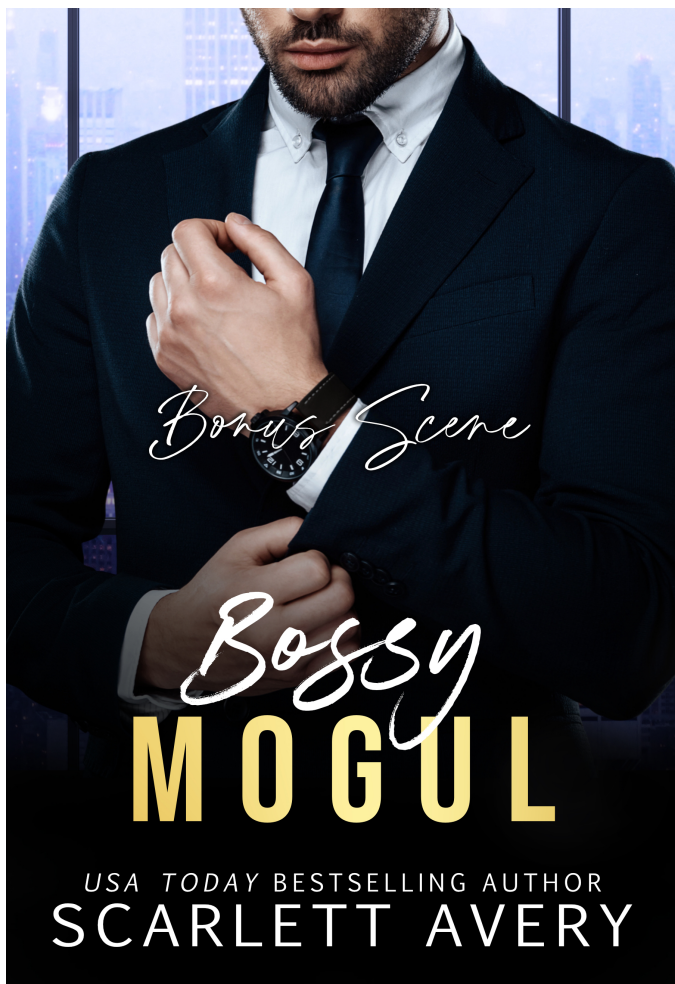




Bonus Scene

Bossy

MOGUL

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Scarlett Avery

Arianne and Beckett dancing salsa

Arianne's POV

It's unlike me to let the light shine on my vulnerabilities, but the thought of being alone tonight after finding out my ex proposed to my good-for-nothing cousin was too crushing.

My pride took a beating.

Initially, agreeing to dinner with Beckett was because I felt like a total bitch for biting his head off. It was also a great excuse not to hide inside my sublet and wallow in self-pity. I was expecting some friendly sparring, a little conversation, laughter, and possibly getting to know my boss-slash-client better. I did not expect to be invited to Cesar Navarro and Diana Estevez's engagement party, and I sure as hell didn't expect to attend a concert featuring one of Cuba's hottest salsa bands.

After spending time in a private lounge with Cesar and Diana, I'm still in awe I'm actually here.

Someone please pinch me.

Beckett says tonight we're friends.

I brushed off his words as just talk and promised myself to keep my head on my shoulders, but here I am walking hand in hand with my *friend* and I have no intention of removing my hand from his.

We come to stand in front of the elevated stage.

“What a night?” I say to Beckett over the music. “Thank you so much for bringing me. Phoebe is going to be so jealous.”

If it weren’t for the selfies, my best friend would never believe me.

“One, we’re friends,” he says.

I grin wide. I kind of love the reference now.

“Two, I promised you a night of fun. Three, I hinted at us closing a dance floor. It doesn’t get better than Club Impacto.”

“No, it doesn’t,” I say. “Do you know how to dance salsa?”

The man is gorgeous, he has the most insane ocean-blue eyes I’ve ever seen, a bright smile that could light up the darkest sky, he sings, plays guitar like a god, and sits at the helm of a multibillion-dollar company. Surely, he must have shortcomings.

“While we were in rehab, Cesar challenged me,” he says. “Like you, I had two left feet. With rock music, there’s more jumping around than dancing. The thing is, I can’t shy away from a challenge and I play to win.” He does a little dance move to prove his point. To my amazement, he nails it.

“I’m suitably impressed.”

“*Suitably?*” He cocks an eyebrow. “What would it take to make it straight up, impressed?”

“Once the band starts, your ranking *might* improve.”

“Ouch. Tough jury,” he says with a cringe.

I laugh.

“This night is so unlike me,” I say, looking around.

“Is that a good thing?”

“You’re rubbing off on me.”

The words fly out of my mouth. My eyes widen in horror. *That could’ve been misconstrued.*

The glee shining bright from Beckett’s eyes confirms my fear. “You dirty girl.”

My cheeks ignite. “I said, you’re *rubbing off on me*. Not you’re rubbing me off.” *Oh, shit.* My hands fly to my mouth, shocked beyond belief by what just came out of it. *Did I just make an obscene invitation to my boss-slash-client to feel me up? Way to go, Arianne.*

“That can easily be arranged.”

Holy smokes.

The way he’s staring intently at me has my lady parts fluttering. Phoebe’s ears must be burning and she must be grinning. As much as I hate the word, how else do I explain the palpitation between my legs. After such a long dry spell, maybe it wasn’t a Freudian slip. It’s an unconscious cry for help. With the way I’m blushing, I should look away, but instead, I hold Beckett’s gaze.

I’m oblivious to everything around us because this man’s mesmerizing eyes are like a magnet.

I really, really want you to rub me off.

In a moment like this, I wish I were as bold as Phoebe.

It's on the tip of my tongue, but I can't muster up the courage to put it out there, so I don't. I keep it locked inside.

What if all this is in my head and I completely misread the signals? I'd rather extend my dry spell to infinity than get rejected. Reading about Chance's engagement was humiliating enough, I don't need more humiliation.

"Can I get your attention, please," Cesar says into a mic, walking up onstage.

Saved by the bell.

"The show is starting," I say before tearing my gaze away from Beckett's.

At least I still have something to look forward to.

Cesar invites *Cienfuegos* to the stage.

God, I love this band.

A short black guy sporting a dyed platinum blond afro introduces the group. In heavy accented English, he lets us know the first song *Cienfuegos* will perform is a salsa rendition of an old chart-topper.

Everyone goes mental, clapping and cheering.

It's a special request—no doubt a tribute from Cesar to Diana. Those two are so into each other, it's ridiculous. Love is a beautiful thing when you find it—not that I'd know first-hand.

Beckett doesn't seem as enthusiastic as the rest of us.

I wonder why.

For me, it doesn't get better than this.

I get to hang out with two Latin artists I love, and
I have a front row seat to an exclusive concert.

Who needs to get fondled by a hot guy?

Not me.

Nope.

Not at all.

I'm good.

I really am.

I'm totally over my temporary moment of
insanity.

Entertaining the idea of crossing the line with
Beckett is lunacy. Good thing I suppressed my desire and
kept quiet.

After roaring applause, *Cienfuegos* kick things
off with a bang. The second the song blares through the
speakers, everyone recognizes it and loses it.

Amigos con derecho.

The hottest band from Cuba is playing one of my
all-time favorite songs.

Yes.

Beckett is sporting a perplexed expression.

Maybe his salsa dancing repertoire is limited to a
few suave moves.

I don't speak much Spanish, but you don't need
to. Music is about the feeling. Maybe my gorgeous boss-
slash-client isn't the god-like hunk I painted him out to
be.

It's good to know he's just a regular human.

Beckett searches the crowd.

I follow his gaze.

He and Cesar are engaged in a silent conversation.

Oh, well.

I let the sexy salsa beat sweep me away and lose myself to music.

Beckett shifts his gaze to me.

He stares at me like he's just seeing me for the first time.

His bewildered expression fuels me.

I dance, just for him.

It's unprecedented, but it's such a high to have his undivided attention.

It's not for the lack of gorgeous women dancing around me—many exhibiting some pretty daring dance moves and extremely revealing outfits.

Beckett doesn't seem to notice them.

He only has eyes for me.

I've never been in this position before, but instead of wallowing like a shy flower, I bloom like a rare purple sunflower.

My body sways to each note of the song like I'm in a trance.

Beckett starts dancing, matching my cadence, my body overheats from his closeness. When he reaches for my hands, there goes the palpitations again.

Dear God.

With our gazes locked and our fingers interlaced, we let the music dictate.

After an hour of feverish dancing, I'm completely consumed by this man. My mind is begging me to snap out of it, but my body is waging a war.

Beckett unlaces our fingers and brushes a few strands of hair that fell against my cheek behind my ears. His touch is electrifying.

My eyes move up to his.

He glides his fingers against my cheek and down to my mouth, tracing my lower lip with his thumb, smearing my lipstick.

God.

I place a hand on his arm and hold on tight. If I don't, my legs won't sustain my weight. I close my eyes—because if I keep staring into his, I'll lose myself.

My body tingles with need.

A part of me is screaming for me to put an end to this insanity, but another part is relishing this moment so much, I drown the sensible voice.

All good judgment has officially gone out the door.

I should be worried, but I'm not.

When the song ends, I open my eyes.

He's still staring at me.

There's a shuffle onstage, announcing the next song.

Since I'm so enthralled by Beckett Christensen, I don't pay much attention to the announcement. The melodic salsa beat is one I know well.

"Probablemente," I say. "I love this song."

He smiles.

I let go of Beckett's hands and give myself heart and soul to the seductive beat. The female singer's smokey timbre adds to the sensuality of the rhythm.

I leave it all on the dance floor.

I'm in a trance and in no rush to break.

Pearls of sweat dot my forehead, and my heart beats faster as I kick this bewitching dance to the next level. Channeling the bad girl in me, I lift my skirt up, intent on provoking the man that is so out of my reach. I flirt with the limits of decency when I slap each cheek as my hips sway left to right.

The bridge hits.

I don't hold back, all the while mouthing the lyrics I've memorized from listening to the song a million times.

When Beckett pulls me to him, I don't resist. He slides a hand around my waist. He's pressed so close to me, there's no mistaking his hard-on.

Dear God.

I can't believe I'm capable of eliciting this kind of reaction from a man like Beckett.

His eyes bore into mine.

Seconds tick by as whatever is playing between us engulfs me. Neither of us breaks the magnetic force fusing us together.

I want to believe what I read in his eyes, so I keep dancing, swaying my hips in a slow sensuous cadence.

Beckett leans forward until his mouth is close to mine.

Please kiss me.

“We can keep dancing, or we can go back to your place and become more acquainted as *friends*,” he says.

He pulls away and studies me.

My heart is beating at an infernal rate, preventing me from forming words, making it impossible to think straight.

“Personally, I vote for the latter,” he says.

Tell him you want him.

“*Friends* who work together could be a dicey, slippery slope.”

Fuck.

That’s not what I wanted to say.

I curse my old insecurities.

“This is uncharted territory for me, Arianne,” he says. At least he’s honest. “You’re exempt from the fraternization clause, so we aren’t breaking any rules.”

It’s crossed my mind.

“As for us working together, we’re adults. I’m sure we can handle it.”

“You didn’t want to be *friends* with any of the other consultants in the past?”

This guy is a notorious playboy. I need to know where I stand.

“The men are automatically eliminated.”

I laugh.

You sometimes wonder when a man is too pretty for his own good if he bats for your team or not. It's never crossed my mind when it comes to Beckett. It's true his reputation precedes him.

"As for the other women, no. None of them looked as incredibly fucking hot as you."

I'm a bit shocked by his revelation, but bask in his words anyway.

"I hope you'll be my first *friend*."

"Something tells me you haven't said that to too many women."

"You're right. See how special you are?"

I don't respond. Instead, I search his eyes.

He pulls me to him. Considering how close we already are, I don't even know how that's possible.

I gasp at his hard-on against my stomach.

In an attempt to sweeten the pot, Beckett grinds against me.

Holy. Shit.

Any doubt I had evaporates.

"Jesus," I say.

"Is that a yes?"

"Yes."

I want this man with every palpitating fiber of my being.

* * *

**Thank you so much for reading Beckett and
Arianne's story.**



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Thanks for being one of my sexy readers.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scarlett Avery". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Scarlett" and "Avery" being capitalized and prominent.

www.ScarlettAvery.com **Bonus Scene: Bossy Mogul.**

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