



### BLURB

“Live in the moment with me.”

That’s what he asked Dahlia to do, and she did, because after a near death experience, her motto was to live life to the fullest. She gave him everything. Her body. Her heart. Then it all came to an abrupt end. She didn’t anticipate he wouldn’t trust her. She didn’t anticipate she couldn’t trust him.

He wants his son.

Three years later, Prince Kofi returns and he’s not the same man. He’s bitter and angry and knows he has a son. He’ll do whatever it takes to bring his heir back to Zamibia, even if it means marrying the woman he believes betrayed him. Dahlia must now raise her son in a culture she doesn’t fully understand, but when a nightmare strikes the royal family, will it bring her and Kofi closer together, or tear them apart for good?

Princess of Zambia by Delaney Diamond

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## Chapter 1

Crown Prince Kofi Francois Karunzika, Conquering Lion of the tribe of Mbutu, heir to the throne of the West African nation of Zamibia, descended the royal plane onto the tarmac. He buttoned his coat, eyes narrowing against the cold weather as his four-man security detail marched with him to the waiting SUV.

He climbed into the back of the vehicle, while one member of his security climbed in the front and the others took a car that would follow. His assistant had arrived a day early and was sitting in the back seat.

“Where is she now?” he asked Kemal, a tall man with skin the color of licorice. A strip of blue-dyed hair ran down the middle of his head. Many of the Ndenga people—a tribe that lived on the coast of Zamibia—wore the decorative flourish as a sense of pride and a symbol of their affinity to the ocean.

“She’s still at work. She should be leaving soon to pick up the child and go home.” Kemal handed over the most recent photo of Dahlia leaving her apartment building that morning, holding a toddler’s hand. Noel Sommers, his son.

The air in the vehicle constricted. Kofi’s flesh and blood unfortunately carried his mother’s last name instead of his—a name that went back for centuries and for many years struck fear in the hearts of their enemies. A name that meant Noel had access to untold wealth and his veins contained royal blood.

He stared at the photo, trying to get a better view of the boy’s face, but he looked down as he walked. The image of Dahlia wasn’t much better, but Kofi didn’t need better. His vivid memory retained all aspects of her body: a round, striking face, full breasts, and a fantastic ass.

“How long before she gets home?”

“Over an hour. She rode the bus today. We should arrive at her address before she does.”

Kofi handed back the photo. “I’m going over there alone. Go to the hotel and I’ll meet you there later.”

“Are you sure you don’t want me to come with you?”

Kofi shot a grateful smile in Kemal’s direction. For five years he’d been a loyal companion, someone Kofi trusted implicitly and received honest feedback from. Kemal thought reaching out to Dahlia, an ex, and claiming his secret son was a mistake, but he’d come fully onboard once the trip was underway, and Kofi had made it clear this child would be the one to ascend the throne after him.

As soon as he learned about Noel's existence, protecting the future king of Zamibia became a top priority. He hired a team to keep an eye on the boy and his mother at all times, professionals who blended into the background, but would be quick to defend should danger arise.

"I can handle Dahlia myself. I need you to make sure the penthouse is set and ready for my son's arrival."

"I'll get to work." Kemal climbed out of the SUV.

Kofi issued the order to drive to Dahlia Sommers's address, and then he settled in for the ride.

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"I'm telling you, she wants to steal your child."

Dahlia pulled the collar of her coat higher around her neck as she stepped into the frigid weather. She'd clocked out and was going to the daycare on foot to pick up her son.

She chuckled into the phone at her best friend Angela's ridiculous comment. "Would you stop? She's being nice."

One of her co-workers at the substance abuse center gave her a cute outfit for Noel. Before leaving, she'd thanked her co-worker profusely and tucked the gift into the satchel across her chest.

"Mhmm. Keep an eye on that woman. Ever since you told me she said, 'He belongs to all of us,' I've been worried. Next thing you know, she'll show up at your apartment and snatch Noel right out of your arms. Because, you know, he's her kid, too."

"Have you never heard the expression 'it takes a village'? She meant that in the nicest way possible, and you know how Noel is. Kid never meets a stranger."

She was lucky to have a son with such an outgoing personality. Ever since he'd been born, she regularly shared photos and short videos of him with her co-workers. By the time she brought him in for the Christmas party a few months ago, the staff not only felt like they already knew him, they'd fallen in love with him. They showered him with affection and gifts, and her son ate up the attention like the little attention whore he was.

"Besides, you don't know me very well if you think I'd let her get two feet with my kid before I tackle her."

"Yeah, yeah, Superwoman. I would believe you, except I've known you since college and you wouldn't hurt a fly."

"My kid is different. I'd go to blows for him."

Angela cursed under her breath and lowered her voice. “My boss just walked into the office.”

“You’re still at work?”

“Yes, unfortunately. I’m finishing up a report for these slave drivers.”

Angela always complained about her job, but she loved the challenge of being a senior consultant. It didn’t hurt that she made a hefty six-figure salary and traveled all over the country and the world.

“In that case, I’m gonna to let you go. Talk to you later.”

“Good idea. Much as I hate these people, I need this job. Kiss Noel for me.”

“Don’t I always?”

Dahlia hung up and kept a brisk pace to the daycare, less than ten minutes away. She trudged along the roadway with her head bent low against the wind, cursing herself for not paying attention to the weather report.

The already cold March temperature dropped lower during the day, dousing Atlanta in unusually wintry conditions for this time of the year. Had she known, she would have driven her car instead of taking the bus. She’d lived in New York for years and didn’t mind using public transportation. In fact, she welcomed the option, which gave her a chance to listen to audiobooks and incorporate exercise into her daily routine by walking. But on a night like tonight, the cold whipped like fire against her skin and made her eyes water.

When she arrived at the daycare, one of the older attendants, Miss Martha, a plump woman with rosy cheeks and a ready smile for all the children, greeted her at the door.

Dahlia breathed easier in the warm entryway. “How was he today?”

“An angel, as always. I think he wore himself out, though. Don’t be surprised if he falls asleep before you get home. His eyes appeared a little droopy when I checked on him a few minutes ago.”

“I wouldn’t be so lucky.” They both laughed, and soon Dahlia was greeting her son, who scampered over with the biggest smile on his face.

He had her wrapped around his finger. It was the best feeling walking into the daycare and seeing his face—that sweet grin and animated brown eyes which never failed to bring a smile to her own face. Her heart swelled. God, how she hated to leave him every day.

“How’s my big boy!” Dahlia scooped him up in her arms and gave him a big, loud kiss.

He giggled happily and pulled back. “Mommy, can I have some candy?”

“No, no. No candy for you tonight, mister.” She’d never get him to settle down if she gave him sugar this late in the day.

Noel pouted, his brow wrinkling with displeasure. He resembled his father so much right then, her breath caught. Kofi’s face came to her at odd times, more and more as his little carbon copy aged into a closer likeness of him.

At twenty-seven months, not only did he mimic his father’s expressions, they shared similar features, including the same broad nose and the shape of their eyes. And she was as hopelessly in love with the little bundle in her arms as she’d once been with the man who fathered him.

Dahlia’s heart contracted painfully, and she shoved all thoughts of the tall African from her mind. She placed her son on the floor. “Let’s get you home and warm, okay?”

Crouching before him, she bundled Noel up in his coat, mittens, scarf, and hat to protect against the elements. They had a short walk to the bus stop and standing outside at the uncovered area could become uncomfortable in this weather. Hopefully the bus would be on time tonight and they wouldn’t have to wait long.

“Say bye-bye to Miss Martha.”

“Bye-bye.” Noel waved.

“Bye, Noel. See you tomorrow.” Miss Martha blew him a kiss and they were on their way.

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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.

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.

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