlanta, Georgia

ISBN: 978-1-940636-40-5

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Dear Reader,

This is it. The last novel in the Johnson Family saga. It's bittersweet because I've grown attached to the Johnsons as I've watched them over the past couple of years—falling in love, breaking hearts, and expanding their family.

This book contains all the elements you've come to love and expect. The family's wealth and power is still on display. So is the sense of family, their love for each other, and the manner in which they fiercely protect anyone they love.

I dedicate this one to all of you for so fully embracing this saga. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Get ready for another sweet, sensual, passionate romance—Delaney Diamond style! And without further ado, I introduce you to the next couple who will fall in love and have their happily ever after: Diana Cambridge and Xavier Johnson.

Prologue

Two months ago

Before Xavier Johnson met Sasha Fulsom for dinner, he sensed there would be bad news. On the telephone, her voice didn't hold its usual anticipatory breathlessness, and he suspected their relationship was coming to an end.

Now it was official. He and Sasha were over.

He scribbled his name on the credit card receipt and handed it back to the server, who in turn thanked him profusely for the generous tip and left them alone again.

Across the table, Sasha checked her makeup in a small compact. As usual, her hair and face were immaculate. She turned heads wherever she went, and had turned his the first time he saw her at an event in Los Angeles. Two phone calls, one bouquet of flowers, and an extravagant dinner later, they'd become lovers.

"Are you ready to go?" Xavier asked.

She nodded, the candlelight flickering off her ebony skin.

They exited the Oasis Room of Agua, a high-end Latin fusion restaurant she'd chosen a few miles outside the city—a venue they'd visited before, not only for the excellent cuisine, but because the owners offered unparalleled confidentiality with various private rooms. They walked down a hallway to the separate entrance reserved for high profile diners, silent and each immersed in their own thoughts. The cobblestone walkway led through a courtyard to a concealed parking lot where valets waited.

"So this is it." Sasha kept her eyes averted. "You can still talk me out of it."

Xavier couldn't see her face very well because the short bob covered most of her features as she looked out at the parking lot. "If I can talk you out of it, you're not ready to get married."

"I'm ready for marriage, but the man I want to marry doesn't want me."

He didn't reply. If he denied the accuracy of the statement, he'd be a liar.

She smiled faintly and shrugged her slight shoulders. "I knew it wouldn't last when we got involved."

Xavier lifted an eyebrow. "Oh really?"

"You're looking for a specific type of woman."

"You have me all figured out," he said with a smile, mildly amused.

“A little.” She tilted her head in an assessing way. “Your ideal woman must be uncomplicated, unpretentious, and down-to-Earth. None of which I am. Oh, and she must have maternal instincts.” She extended her hand so the light picked up the diamonds on her wrist. “I’m complicated and certainly not down to Earth. I enjoy the finer things in life. I’m very demanding, although you managed to keep me at a distance, and there’s not a maternal bone in my body. We were never going to be more than just lovers.”

She said the words with certainty, prompting Xavier to ask, “Then why did you continue seeing me?”

Sasha twisted the engagement ring on her finger—one that had been placed there in the past week by a man Xavier knew very little about except that he was twenty years her senior, rich, and indulged her every whim.

Her brow wrinkled before her gaze met his again. “Because the sex is amazing,” she quipped.

Xavier let out a loud laugh. “I guess I should be flattered.”

A coy smile flitted across her lips. “The truth is, I thought I could change you. Classic female denial. I realized you wouldn’t change when you never introduced me to your family.”

She spoke lightly, playfully, but he sensed the hurt beneath the words, and guilt twisted in his chest. Not a single member of his family knew he was seeing her. Sasha was attractive, cultured, and comfortable in their world. Exactly the kind of woman he should choose for a life partner. Add in their compatibility in bed, and she was almost perfect.

Except she didn’t want children, and for Xavier, that was a deal breaker.

His siblings were all moving forward with domesticated life, and he envied them. Gavin’s wife was pregnant with their third child. Trent was getting married. Ivy and Lucas were engaged, and Cyrus’s reconciliation with his wife Daniella had resulted in a son and another baby on the way.

Seeing them so content made him long even more for the same, and the only kind of woman who would be right for him was one who shared his views on family.

Sasha spread her fingers and stared at the brilliant rock on her finger. “When are you going to settle down?”

“Eventually.”

“You’re almost thirty-six years old. Your youngest brother is beating you to the altar.”

“I’m still young. I’ll settle down when the time is right.”

She punched a text into her phone and then dropped the device back into her purse. “I’m a little jealous of this future woman. Silly, isn’t it?”

“We wouldn’t have worked. You said so yourself.”

She didn’t respond, only intertwining her fingers in front of her.

Seconds later, a black SUV pulled up. The driver jumped out, came around to their side, and opened the door.

Neither of them moved. This was it. The end of their affair. This was the end of a third relationship since he’d returned home less than two years ago, which meant women cycled in and out of his life an average of every six months—a cringe-worthy statistic that did not bode well for any long-term relationship.

Sasha ran a hand down his chest. Her fingers folded around his tie, and she gently tugged, pulling him down for a kiss. He allowed it, because he understood this was goodbye.

Their lips connected and his body stirred to life. One arm snaked around her waist, and he pulled her hard against him, kissing her with more passion.

She melted against him and moaned. The familiar sound lit his blood on fire, hardening his body. Those mewling noises were simply a prelude to the more boisterous sounds of lovemaking she made when he fucked her until she screamed his name and begged for mercy.

Sasha inhaled sharply and pulled back, eyes wild and filled with desire.

“One last time,” she whispered, touching a hand to his cheek, her eyes pleading.

No matter how much his body burned for her, Xavier couldn’t. “You’re wearing another man’s ring.” He spoke the words softly and without accusation.

Her mouth twisted into a rueful smile of regret. “That I am.”

She pressed her lips to his again, briefer this time, then quickly pulled away and turned to the vehicle, but not before he saw the sheen of tears in her eyes.

“Goodbye, Xavier.”

Climbing into the SUV, she didn’t give him a second glance. Once in the interior, he couldn’t see her face behind the black tint of the windows.

For a long time after they drove away, Xavier stood on the sidewalk with an emptiness in his gut. Her words came in a chanting taunt.

When are you going to settle down?

He wiped a hand across his mouth, lips still tingling from the taste of her.

He’d have to be a little bit more patient, it seemed.

Chapter One

Present day

Xavier pushed up from the chair and rolled his stiff shoulders. He glanced at the Audemars Piguet timepiece on his wrist.

“Damn,” he muttered. Later than he thought.

He removed the oval metal-framed glasses and swiveled in the mahogany executive chair. Rubbing a thumb along the bridge of his nose, he looked out at the dusky sky. No matter how many times he told himself he would leave early, he ended up staying late.

A low grumble had him clutching his stomach, which meant after a trip to the copy room, he needed to stop on the way home for a bite to eat. The snack from the break room had only served to tease his appetite.

He gathered the pages and walked toward the copy room. In the quiet hallway, the cleaning woman dusted the awards and pictures covering the walls. Her cinnamon-brown face creased into a smile. “Good night, Mr. Johnson.”

He nodded and smiled. “How are you this evening, Linda?”

“Fine, sir.”

He paused. “How did Vincent’s surgery go?” Her husband had been admitted for a sinus endoscopy a few days ago.

Linda’s eyes lit up at the question. “Very good, sir. Thank you for asking. In and out in one day, like the doctors promised. He took the week off and will be back to work next week.”

“Excellent.” He gave her the thumbs-up sign and continued to his destination down the hall.

The large room contained several copiers, a fax machine, and a computer terminal. Shelves stocked with paper and other office supplies lined the bottom half of one wall, with the top half available for use as a workstation.

Xavier stuffed the pages into the nearest copier feeder and hit *Start*. The sheets ran through easily, but five pages in, the machine stopped and let out three high-pitched warning beeps. Frowning, he removed the sheets that remained to be copied, found a stuck page and removed that, too. But a light continued to blink on the console.

“Come on,” he muttered. Just his luck. Right when he was ready to leave, something kept him in the office.

He lifted the lid, searching in vain for the problem. After several minutes of lifting and rattling parts of the machine, he slammed a hand atop the copier in frustration.

What the hell was wrong with this thing?

“Come on!” he growled.

“Need some help?” a quiet voice asked.

Xavier swung around. Diana Cambridge, his brother’s efficient and professional executive assistant, stood behind him, an amused sparkle in her large round eyes.

“What are you still doing here?” he asked.

“Going through sales projections.” She walked further into the room, her ample hips swaying as her heels clicked on the tile.

A plus-size sister with short ebony curls, she wore her confidence like a suit of armor. They seldom ran into each other because of the sheer size of the floor, but whenever they did, she captured his attention with her eye-catching ensembles.

Today’s outfit consisted of large gold earrings and chunky jewelry paired with a dark green ruffled blouse and black pencil skirt. He couldn’t help but notice how the skirt showed off her long legs. She was easily five feet eight without the black pumps that brought her within inches of the top of his head.

“Don’t tell me Trenton has you working late while he’s at home.”

“Oh no, Trenton would never do that.” She laughed easily, her face becoming animated, and a dimple in her left cheek made an appearance. Breathing in her fragrance, he smelled vanilla and coconut. Simple. Natural. Unpretentious.

“Would you like some help?” She cocked a brow, and Xavier realized he’d been staring.

Shaking off the temporary fog, he said, “Yes, I would.” He waved at the offending machine. “There’s a piece of paper stuck in there somewhere, but I can’t find it.”

“Let me see what I can do.”

He stood back and let her go to work.

“I think I know what the problem is,” she murmured, bending over and reaching toward the back of the machine.

Xavier went still, nostrils flaring at the provocative pose. His gaze fixed on how the skirt molded to her ass, hugging enough to give a good impression of the lift and width of her bottom without being indecent. He tugged on his suddenly restrictive tie.

“Got it!”

His gaze shifted up. Diana held a torn piece of paper in her palm, a smile of victory on her face. She snapped the lid closed on what looked like a hidden compartment—at least one he hadn't found—and the blinking light disappeared.

“That little thing caused so much trouble?” he asked.

“Afraid so.” She tossed the scrap in the trash. “I'll take those.”

He handed her the pages.

“How many?” she asked.

“Ten.”

While she ran the copies, Xavier alternated between watching her and watching pages fly out of the machine.

When he started at Johnson Enterprises eighteen months ago—his family's beer and restaurant conglomerate—he and Diana spent a few weeks working closely together. She helped him get settled until he hired his own assistant. She had intrigued him right away, not only with her knowledge but her warm personality. Yet he'd kept his distance. She'd been married at the time, and then there was the other sticky issue—the fact that he was the chief operating officer of the company where she worked. Nonetheless, whenever she came near, tension filled his muscles, and his senses went on high alert.

Diana stacked the copies together and handed them to him. “Here you go.”

“Thank you. You're a lifesaver. Now go home.”

“I will,” she said with a laugh. “Right after I stop off to get a bite to eat.”

He opened his mouth to inquire where she was headed, but stopped. He was friendly, but to a point. He never wanted an employee to feel as if he was infringing on their time and space.

“Enjoy your dinner,” he said.

“Can I help you with anything else?” There were a few things she could help him with. None of them work-related.

“I have everything I need.” He held up the stack of papers. “Thank you.”

“Good night.”

The Waterfront and Pike Place Market—the oldest continuously operating market in the country—were among Seattle's most visited sites. Diana loved the area but tended to avoid the mazelike market because of the throng of Seattlelites and tourists who swarmed the buildings after

the early morning hours. They came to see the famous fishmongers with their theatrical yelling and tossing of the daily catch and to purchase fresh produce, flowers, and products from local artisans.

At this hour of night, the market had already closed, and the activity on the waterfront had died down. Diana was craving a burger, and if she'd been smart, she would have bought one from The Brew Pub, the casual dining chain owned by the Johnson family and located on the first floor of their building. But she hadn't been smart, and given the late hour, too distracted by work. That's why she was staring up at the Burger Escape menu, trying to decide between a mushroom burger and an avocado burger.

"We have to stop meeting like this." The words vibrated in the air, his voice was so rich and smooth and attention-grabbing.

Xavier, the second oldest of the Johnson siblings, stood behind her in line, looking as freshly pressed as he did when she helped him in the copy room, in a charcoal three-piece suit, charcoal tie, and white shirt. A familiar prickling sensation crept over her, crawled under her skin, and invaded her bones. He was one fine man, his complexion a rich brown, the same dark hue as a bar of chocolate. While his brothers were all clean-shaven, the short, neat hairs of a circle beard framed his generous lips, leaving the strength of his jaw exposed.

All of the Johnsons had a refined, polished appearance. Anyone who didn't know who they were could tell they came from money, but there was something about *him*. An underlying current of...something. Not quite civilized, not quite untamed, an earthiness magnified by the dreadlocks and facial hair.

"We had the same idea," Diana said.

"So it seems. This is going to sound crazy coming from a man whose family owns a casual dining restaurant, but I've been craving a burger all day." He flashed an engaging smile, friendly and absolutely stunning in its brilliance.

"I'm in the same boat. I wanted something big, gooey, delicious, and utterly bad for me."

Xavier laughed. "Sounds like an excellent idea. I'll join you."

"You will?"

"Don't sound so surprised." Amusement filled his dark eyes.

"I figured you came for the grilled chicken salad."

"Oh sure. That's why everybody comes to Burger Escape."

She covered her mouth and giggled. Xavier always made her laugh. “I have to admit, I am a little surprised. I assumed you’d be interested in a gourmet place. You know, a restaurant that serves seaweed on a bun or something.”

“First of all, that sounds absolutely unappetizing. Second of all, I enjoy gourmet food like anyone else—well, maybe not as much as Cyrus. Don’t tell him I said that.”

Diana grinned. “I won’t.” She pulled an imaginary zipper across her lips.

“But my vice is junk food. I love a good hotdog, too.”

“Really?” She was learning all kinds of interesting tidbits about him.

“Oh yeah.” Xavier stepped out of the way so a man carrying a tray filled with burgers, fries, and drinks could pass. “A good Chicago dog or chili cheese dog brings me this close to nirvana every time.” He held up his finger and thumb a small distance apart.

“I happen to love a good dog myself. There’s a food truck I stalk that’s always downtown called—”

“Dog World,” they said at the same time.

She blinked. “Yes.”

“No seaweed anywhere near that menu.”

“True. And they pile on the chili and cheese, don’t they?”

“You can barely see the hot dog.”

“I know! It’s terrible, but so good.” She giggled again.

She saw warmth in his eyes, but a razor-sharp shrewdness, as well. “Since we’re on the same page, why don’t we have dinner together. My treat.”

A smidge of heat invaded her stomach. Dinner with Xavier Johnson sounded almost too intimate. “No. I’m fine. I’m going to grab my meal, and then call a car to take me home.”

“No way. I’d be happy to take you home after dinner.”

“I couldn’t ask you—”

“I insist. Besides, you saved me from the big, mean copier that was eating my documents. Consider my offer to be a debt repaid. If you don’t mind, of course.”

Of course she didn’t. Their interaction felt easy and fluid. She wanted to spend time with him and had privately acknowledged her attraction to him even before her divorce was final last year. To her shame, he’d infiltrated her fantasies on more than one occasion, performing all manner of carnal acts her husband would never engage in.

Allowing herself a smile, Diana shook off the hesitation. “All right, Mr. Johnson, I’ll allow you to repay your very huge debt by buying me dinner.”

This time, it was he who laughed.

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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. She speaks fluent conversational French and can get by in Spanish.

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