

A Sip of La Dolce Vita

Book 1 of the "A Taste Of" series

A Sip of La Dolce Vita

P. Flower

Author: Puck Bloem
Cover Design: Puck Bloem
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For my parents, thank you for always supporting
me no matter what.

Playlist

"Dream a Little Dream of Me"-The Mamas And The Papas

"Iris"-The Goo Goo Dolls

"Dear Arkansas Daughter"-Lady Lamb

"Older"-Isabel LaRosa

"Timezone"-Måneskin

"Champagne Coast"-Blood Orange

"Wicked Game"-Chris Isaak

"I Wanna Be Yours"-Arctic Monkeys

"Reflections"-The Neighbourhood

"Video Games"-Lana Del Rey

"Kiss me"-Sixpence None The Richer

"Little Talks"-Of Monsters And Men

"L'altra Dimensione"-Måneskin

"Everlong"-Foo Fighters

"Ocean Eyes"-Billie Eilish

"Home"-Edward Sharpe + The Magnetic Zeros

"Sarà Perché Ti Amo"-Ricchi E Poveri

Prologue

Camila

I've never been in love before, but come on, I'm only 22, my life has just started! I've had some boyfriends through high school and college-I went to Yale, I still don't know how I did it-but I didn't *love* them. They didn't say "I love you" either, so I don't feel bad for not loving them. I'm kind of desperate for a boyfriend at the moment, to be honest. I mean, all my friends have boyfriends and they go on group dates together all the time. And I can't really come with them because I'm, well, single. It's not like they don't invite me, they actually do it every time. But I decline, because I don't want to be a burden. Luckily I don't have the worst FOMO. And I'm not *that* desperate, it's not like I'm on any dating apps or saying yes to any guy that asks me out, not that that happens so often. And besides, I don't think I'm going to find my dream guy here, in America. I mean have you *seen* the guys here? They're nothing compared to the guys I'm used to in Italy. Let me explain, I'm Italian and I lived there until I was 17. That's when I went to Yale and studied rights and law. Let's just say I had "The American Dream." Now I work as the assistant for the millionaire owner of one of the biggest law-firms in the country. The guy I work for, called Luke Moore, also happens to be my youngest older brother's best friend. I have four older brothers,

and the youngest one, Vito, is a lawyer, and works for Luke's company. He is dating this great girl called Donna, who is a friend of mine. And he actually got me the job some time ago. I had just graduated and needed my first job and Luke needed a new assistant, so that's why Vito suggested that I could work for him. And the one and *only* thing Luke and I agreed on in the two years we've known each other was: I was not suitable for the job. I remember Luke listing the reasons why I wasn't suitable for the job, right there on the couch of my brother's apartment. 'One, she has just graduated, two, that means she has zero experience and three, she's your little sister.' Ouch. He really thought that low of me. But my brother, being the great lawyer he is, went immediately against him. He never went against him at work, but outside of work when they are just hanging out as friends, he wasn't scared of any debate. 'One, she graduated from *Yale*, which is the highest ranked law-school in the country, two, you can be the one to give her that first experience and three, I'm your best friend and work for you, so her being my little sister shouldn't matter either.'

Boom.

Luke: 0 Vito: 1

Now I've been Luke's assistant for nine months. Yes Luke is a little scary, 6 foot 3 and intimidating and yes he is a grumpy, impatient, bossy millionaire-the millionaire part is actually a plus point-but the pay is good and that's what counts.

Me and Vito visit our family in Italy pretty often. The summer has just started and that means we're gonna be

there again for a couple of weeks. Luke has been to our family's place in Italy a couple of times too, but those were all times I didn't come with them. And I couldn't be more happy about that. I already need to see Luke five days a week at work-sometimes even six times when we're hanging out with the whole friend group where he surprisingly is in-and I don't need to *also* see him *every* day for a couple of weeks straight at my safe place. But this summer, he is coming with us. I couldn't be less excited about it. I don't hate or dislike him or anything, it's just that he's such a grump. And you can absolutely not be a grump in Italy! I mean, where I grew up is an amazing place! A small wine region at the east coast of Italy. We lived in a big old white house with a beautiful big garden and a huge vineyard-that my parents have owned for years now-across the house. A farmers market every tuesday and a twenty-minute walk away from the house is the beautiful sea to swim in. You just can't be a grump there and fuck up the happy and great mood. The *only* thing I'm excited about is that we're flying there in Luke's private jet. I have to admit, that's pretty cool. But I'll show Luke that he doesn't always have to be such a cold grump. I'll show him *a sip of la dolce vita*.

Chapter 1

Camila

Great.

Here I was on a Friday night at some fancy restaurant, sitting across from my boss and my brother's best friend. Vito and Donna were late, *again*. They were usually a little later, like five to ten minutes, but never *this* late. We had been waiting for them for twenty minutes now. Me and Luke just kept ordering water because we wanted to wait for the wine until my brother and his girlfriend arrived. There was an awkward silence between the two of us. One of those silences where you could say the weirdest thing to break it and the silence itself *still* was more awkward. 'So, did you let Miles take the case?' I asked him. Miles Williams was his best lawyer-after Vito obviously-and got asked for a very important case with some good money behind it. Some mafia group from Italy was involved with it. I had heard that the group had murdered multiple people and sold loads of drugs and that the leader had been arrested, but had said that someone else had been the boss of the group. And that someone else needed Miles as his lawyer. 'Yes.' Luke answered simply. 'The guy is definitely innocent and is willing to pay a lot of money for Miles to prove it and keep him out of jail.' My phone rang. I reached into my purse and grabbed it, it was one of my four brothers calling. 'It's Vito, I have to take this,

excuse me for a moment.' I said whilst getting up from my chair and walking towards the restroom. 'Dove cazzo sei?!' I whispered angrily. *Where the fuck are you?!* 'Ti stiamo aspettando da venti minuti ormai!' *We have been waiting for you for twenty minutes now!* 'Calmati sorella, saremo lì tra dieci.' Vito answered from the other side of the phone. *Calm down sis, we'll be there in ten.* 'Perché sei così in ritardo?' I asked. *Why are you even so late?* 'Donna non riusciva a trovare la sua seconda scarpa.' *Donna couldn't find her second shoe.* 'Ovviamente.' I mumbled. *Of course.* 'I'm so sorry Cami, I'll drive as fast as I can!' I heard Donna yell apologetically. 'No, don't worry, just drive safe, I'll see you in a bit.' I hung up the phone and sighed. Then I walked back to our table and sat back down across from Luke. 'They'll be here in ten minutes.' I said to him, he hummed in response. There was the awkward silence again, hooray. But before I could break the silence again a little girl walked up to our table. 'Your girlfriend is really pretty.' She said softly to Luke. 'Ahh, that's so sweet of you, thank-' I was cut off by Luke. 'She's not my girlfriend.' He said coldly to the girl. 'Oh,' the little girl said 'you're still really pretty.' I smiled at the girl and thanked her. When she walked away my smile immediately disappeared and I looked at Luke with an annoyed expression on my face. 'Why couldn't you just go along with it?' I sighed. 'Because we're not dating.' He answered. 'Still, you could've just said nothing, or "yeah she really is"!' 'But you're not my type.' 'Who cares if I'm not your type, the girl wouldn't even have noticed that!' I snapped. 'Why are you making such a big problem out of

it?' He asked calmly. I hated how calm he could stay in some situations. I couldn't. To be honest, I kinda had a temper. When I was angry or annoyed, or just hangry, and my temper came out, my Italian accent showed even more than usual. It made me sound like some angry Latina or something like that, and some people didn't take me seriously because of it. 'Because the sweet little girl got all the courage to walk up to us and say that I'm really pretty and you immediately cut her off before I could even say thank you and *then* tell her *nicely* that we're not dating!' All he did was sigh, cross his arms and lean back a little in his chair. 'You done scolding me?' I rolled my eyes at him. 'Yes.' I sighed in annoyance. I looked around the restaurant and *finally* Vito and Donna arrived after waiting for them for thirty minutes. The waiter walked them over to our table and they sat down. 'Hey!' Donna said a little awkwardly. 'Sorry that we're so late, it's my fault.' I gave Donna a small smile and told her that it was okay. We all grabbed a menu and started looking through the food options. 'You guys pick out the wine, you have the best knowledge about it after all.' Luke said, talking about my parents' vineyard and winery. Me and Vito started looking through wine options. 'Not many good options.' I mumbled. We grew up with wine, we could always have a sip or two from our parents' glasses at dinner. We learned a lot about it growing up, that was just how it was at our house. When I told the people from America they were always stunned and thought I was some fucked up alcoholic. Luke chuckled slightly at my comment. I looked up from the menu at him. 'You're always so picky when it comes to

wine.’ ‘So?’ I answered. ‘I’m not gonna drink some 5 dollar boxed wine from the grocery store.’ ‘Besides, you’re really picky when it comes to whisky.’ Vito backed me up. Luke got quiet. ‘What do you guys think of a Château La Mission Haut Brion?’ I suggested casually. ‘Camila, that’s a 300 dollar wine!’ Donna said immediately. ‘Then I’ll pay for it.’ ‘We’re not letting you pay for a 300 dollar wine, Camila.’ She continued in a serious tone. ‘Don’t worry about it, I’ll pay, you guys get whatever you want.’ Luke said, not even looking up from his menu. ‘We’re not letting you pay again dude, you already paid for Gretchen’s huge birthday dinner two weeks ago.’ Vito said. ‘I said, don’t worry about it, I’m a millionaire after all.’ ‘Like we’d ever forget.’ I said. ‘Just get the wine you want, Camila.’ He said. A couple of minutes later the waiter came back and we ordered our food and wine. ‘So, tomorrow at the airport at 5 am?’ Donna asked. ‘That’s correct.’ Luke answered. There was the awkward silence, *again*. ‘So, are you guys excited to see your family?’ Donna asked. ‘Yeah, at least I am, especially Sofia.’ I answered. Sofia was the 5 month old daughter of my oldest brother Marco and his wife Zara. ‘Yeah, me too.’ My brother agreed.

After waiting for another fifteen minutes the waiter arrived with our food and poured us each a glass of wine. I slowly took a sip and savored the flavor. Apparently Vito did the exact same thing in sync with me because Donna chuckled and Luke told us that it was so easy to see that we were related to each other if you looked past our physical resemblance. Me and my brothers all had our dads thick curls and our moms hazel eyes and dark

brown colored hair. I was always told that I was my moms younger version on the outside and my dads female version on the inside. And if it was really true that I looked exactly like my mom when she was younger, I would age beautifully, just like her. My mom was now 53, but still looked like someone in between the ages of 40 to 45 who looked good for their age.

At the end of the night after Luke had paid 545 dollars and 32 cents for our dinner, we were walking back to our cars in the parking lot. 'Wait, I haven't seen your new car yet.' Vito said to Luke. 'Follow me.' Luke said. Luke had bought a third car last week. Yes, a *third* one. A BMW IX3 in the color black. I had helped him with buying it by sorting out all of the payments and insurance papers. I had to admit, it was a nice car, but not as nice as his other two. He also had a Porshe Taycan in some sort of grayish color and a Rolls Royce Phantom that was also black. I preferred the Porsche. 'Jeez dude, how much did you pay for this?' My brother was stunned whilst checking out the car. 'Not that much, just 75 thousand dollars, the Porsche cost more.' '75 thousand dollars?!' 'Yeah, and if you ever want to show off, you can borrow it, but if you crash, I *will* sue you, I don't care if you're dead or not.' Me and Donna chuckled. Luke looked our way and gave us a serious look. 'I'm not joking.' 'Oh, we know.' I said, trying to keep in my laugh.

Chapter 2

Luke

I had a small obsession: Camila Gabriela Noemie d'Alessandro. Not an obsession as in stalker dark romance books, don't get me wrong. I just liked her so fucking much that I hated myself for it most of the time. I barely even understood how I got to that point, I mean, she was my best friend's little sister. Camila was just so sunshiny, nice, sweet, caring, loving, kind, loyal, grateful and stubborn. It surprised me that I didn't find her annoying. How the hell did I fall for *her*? Normally I wouldn't fall for people so easily, I was just a casual one night stand guy, but Camila, fucking hell, she had me wrapped around her finger and she didn't even know it. When I said that she wasn't suitable for the job as my assistant I didn't mean *she* wasn't suitable, *I* wasn't. I was afraid I wasn't going to be able to concentrate with her around. My favorite part about her was that she was seven years younger than me. I was 29 and she was 22. Camila was also a lot shorter than me, she was 5'5 and I was 6'3. But of course I needed to fall for my best friend's little sister. And it was so wrong that I wanted her so bad that I actually enjoyed it sometimes. She had expensive taste, I knew it all too well. Designer clothes, shoes, bags. "Expensive" cars, wine, vacations, food. I