



Sweet

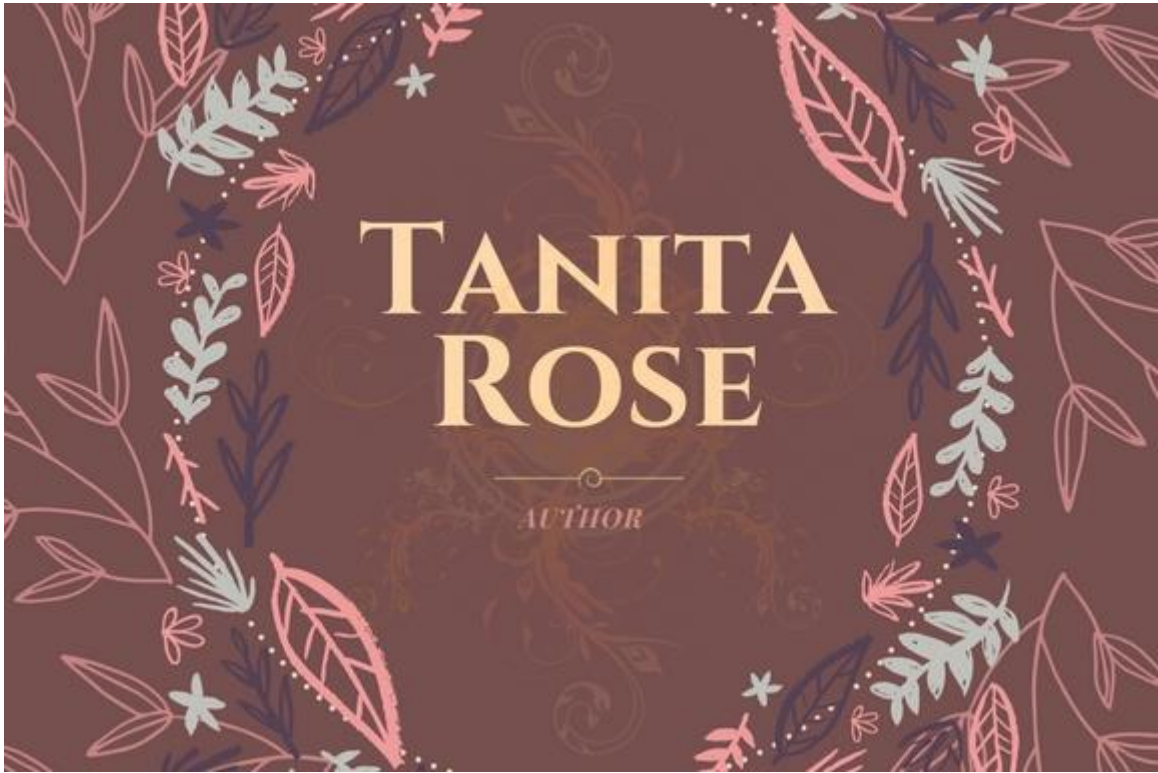
DESIRE



part 1

*She found power
In her surrender*

TANITA ROSE



TANITA
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—
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Sweet Desire

part 1

When You Dream

Within Your Embrace series

Book 1

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For my family.

For giving me the support that I needed.

And for all of you dreamers out there;

Fairytales do come true.

Believe, and yours will too.

Description

FORBIDDEN. DENIED. UNREQUITED.

Noah was everything she ever wanted, everything she ever dreamed about, and yet he was the one she could never allow herself to have. Her best friend's brother.

DESIRED. CHOSEN. CONTROLLED.

She was too sweet, too innocent, too fragile for someone like him. Someone whose tastes ran on the darker side. Someone broken and cynical, steeped in shadows of his past. Someone who exuded control in every aspect of his life, craved and needed it more than he needed to breathe. She could never handle all he would demand of her.

Or so he thought.

FOR HIM SHE WOULD SURRENDER.

Sophie fought so hard to establish control over her life, to diminish the damage her messed-up childhood left behind. The scars that no one could see, and yet they held so much power, contained so much pain. She struggled for years to defeat the shadows choking her from the inside out. To distance herself from the dysfunctional life she was forced to live. And she promised herself she would never give anyone else control over her life. She would never allow anyone else the chance to break her.

And then *he* came back into her life.

Will these two broken hearts find a path to happiness or will dark secrets of the past tear them apart forever? Will the shadows surrounding them be too much for them to overcome? Will those who wish them torn apart succeed? Or will they find a way to be together after all?

Prologue

Anchor

5 years ago, Sophie at 17 years old

Her head was pounding and everything hurt. She was trying so hard not to let the tears she was fighting all day finally fall. Her life was a nightmare and there was no escape. She prayed for sweet oblivion to consume her, become her salvation, but her restless mind wouldn't calm down not even for a minute.

She moved around on the bed, trying to find a comfortable position, but nothing she did worked. She groaned in frustration and hit the bed with her palms several times. She pulled the pillow from underneath her head and put it over her, thinking if she should just smother herself with it and be done once and for all.

She flung it across the room and kicked the light summer blanket off her, rolling around the bed before getting up and heading to the balcony door and the terrace. She descended the stairs in her bare feet and the silk champagne colored nightgown she wore to bed, and walked towards the pool. She sat down and put her feet in the water.

It was too quiet. It always was at her best friend, Andrea's place. Her home was a war zone and she was constantly on alert. Here, though, it was so serene, her mind couldn't handle the calmness and the quiet surrounding her.

Every time she slept over at Andrea's and was too restless to sleep, she came to this pool and sat down, looking at the stars, waiting for *him* to arrive.

He was home from college and she saw him a few times, spoke to him briefly about mundane, trivial things, and that was that. They didn't interact much. At least not during the day.

On nights like this, though. He was her salvation. Her anchor. And the one person she trusted with her messed up life.

He comforted her, consoled her, reassured her that everything was better after the storm and that she would weather this one as well. He was her solace in the darkest nights of her young life and he was the one who cheered her up and gave her hope when she herself did not believe anymore.

No one knew of the conversations they had here, by the pool, dipping their toes in the water, looking at the stars and just being. Not even Andrea knew and she was Sophie's best friend.

It started on a night similar to this one when she couldn't think, or sleep, when her head was swarming with agony.

Her life was never easy, but these last few years were a new kind of Hell for Sophie. Her parents fought all the time. There was screaming, name calling, throwing things... cheating. And yet they demanded perfection from her. Oh, everyone thought they were the perfect family, and they were, on the outside looking in, behind closed doors though, they were anything but.

He found her on a night like this, sitting by the pool, crying silent tears, she learned how to do that, to not make a sound. He sat next to her, put his feet in the water and just sat there, saying nothing.

Eventually she stopped crying and she looked at him. He reached over, wiping her tears and when there were none left he pulled her towards him and put his arm around her, holding her in his strong and warm embrace.

He just said, "Your mom and dad again?" She nodded and proceeded to tell him everything. He reassured her and comforted her, but mostly they just sat there, gazing at the stars. He told her funny stories that made her laugh, until several hours had past and she got sleepy.

She rested her head on his shoulders and when she was barely conscious she felt him gather her in his arms, lift her up, holding her tightly pressed to his chest and carry her up the stairs and into her room. The last thing she heard was, "Good night, sweet Sophie."

That was a few years ago and ever since, on the nights she was feeling overwhelmed and miserable, he was there to ease her burden.

She looked around and she saw him walking down the stairs. He smiled at her, but it was not that carefree grin she was used to. There were shadows around his eyes that weren't there before, a hardness that clung to his features, and a need to just be, reflecting in the blue pools of his eyes. Like the midnight sky and the bright stars surrounding them, their luminescence radiating above them and casting their shadows in the water's reflection in the pool.

"Hey." She whispered. He seemed troubled, but she said nothing about it. She knew him well enough to know he would talk when he was ready to, and not a second before.

"Hi." He responded. He sat down next to her, rolled his pants up to his knees and put his feet in the water, his hands clenching the edge of the pool tightly, as if to prevent himself from jumping in.

"Your parents again?" He asked knowingly. Whenever she sat at the pool staring into the sky as if the stars would give her the answers she was searching for, it was usually about her parents and the nightmare that was her house.

"Yes. You?" She asked quietly. Trying to sound non obtrusive.

"It's nothing, just some things with Natasha." He explained reluctantly. Not that it was any kind of explanation, whenever it came to her he was very vague.

"Oh." She didn't know what to say. Just the mention of her name brought a deep stabbing pain to her heart. Natasha was the girl he's been seeing for about a year now.

Sophie had never met her, he'd never brought her home, apparently it was a scheduling misfortune that kept them apart this summer. Her parents wanted to take a vacation together, or so Andrea had informed Sophie. She got the information from her mom, since Noah refused to talk about it. All she knew was they had some kind of disagreement.

It seems that was the reason he's been so broodily distracted lately. They either had a fight or he must miss her. Sophie wanted to be a good friend, God knows he listened to her talk for hours in the past, but she didn't want to hear about the perfect Natasha. Whenever anyone mentioned her, she just stayed quiet, waited them out and then quickly changed the subject, so nobody would notice her unease.

No one knew about her feelings for Noah, not even Andrea and she was her best friend. And that was precisely why she couldn't tell her. Noah was a bit of a player and girls were literally drooling over him.

Not that he minded, but Andrea did, and so did Sophie. They liked to talk and they often filled Andrea's mind about her brother, which she hated, and in turn despised each and every one of the airheads he dated. *Oh, I'm sorry, slept with.* He wasn't exactly keen on relationships.

Therefore she couldn't reveal her secret crush on Noah. Andrea would absolutely hate it, and she would never forgive her. Besides, it was a moot point, given that he got over his relationship-phobia and was with *her* now.

She didn't know what was wrong, but she wasn't going to ask either. She developed a hearing problem when it came to that particular subject. She simply couldn't bear the thought that she lost him, even though she knew he was never hers to begin with.

Still, a girl could dream, couldn't she?

"Hey, why so deep in thoughts?" He said and sprinkled her with water.

She jumped at the contact with cold water on her heated face, she didn't even hear him.

"Huh?" She barely registered what he said.

"I think we both need a little distraction, what do you say?" He asked with a mischievous grin she knew all too well and didn't trust for a second.

"What kind of dis..." She didn't even get to finish her sentence before she felt his big, strong hand on her back, the other around her waist, and she was flying in the air. She landed in the pool with a big splash, water going everywhere, her eyes, her nose, her mouth.

When she surfaced she was coughing like crazy, but before she could scream and release a dozen of those four letter words that would make her feel infinitely better, he jumped in as well and dunked her again.

He pulled her up with him and threw her in the air as if she weighed nothing. He laughed at her outraged yelp and swam towards her. He was laughing and seemed happy, those shadows she glimpsed earlier disappearing for the moment.

She shook her head at him in mock anger and then laughed alongside him. They swam and dunked each other for about an hour when Noah called a halt to their playtime. He helped her out of the pool and handed her a towel. When they dried themselves she looked at the clock that hung on the wall at the porch, above the fireplace. It said three in the morning.

Huh, they were here for three hours, when to her it seemed as if only an hour had passed. Time really did fly when you had fun and not a care in the world.

And now it was time to return to reality. The one good thing, she finally felt exhausted enough to get some sleep. Tomorrow was a new day, and she would have to deal with her parents again. She hated her life. Why couldn't they just get a divorce already? They were miserable and were making everyone else the same, especially Sophie.

For a few hours she got to forget, escape her reality and the shadows submerging her life, completely blanking out any light that might give her hope. He was her anchor when she was drowning, her lighthouse when she needed guidance, her protector when she needed one and her hope when she felt she had none left.

He escorted her up the stairs to her room, he bestowed a soft, gentle kiss on her left cheek and smiled tenderly at her blushing face.

"Good night, sweet Sophie." He said affectionately.

"Night." She said, with barely a whisper.

He turned and left. She lifted her hand and touched her cheek. Her skin felt incredibly sensitive where he kissed her, she felt like he branded her and trembled at the thought. She took off her wet nightgown and slid into bed, pulling the covers over her naked body.

She smiled, thinking - tomorrow was a new day, closed her eyes and drifted into unconsciousness.

Little did she know that in the span of a year, both their lives were going to change; irrevocably.

Chapter 1

An Impossible Dream

She had a dream, where her every fantasy became a reality. She knew it was a dream, because it was an impossible one, something she knew would never happen when she was awake.

And despite that, she couldn't help but touch herself, she slid her hand across the damp T-shirt she was wearing to sleep, slightly brushing on her nipples, shivering in response, she continued downward, sliding across her belly, her quivering pelvis where she reached her destination. She brushed on either side of her clit, not touching the sensitive little nub of ecstasy, but slowly teasing it, just the way he did it in her dream, the way she hoped and wished he would do it in reality.

She felt her sweet honey drip from her pussy and she dipped her finger slightly inside her tight channel to gather the silky dew and brush it across her clit. She massaged the pulsing little nub and shivered in response of the euphoria it gave her, all the while she was seeing his face above her, looking down with desire filling his eyes.

His short hair already slightly too long, falling on his forehead, God, she wanted to touch those silky dark strands, to bury her fingers through that thick mass, wound tightly around them and pull him towards her, hard, until those blue eyes of his sparkled with need, to taste, to demand, to control, and she would gladly give, anything he would ask. Not that he would, no, he would order, he would demand, he would take charge, and she would melt at the sight of dominance, his perfect masculinity.

For him, she would submit.

She knew herself too well, she didn't bow or kowtow to anyone, she barely listened to her parents when they wanted to order her around, to their immense annoyance and dissatisfaction. And any boyfriend she had in the past she bulldozed right over, she knew she didn't give them a chance and that she chose the ones who wouldn't push her too hard.

She liked her independence, thank you very much, and didn't need a boy to tell her what to do, as soon as they tried they were gone so fast it gave them whiplash. She was told she was too stubborn for her own good, hah, as if.

Well, maybe.

She knew the real reason why she fought so hard to surrender to any of them though, she already belonged to someone else. Heart, body, mind and soul. She gave them all to him a long time ago, when she was too young to know better, and when she did, well, then it was already too late. He consumed her every waking thought, and in her sleep, he tortured her innocent body with sensations she couldn't control.

She shivered at the renewed remembrance of her dream. The way he teased her, consumed her... loved her. His touch was searing hot lava scorching her body from the inside out, from where his fingertips touched the surface of her skin, gliding across, causing goose bumps along the way.

She gasped at the sight of his eyes, so focused, with a single intent, to conquer her body while wielding his as a weapon, she would say of mass destruction of her senses, but it was more like incredible pleasure she couldn't even imagine, even in her dreams, despite that this was one of course.

It was so vivid she would swear on her life it was real and had to convince herself it was not. She almost cried at that thought, at the injustice of it all. Why couldn't she have her happily ever after? And he was that, oh, and so much more. He was her prince, he was her bad boy every girl dreamed of reforming, he was her master with the way he made her surrender, he was simply... *everything*. Everything she dreamed of in the privacy of her mind, her secret desire, her deepest, brightest and darkest wish, a hope she never dared mention or even acknowledge out loud and yet deep down she willed it to come true.

Sometimes she didn't understand this obsession, this need clawing its way to the surface, scarring her insides, destroying any chance of finding happiness with someone else.

Just the thought of his touch brushing her sensitive skin made her shiver, his lips caressing her neck, little sloppy wet kisses behind her ear contracting every nerve in her body, making it burst with desire. She moaned when he slid the top of her shirt down to reach her breast, he pushed the wide collar just beneath the swell of her left breast, revealing it for his use. First he examined it, weighed it in his hand, then he lifted it upward towards his mouth where he proceeded to devour it.

He licked her nipple slowly, but oh so thoroughly, around the erect little bud and then right on top, sucking it into his mouth, applying pressure until it almost hurt before it transformed into liquid pleasure. Her hands sought an anchor, his powerful biceps, but she couldn't reach them, so she burrowed her fingers beneath her, grabbing the sheet with a strength she didn't know she possessed.

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