



Smart. Sexy. Successful. Sayid has it all, including a bevy of young subs willing to serve him. He should be happy, but he can't shake the feeling that something is missing. He doesn't expect the quirky, outspoken artist that he meets on sabbatical to be the cure for his melancholia.

Meeting a sexy Dom wasn't high on Dani's priority list. She has enough trouble finding time to sleep and work around her infant daughter's schedule. It may not be what either of them expected, but it may be just what the doctor ordered.

EXCERPT

"Dani!" Sophie called out. "You here?"

Sayid thought it was a silly question considering the door had been wide open, but then again, this was the sticks. The man might be down the street grabbing a cup of coffee or chatting with a neighbor.

Sayid sighed and looked around for a wastebasket in which to toss his empty cup. He found it hidden next to the front door, just as a petite brunette peaked out from behind a silk-screened room divider at the back of the altar.

"One minute, Sophie!" she called out, her back to them but one finger raised.

Sayid smiled as Sophie began looking around. *That must be Dani*, he thought to himself. He had assumed that "Dani" was short for "Daniel." He'd been expecting a young man, perhaps someone a little effete. What he *hadn't* been expecting was a barefoot earth goddess.

Dani's dark hair flowed down her back, just below her bare shoulder blades. She had dressed for the summer weather in a scarf-style dress with little spaghetti straps. Tied around her waist was a lightweight sweater. He supposed even earth goddesses got cold.

Around both wrists she wore multiple bracelets and bangles. On the left, the one holding a phone, she had tied what looked like several small scarves or pieces of cloth. There were even little leather bracelets woven into the ties.

The right side was more traditional—one wide leather cuff with a myriad of silver bangles. Her feet weren't bare as he'd first thought. As he slowly took in the details of this woman, he noticed she wore barefoot sandals—tiny, ornamented pieces of jewelry that connected around her ankle, covered the top of her foot, and attached to her toe.

He couldn't help but stare at the tattoos visible from across the room. The first appeared down the center of her right forearm, the second one on her left shoulder, and the third played peekaboo at the center of her back each time she swung her hair.

Dani placed a hand on her hip, turning slightly, and suddenly he could see the gentle swell of her breasts.

"Careful," Sophie whispered, bumping her shoulder into his arm. "You're starting to drool."

"Funny." He smirked down at her. In fact, the opposite had happened—his mouth had gone dry. He couldn't remember the last time he'd had such a visceral reaction to a woman.

Dani's voice carried across the shop. "If she can't have it to me on time, then she'll miss her spot in the rotation and I won't be able to get started on it until at least September." She turned toward them with an exasperated shrug.

"Excellent. I will expect it on Monday." She pulled the earphones from her ears and wrapped them around her phone.

"I am so sorry for keeping you waiting, Sophie."

Sayid watched her hug Sophie, who was several inches taller than her. Then she turned to him, her smile broad. Her grass-green eyes seemed even brighter behind the round framed glasses she wore as she looked up at him and held out her hand.

"You must be Sayid. Do you see anything you like?"

He laughed under his breath. He saw *a lot* that he liked, even if he shouldn't. And he really shouldn't. If she was thirty, he'd be surprised.

He looked at the hand she still held out to him. He reached for it, letting his eyes linger too long as his gaze swept up her body and finally reached her eyes.

"And you must be Dani."

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