ON THE DOTTED LINE

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Chapter 1

TWO SUGARS

For the tenth time on that singular Monday morning, twenty-three-year-old Valeria Valle wished she could quit her job at The Kitty Café. The Kitty Café did not, as the name suggested, host an array of adorable cats nor was it a place for cat owners and cat lovers alike to share their love of cats over steaming cups of chai tea.

All animals besides services animals were banned from The Kitty Café, upsetting many L.A. residents and tourists. The only kitten-like thing happening at the café was the stupid faux velvet cat ears headband Valeria was forced to wear as part of her everyday uniform. They were cheaply made, reminding her of the kind of cheap souvenir one wore to a child's birthday party, which made the already petite Valeria look like an overgrown toddler.

A part of her wanted to ditch the terrible ears behind the cat-shaped potted plant, but if her manager Marcy saw she wasn't wearing them, then she would surely have a coronary, and after she recovered, she would fire Valeria on the spot.

Valeria really needed this job, which was why she kept plastering a stupid smile on her face day in and day out when all she wanted to do was quit.

However, Valeria couldn't quit. She had rent that needed to be paid, student loans for a rather useless Communications degree, and, well, she lived in L.A., which practically charged a person for breathing oxygen. Her parents and sister had begged her to move back home while she got on her feet and got a decent job, but Valeria would rather work at The Kitty Café until she was ninety than admit defeat and head back to boring Oregon.

Surely, she could get a decent job even if her major had been in communications, right? The nearly eighty rejected emails told her otherwise. She'd briefly thought back to her old classmates who had gone back to school for some sort of graduate degree, but she could barely afford her student loan payments *now*. There was no way she could afford to go back to school, nor was she interested in it anyway.

Valeria's fake smile wobbled on her heart-shaped face. She had been smiling like this for the past fifteen minutes waiting for the customer in front of her to finally make a decision.

The older woman was the bane of Valeria's existence. She came to The Kitty Café every morning and she never seemed to know what to order. She thought she was personally torturing her. The woman, whom she knew as Flora, smacked her coral lips together. "How much for a caramel macchiato, sugar?"

"\$4.95."

"I only have change and I will need my receipt," Flora demanded sternly before looking up at the menu again. "Which do you recommend, a caramel macchiato or a vanilla latte?"

"Both are quite good." Valeria's shoulders slumped in exhaustion. She felt her thick bra straps dig into her golden tan skin. She made a mental note that if she ever got a decent job, her first paycheck would go towards a breast reduction surgery. Her roommate Kaylee thought the whole idea was absurd, but then again, she didn't have to carry around a pair of D-cup breasts on an already small frame which resulted in terrible back pain and awful posture.

"I don't know, my doctor told me to stay away from sugar."

"We also have teas. They're organic."

"Aren't all teas organic?"

Valeria didn't respond and instead pretended not to hear. Twenty torturous minutes later, Flora finally decided to purchase a small chai latte with a crisp fifty-dollar bill which resulted in Valeria having to send her co-worker, Ellie, to the donut shop next door for some change.

After Flora had received her change, she left the café, promising she would return tomorrow. Ellie then excused herself to take her ten-minute break, leaving Valeria alone for at least a few glorious minutes of silence. Though, given her luck, she wouldn't be surprised if a group of middle schoolers barged in at that moment to demand hot chocolates.

Her brown eyes glanced at the clock, only four hours, twenty-six minutes, and forty-two seconds to go, forty-one, forty—

"What is so urgent you can't, or won't, stop staring at the clock? It must be something good. I don't think I've seen you blink since I've been standing here."

Valeria jumped slightly when she heard the unknown voice causing the man's chest in front of her to practically rumble with laugher. How could she not have noticed he'd

been standing there all this time? Usually, she never missed anything, but her interactions with Flora always seemed to exhaust her.

Her skin felt hot and prickly, and she felt the redness rise from her neck to her cheeks. In her embarrassment, she knocked down a tip jar, causing the surprisingly large amount of change to fly onto the floor. Valeria started stuttering an apology as she left the cash register and nearly dived onto the floor. Why was she so stupid today? "I'm sorry, I promise I'm not usually this clumsy."

"It's all right. I assure you I have picked up loose change before. Though I must admit I don't often use it."

Valeria's forehead prickled with sweat. Was he calling her broke? Well, she *was* broke, but it did not mean she appreciated being told that by a complete stranger.

The man continued, "It's just so much easier paying by card, don't you agree?"

"Uh..." Valeria trailed off as she gripped the tip jar in her sweaty hands. She couldn't tell a complete stranger she was pretty sure she had maxed out the three credit cards she had and was relying on said tip jar to buy herself a box of instant soups to last her the whole week.

"I'm sorry, I should give you time to think. I tend to take over the conversation out of habit, miss?" The stranger took her sweaty palm and helped her up from the questionable looking floor.

"Valeria." She dorkily pointed to her name tag on her ample chest. "Valeria Valle."

After rescuing the tip jar, Valeria finally caught a closer look at the man who had caught her by surprise. She had been expecting an older man, the kind who always tried to flirt with her or tease her even though she could have easily been his daughter. This man, though not in her age range, was definitely not approaching retirement anytime soon.

His skin was a golden tan which was sun-kissed courtesy of the L.A. sun. His eyes were almond-shaped and dark brown, the color of chocolate. His nose was slightly large, but it seemed to suit his facial features perfectly. His full lips parted, showing a row of perfect teeth, no doubt the expensive work of Los Angeles' finest dentists.

He was wearing a dark navy-blue suit with a black tie which was tailored to perfection. His silver Rolex watch glistened in the bright sunlight peering over The Kitty Café. Valeria immediately started wondering what he did for work to have him dressed like that at the ungodly hour of seven am. Perhaps he was a businessman, a doctor, a lawyer, a professor, or simply an actor who really wanted to land his first big Hollywood lead.

"Valeria." He spelled out each syllable of her name perfectly and she felt her skin becoming prickly again. She felt as if the teacher had called her up to present in front of the class. "Lovely name. I'm Enrique Allende." He offered his hand, and she gripped it with her sweaty palm, feeling how hard and masculine it was.

The name sounded as elegant as his suit. Valeria calculated he was probably in his early to mid-thirties, which wasn't bad at all. Many people had a ten-year difference. Look at her, she was already planning the wedding. It had been so long since she had felt attraction to any man, she'd been worried she'd forgotten how it felt. Now that she'd graduated from college, her dating pool had become increasingly smaller. It also didn't help she was hopelessly shy and—

"Coffee?" Enrique was raising a thick, dark eyebrow in an almost flirty way.

Valeria could feel her cheeks grow red. Was he asking her out on a date? "Oh, wow, I'm so terribly flattered—"

"Flattered?" Enrique looked confused. "Don't you sell coffee?"

The comment brought her back to reality as she saw where Enrique was truly looking. The coffee menu behind her. Of course. Why would he ask someone out whom he had known for less than five minutes, no matter how polite he was?

"Of course, we sell coffee." She plastered a smile on her face, trying to hide her embarrassment. "I'm sorry I'm a little bit out of it today. What kind of coffee would you like?"

"Just a plain coffee." The flirtatious atmosphere had left him. He was once again all business as he pulled out his credit card. "No milk or creamer. Just two sugars."

Valeria nodded as he inserted the card then she handed him back his receipt. She was suddenly grateful she had an excuse to go to the back to hide her flaming cheeks. Valeria poured the coffee into the café's signature lavender to-go cup.

Stupid, stupid, of course, he wasn't going to ask you out on a date. She looked over her shoulder as she added the two packets of sugars inside the dark liquid. Enrique was looking at his phone. He's the type to sleep with his secretary, the competition, and whoever else looks good in a tight skirt.

Valeria knew she was being prejudiced. After all, she had only known the man for less than ten minutes, but when one was humiliated, they tended to fight back no matter how petty and pathetic it was. "Order up," she croaked as she placed the cup down.

Enrique grabbed the cup just as his phone rang, an annoyed expression appearing on his face as he pressed the phone against his ear. "Robert, this better not be a conversation concerning what we talked last night. I told you, I am through talking about it." Enrique stared at Valeria's still embarrassed expression and winked.

Valeria's cheeks turned even redder, even though it was a tough task given her honey-tan complexion. She sighed in

relief when he left, but the redness in her cheeks did not disappear even by the time Ellie came back.

Ellie was chewing a piece of gum loudly. "Vale, why is your face all red?"

"Oh, you know, Flora. I don't know how much longer I can take her shit. It seems she gets a rise from torturing us."

"Frigid bitch." Ellie snapped her gum. "Sometimes I wish we could punch customers, so they know not to be such assholes."

Once her shift was over, Valeria headed back to her tiny apartment just a ten-minute walk from The Kitty Café. As soon as she got in, her roommate Kaylee was putting on the orange vest she wore for her shifts at Pedro's Mexican restaurant.

Kaylee and Valeria had been roommates for a year, ever since Valeria finished college and Kaylee decided she no longer wanted to live with four other roommates.

"I'm late," Kaylee complained as she bit her lip, smearing pink lip gloss over her chin. "I paid the rent. I wrote down the amount of your half and left it on the table. If you can pay me back by Tuesday, that would be great. I do not need my bank to call me about overdraft fees again."

Valeria nodded as Kaylee closed the door behind herself. She winced when she looked at the paper her roommate had given her. For their cramped and smelly two-bedroom apartment, Kaylee and Valeria paid \$3000 monthly. Meaning Valeria's share was \$1,500 and that didn't include her cell phone bill, her share of the internet bill, her student loan payments, or her credit card bills.

Maybe her parents were right, and she should move back home. But what would she do in Oregon? Work in the family's bakery with her parents and sister, Maribel? To the romantic Valeria, that was a fate worse than death. She

would rather be starving in L.A. than move back home even though she missed her family.

Just thinking about money made her head spin. She should take a nap, she decided as she took off her shoes. She deserved a nap after the day she'd had. She would get the courage to check her bank account to pay back Kaylee in an hour.

Valeria was naked. Very naked, as in not a stitch of clothing adorned her body as she lay on top of a large, white bed with half of dozen pillows sprawled around her. She spread her legs apart showing off her pussy surrounded by silky, dark curls as her manicured nails gripped the wooden bedstand.

Her long, straight black hair hit her cheek as she looked across the room and saw Enrique. Enrique was naked, as well, although he was sitting in a velvet armchair, smiling at her as if he were the cat who ate the canary.

He moved a finger, motioning her to come forward. "Valeria, on your knees in front of me. Now. Come, baby. Now."

Valeria hopped off the bed doing as she was told, not feeling shy about her nudeness at all. She went onto her knees, facing him, her face mere inches away from his erect cock. She swallowed.

Valeria had only had one boyfriend before, Alex, during her freshman year in college. The both of them had been so awkward together, they had only had sex twice before breaking up. But now she was no longer in front of a boy from college. She was in front of a man.

"Do you like it?" Enrique mused as he held his erection in his equally large hand. "Because I want to place it in between your beautiful little lips and have you suck on it until I finish inside you and my seed is spilling out of that sweet mouth of yours."

Valeria felt her entire body redden as she simply nodded.

Enrique chuckled as he cupped her chin in his hand. "There's my obedient girl. But I have a better idea, Val. I'm going to fuck you. Hard. And then you are going to suck my dick that's covered in your pussy

juices. Won't that be nice, or at least deliciously naughty? Do you want to try that, my Valeria?

"Yes," Valeria whimpered as Enrique helped her up. "I want to try it."

"Sweet, sweet Valeria, those words are music to my ears. I need to reward you for being such a good girl," Enrique whispered in her ear as he played with an erect nipple. "Spread your legs even more for me. You're going to sit on my cock, then you are going to wrap those sexy legs around me."

Valeria spread her legs open as Enrique guided her to sit on his already hardened cock. A moan escaped her lips when she felt the hard, pink flesh pierce her quim as she struggled to accept him. It felt like she was being impaled by a sword or a rock.

His cock felt warm, hard, and slippery as it spread her open inch by inch while she tightened herself around him trying to get used to the sensation of being spread open by the flesh of his manhood.

A cry escaped her lips as Valeria finished accepting his entire length, feeling as if his cock had found sanctuary in her lower belly. How on earth was she going to take him over and over again while he fucked her and then accept him in her mouth?

"Don't be frightened, amor," Enrique whispered in her ear as if he could read her thoughts. She felt the butterflies in her belly flutter. "I'm going to make you feel so good that you will be begging me for more. Are you ready?"

Valeria sat up with drool dripping down her chin. When some of it dripped down the center of her blouse, she quickly grabbed a tissue and cleaned herself up. Her head was pounding, and her stomach felt empty. The warm, pleasurable feeling she had been experiencing had quickly evaporated.

"What the hell was that?" she grumbled as she forced herself to stand up and throw cold water on her face in an attempt to wipe off the horniness she had been feeling just seconds ago. It hadn't been the first time she'd had a sex

dream, but they had always been with celebrities, never a real person. Never someone as real as Enrique Allende whom she would probably never see again. He might as well be fictional.

Two days later, Valeria was walking through the streets of her neighborhood with a sticky resume in her hands in search of a second job to help pay her alarmingly growing number of bills. She knew most people did online applications, but Valeria was desperate enough to resort to old-fashioned paper copies of her resume and a few tears.

Besides, most of the businesses here were run by people her parents' age or older who could barely figure out a phone, let alone a computer. Valeria was also hoping the early March walk would distract her from the fact that she had worked another shift yesterday at The Kitty Café and hadn't seen anyone besides Flora.

No doubt, Enrique had been annoyed by her weirdness and had decided not to step foot in The Kitty Café ever again.

"Valeria! Val! Val!"

Valeria turned around and saw a dark-haired young woman around her age wave her over. She immediately recognized her as Blair Wright, a pretty girl whom she had taken two public speaking courses with during her time at UCLA.

"Blair! It's so good to see you." Valeria hugged her fiercely, taking a sniff of her sweet, expensive Chanel perfume. "How long has it been? A year?"

Valeria then noticed Blair's outfit, a tailored, white skirt and delicate lavender blouse with a lace bow at the collar. She noticed she was wearing large diamond studs in her ears. "Wow, you look stunning."

"You do too," Blair offered generously, even though Valeria was in her old interview outfit of a black pencil skirt

and white blouse that now fit too snuggly on her bottom and chest. "Are you busy? Can I borrow you for a cup of coffee?"

"Wow, a second job; that sucks." Blair sipped on her vanilla latte as Valeria finished telling her about her woes regarding her limited funds. "And they tell you college is the key to the American dream. So, you're telling me you haven't found a job even with your degree?"

Valeria sighed as she stirred sugar in the coffee Blair insisted she buy for her. "No, I've applied to hundreds of jobs since we graduated last year. Advertising, publishing, marketing, you name it. I've gotten a few interviews, but nothing which leads to an actual job. If this keeps up, I'm going to have to move back to Oregon with my parents."

"Ew, do not go back to Oregon. Trust me, Val, you do not want to be lonely, depressed, and surrounded by cows."

Valeria rolled her eyes. "My family lives in the city. I don't think I've ever seen a cow. At least not in the city, in the countryside maybe. I don't want to move back home, but unless I come up with some serious cash in the next couple of weeks, Oregon will be my fate."

Blair was quiet for a few minutes as she sipped on her drink. "You know, I haven't been working myself for the past six months. Couldn't find anything in my field, either."

Valeria looked at Blair's lavish clothes and pricey jewelry. "How are you surviving? Selling feet pics?"

Blair ignored the joke as she looked around the cramped café filled with bored hipsters and stoners. "Six months ago, I met this woman, Cecilia Montez. Once a month, Cecilia rents out a penthouse at a different five star hotel. She invites these wealthy men and women to party with her. We are talking big names, Val. CEOs, models, directors, star football

players, you know, those people you see in magazines. The A-listers. She also invites another group of people."

"Who?" Valeria wasn't sure where Blair was going with this.

"Ordinary people like you and me. Men and women. Well, once a month, we dress up and go to these events with Cecilia to meet prospective clients."

"Clients?" Now, Valeria was truly confused. "Do you sell things to them?" $\,$

Blair looked at Valeria as if were an idiot. "Yes, ourselves. If we find a client who is interested in us, then they become our sponsor of some sort. Our sugar daddy or mommy, and we become their sugar baby. It is all very professional, we come up with an agreement on everything, especially pay and what each party is comfortable with. There are some poor fools who are so lonely, they will pay big money just for talking to someone. Maybe you can start with one of those. Whatever you decide, Ms. Cecilia gets a twenty-five percent cut of each check you receive. Ms. Cecilia is a decent and fair woman, but trust me, you don't want to get on her bad side. Just don't get stingy."

"Blair, are you suggesting that I prostitute myself?" Valeria hissed, careful not to grow too loud. "That's illegal in California, not to mention disgusting!"

"It's not prostitution, it's sugaring." Blair looked offended. "The whole thing is very discreet. You don't have to meet with men you don't want. Ms. Cecilia is not a pimp; she's very careful who she brings to these parties. No drug addicts or violent men. The men there can be very charming and generous if you play your cards right."

"I don't want to play my cards right. I don't want to get involved at all." Valeria tried to keep her temper in check. Blair had only been trying to help after all. "Thanks, but no thanks."

"I paid off my student loans, credit cards, and I actually have a savings account now. Just think about it, please, Val. I'm trying to help you," Blair urged as she handed her a pretty pink card with the name Cecilia Montez on it. "If you change your mind, call me and we can call on Ms. Cecilia together. She has an office in West Hollywood. She is hosting another party at The Dahlia Hotel two weeks from now. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity, Valeria."