ROYAL CHOICES

ASANTI EAST



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This book contains fantasy themes appropriate for mature readers only.

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Chapter 1

Nicole

a'am, Ms. Nicole Simmons, do you have anything in your ankle?" the TSA officer asked.
"Only a plate and eight screws," she responded nonchalantly. The look on their faces was always priceless.

Nicole had dislocated her ankle when she was a kid trying to chase Tina Andrews. Tina had stolen Nicole's backpack for the millionth time, and this particular day Tina ran a different way than usual. Nicole saw the pothole a second too late. The rest was history. At least as far as her ankle was concerned.

After clearing the scan and unavoidable pat down, she glanced at her watch and cursed. She grabbed her bag and took off sprinting for the gate. Of course, her flight would be at the gate the absolute furthest away. She knew she should have left home earlier but she had to help her grandmother.

By the time she finally made it, she saw her flight taking off. "Shit!" she cursed out loud and quickly covered her mouth. She rushed to the customer service desk and saw someone she recognized but hadn't seen in ages, Tina Andrews.

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Tina had teased and bullied Nicole from the time they were in elementary school through high school. Tina was the girl in high school who was the prettiest, the slimmest, dated the quarterback, all that good stuff. She teased Nicole because she was never as slim as Tina was.

Once they graduated, Nicole went on to the local college and graduated with her bachelor's degree and Tina worked dead end job after dead end job. Every once in a while they would see each other, and the hatred still flowed from Tina to Nicole. Three kids and three different fathers later would make anyone angry at the world. But Nicole could never actually pinpoint why Tina didn't like her. It was always a mystery and one she did not have the time to try and solve today.

She approached the desk to ask about a different flight.

As Nicole tried to explain to Tina, Nicole started to get agitated.

"Ms. Simmons, I do apologize, but I doubt I will be able to get you on another flight today," Tina said without even looking up and sarcasm dripping from her voice.

"Tina, will you at least check, please?" After a brief huff and puff and an eye roll, Tina finally agreed. Nicole handed her ID and old boarding pass to her.

"You're in luck," Tina said dryly. "There is a flight I can get you on, but it doesn't leave for five hours."

Nicole did some quick calculations, and yes, it would be a close call, but she could still make her connecting flight to Geneva by taking the new plane.

"Ok, I'll take it." After a quick huff, Tina made the changes and shoved her ID and new boarding pass in her hands. "Thanks, Tina.".

"Yeah," Tina said with a dismissive wave of her hand.

Nicole sent a quick update to her mom and grandma, so they wouldn't worry when they didn't hear from her as scheduled. Just

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like clockwork, her mom called in response. "Nicole, sweetie what happened?"

She understood the concern in her mother's voice and just shook her head. "Nothing Mom. The Uber driver got lost, I had a delay with TSA, and by the time I finally got to my gate the plane was taking off," she explained.

Nicole heard the frustration in her mother's voice when she said, "I told you to leave earlier, but no, you had to help your grandmother out."

"Yup, Mom I know, where is Grandma anyway?" she asked.

"She's out in the garden, let me go get her," her mother replied

Her mom and grandma were as close as a mother and daughter could be. Like Mom never moved out type of close. It wasn't that she couldn't, just she never wanted to. As Nicole grew older, she really appreciated that. Seeing how her father was pretty much nonexistent, which she preferred, honestly. Her mother and grandmother took over those roles just fine.

"Here, she is!" her mom exclaimed after a brief hold.

"Umm hello," her grandma said.

"Hey, Grandma. I missed my flight, but they got me on another one, so I'm fine," she explained quickly.

"Oh, okay, baby as long as everything worked out, I talked to your godfather he is so happy and proud of you, so are your cousins," her grandmother replied.

Nicole smiled knowing her grandma told everyone she possibly could about her grandbaby going to Switzerland.

While Nicole's hometown wasn't the biggest, it also wasn't the smallest. It was just the right size she liked to think, most everyone knew everyone, but people tended to mind their own business. Also, you couldn't beat the beautiful beach that was ten minutes away from the house. As she started to focus on the conversation again, Nicole started hearing her work phone go crazy. She rolled

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her eyes and groaned internally knowing exactly who it was and what they wanted. "Okay, Grandma I gotta go," she said reluctantly. "I'm going to get some work done while I'm here waiting."

"Okay," her Grandmother said. Nicole heard the frustration laced in her grandmother's voice, she couldn't stand her boss any more than Nicole could. "Love you," they both said at the same time and hung up.

When Nicole finally made it to her new gate, at the other end of the airport, she pulled out her work phone. Her text and email inbox were full of messages from Ian, her arrogant, egotistical, downright horrid boss. Who happened to be a partner at the financial firm she worked for as an analyst. As she started typing a reply to his message about what happened and why she missed her flight Nicole started to feel her agitation build. The fact that Nicole wouldn't sleep with him made it worse. At first she tried to ignore his blatant sexual advances but then one day he flat out told her he would make her life a living hell if she didn't sleep with him. Saying every woman working in his department had to.

Nicole tried to report him to HR but seeing as his cousin was the manager of HR of course the complaint went nowhere. So she resorted to just keeping her head down and working from home as much as possible to avoid Ian.

When the opportunity to attend the Financial Economic Summit in Geneva presented itself, Nicole jumped all over it. Get out of the office for a week, learn about international economics and finance, and get away from Ian's uncomfortable stare. Oh yeah, no one had to tell her twice.

She pulled out her laptop and found a chair with an outlet in it and set out to waste some time. She double-checked her hotel reservations, mapped out her route once she landed at her connecting airport so she could make her flight.

While she was in the middle of responding to some emails

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she heard a commotion at a door near her that led out to the tarmac.

Nicole glanced up and saw three burly security guards who were not there before; they all had some sort of crest embroidered on their suit jackets, strange. She shrugged and continued her work. Just don't bother me, she thought to herself. When she heard the door open again, she glanced up out of habit.

She didn't know what she expected to see. Actually she did, she half expected to see some overweight snobbish looking celebrity or insanely rich person. But she was surprised at the sight that stood before her. What she saw was a man straight out of a fantasy, sculpted by the gods themselves.

Over six feet tall, beautiful olive tanned skin, dark brown hair that looked to be about shoulder length pulled expertly back into a ponytail, a slight stubble on his face which made him look a bit dangerous —but the sexy kind — wearing a suit worth more than all her clothes combined. He exuded power and authority. The type that what he says is law, no questions no comebacks. The way he towered over his security was somewhat comical, he had a few inches on all of them.

"Fuck," she said to herself before she shook her head back into reality and looked back down at her laptop. "Yup and his supermodel girlfriend will be meeting him in 2.5 seconds"

She could tell when Mr. Tall and Dreamy and Powerful started moving because his guards moved with him, not quietly by the way. Next thing she knew he was standing in front of her.