



## The Valquez Seduction (The Playboys of Argentina)

By Melanie Milburne

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**The most dangerous game of all...**

Standing outside a decadent Las Vegas nightclub, innocent schoolteacher Daisy Wyndham has never felt more out of her depth. And that's before sultry Argentinian polo player Luiz Valquez rides to her rescue in front of the global media, leading to reports of their engagement....

It's a dangerous charade, but one they're both prepared to play! Luiz can shake his playboy image, and Daisy can cast aside her cloistered upbringing. With Luiz doing his best to be good and Daisy trying her hardest to be bad, it's only a matter of time before one of them gives in....

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### Editorial Review

#### About the Author

Melanie Milburne read her first Harlequin at age seventeen in between studying for her final exams. After completing a Masters Degree in Education she decided to write a novel and thus her career as a romance author was born. Melanie is an ambassador for the Australian Childhood Foundation and is a keen dog lover and trainer and enjoys long walks in the Tasmanian bush. In 2015 Melanie won the HOLT Medallion, a prestigious award honouring outstanding literary talent.

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It only took Daisy Wyndham three and a half blocks to shake off her father's bodyguard. She grinned as she joined her two teaching friends inside the Las Vegas hot spot nightclub where they planned to kick off their half-term holiday before the winter school term in London resumed. 'See?' She high-fived Belinda and then Kate. 'I told you I'd make it before the first round of drinks. That's a new record too. It usually takes me at least five blocks to lose Bruno when I'm abroad.'

Kate, recently appointed to teach Year Three, handed her a glass of champagne with a frown pleating her brow. 'Is this going to happen *every* night we're here on holiday?'

Belinda from Grade Four rolled her eyes. 'I did warn you, Kate. Travelling abroad with Daze means excess baggage in the shape of a big hairy scary guy carrying a concealed weapon. Get used to it. It ain't going to change any time soon.'

'Oh, yes it is.' Daisy set her posture in a determined line. 'I'm sick of being treated like a little kid. I'm plenty old enough to take care of myself. And this holiday is the perfect chance to prove it.' Once and for all.

Her father would have to get over it. She wanted to live her life the way she wanted to live it. Not be answerable to her dad, who thought she was still twelve years old.

'Why's your dad so protective anyway?' Kate asked.

Daisy took a sip of her drink before she answered. She hadn't told anyone of her father's former and thankfully brief connection with the underworld. It was far easier to pretend he was overly protective because she once went missing for half an hour as a child. That her disappearance had been nothing more than a case of her hiding from her mother behind a rack of dresses in Marks and Spencer was beside the point. 'My dad watches too many scary movies. He thinks as soon as I step foot in a foreign country someone is going to kidnap me and demand a ransom.'

Kate raised her brows. 'I realised you came from money but—'

'Pots and pots of money.' Belinda held her glass out for a refill. 'You should see her dad's estate in Surrey. Massive. He has villas in Italy and the South of France too. I didn't realise being an accountant could be so lucrative. Maybe I should've done that instead of teaching.'

Daisy chewed the edge of her lower lip. She had always believed her father's wealth was gained through hard work and discipline, building up his London accounting firm from scratch. She *still* believed it...sort of.

How could she believe anything else? He was a loving dad who consecrated the ground she walked on. So what if he had once done a teensy weensy accounting job for a Mafia boss? That didn't make *him* a criminal. He had assured her it had been years and years ago and there was no reason to be worried now, although why he insisted she have top level security at her flat and always travel abroad with a bodyguard did make her feel a smidgeon of disquiet if she were to be perfectly honest. But that was something she had always put up with because it was easier than arguing with him about it. Arguing with her father was an exhausting and pointless exercise, which her mother, Rose, had found out the hard way when she'd tried to divorce him.

'If you've got so much family money why bother teaching?' Kate asked.

'I love teaching,' Daisy said, thinking of her kindergarten class with their sunny and earnest little faces. 'The kids are so innocent and—'

Belinda gave a half snort, half laugh as she wiped up a dribble of bubbles off the side of her glass with her fingertip. 'Yeah, like you.'

Daisy sent her a mock glower. 'Just because I'm technically still a virgin doesn't mean—'

'Technically?' Kate frowned in puzzlement. 'What? You mean you haven't actually *slept* with a guy?'

*Here we go*, Daisy silently groaned. Why was being a virgin such an oddity these days? Plenty of girls didn't sleep around. What about Amish girls? Or girls from other religious persuasions? Nuns, for instance. Anyway, having an overprotective father was like being raised in a convent. He'd practically strip-searched every suitor she'd ever had. He did background checks on them too. It was beyond embarrassing. Which was how she had ended up twenty-six years old without having done the deed.

But this holiday was going to change all that. Or so she hoped. Away from her father's watchful eye, she would be able to stretch her dating wings. Flirt a little. Relax instead of being uptight about the whole process in case her father suddenly appeared, waving a warrant for her date's arrest.

'Not yet,' Daisy said. 'But I'm not going to do it just for the sake of it. I want it to mean something. I want it to mean something for the guy too.'

'I hate to be the one to tell you this but you're unlikely to find your soulmate in Vegas,' Kate said.

'Don't feel too sorry for her,' Belinda said with a naughty grin. 'Our Daze has a toy. I gave it to her when we did Secret Santa with the staff at school last year. Didn't I, Daze?'

Daisy laughed it off but she hated that she still blushed over that wretched sex toy. She'd only taken it out of the box a few times... OK, well, maybe more than a few times. Truth be told, she hadn't put it *back* in the box. It was currently in her make-up bag in her hotel room because she hadn't wanted her new nosy flatmate to find it in her bedside drawer while she was away. Anyway, it had an absolutely brilliant massage attachment that was really handy when her neck or shoulders got tense.

'Hey, check out two o'clock.' Belinda jerked her head towards the right hand end of the bar. 'The guy standing next to the girl in the dress that looks like aluminium foil. Do you know who it is?'

Daisy studied the tall black-haired man leaning indolently against the bar as he chatted to a young woman dressed in a tight sheath of a shimmering dress that clung to every curve of her supermodel-perfect body.

The man's open-necked shirt was startlingly white against his deep tan and his eyes were so dark they looked as black as molasses. His hair was long enough to curl against his collar and was tousled, as if he'd not long tumbled out of bed or run his hands through it, or both. His mouth was nothing short of mesmerising. A sculptured sensual curve surrounded by a day or two of dense black stubble, the top lip curved upwards in a smile that looked more cynical than amused, and a bottom lip that hinted at a dangerously healthy sexual appetite. In spite of the heat in the crowded nightclub Daisy felt an involuntary shiver run over her flesh. 'No, who is it?'

'Luiz Valquez,' Belinda said. 'He's a famous Argentinian champion polo player. He's nicknamed in the press as the king of one-night stands. There's not a playboy out there who can change partners as fast as he does. He's practically turned it into a sport. Talk about smoking-hot.'

Hot wasn't even close, Daisy thought. She hadn't seen a man who looked anywhere near as heart-stop-pingly handsome as him. He looked like one of those male magazine models, the ones who advertised designer eyewear or expensive aftershave. Oozing testosterone and sex appeal. Simmering with sensual energy that radiated out from him in soundless waves. She couldn't seem to drag her gaze back to her friends. It was glued to the man as if invisible wires had tethered her eyeballs. There was something about him that was so...hypnotic. Captivating. It wasn't just his staggeringly gorgeous good looks. There was something about his aura of supreme confidence she found intensely intriguing. She could see it in the arrogant tilt of his head, the hawk-like blade of his nose, the sharply intelligent gaze. It was as if he knew he was in command of the room and was biding his time to demonstrate it.

'Stop drooling, Daze,' Belinda said. 'He doesn't associate with mere mortals like us. He only ever dates supermodels or Hollywood starlets.'

Daisy was about to look away when he suddenly turned his head and his dark-as-night eyes met hers across the crowded nightclub. An electric jolt shot through her as his black brows lifted in blatant male appraisal. A hot spurting sensation arrowed between her legs and she almost fell off the bar stool she was perched on. She quickly crossed her legs but his gaze followed her right thigh as it hooked over her left one. Then his gaze came up ever so lazily the whole length of her body from ankle to hip, from her waist to her breasts, stalled there for a pulse-thundering pause, before coming up to her mouth.

He paused again. Longer this time.

Daisy felt her lips burn as if he had pressed a hot brand to them via his sexily hooded gaze. He then moved his gaze from her mouth to do a leisurely sweep of her chestnut hair, which she had bundled into a half-up, half-down do that framed her face and brushed her shoulders at the same time.

Then he came back to her eyes.

Daisy had heard the expression 'time stood still' many times. She had even used it on occasion. She knew it wasn't logically possible but this time it really *did* stop. She felt it. It was as if every clock in the nightclub, every clock on every smartphone, every watch on every wrist shuddered and then stopped.

Tick. Tock. Stop.

Belinda snapped her fingers in front of Daisy's face. 'Earth to Daze.'

'Oh, my God.' Kate nudged Daisy in the ribs. 'He's coming over!'

Daisy sat with her heart pounding like a piston in an engine long overdue for a service. Her skin felt tin-gly all over. She could even feel the backs of her knees fizzing like sherbet trickled into a glass of soda. She felt giddy. She had to grip the edge of the bar with one of her hands to stop from tumbling to the floor in an ungainly heap.

She couldn't remember a time when a man had looked at her like...like *that*. As if she was the only woman in the room. As if he could see through her little black dress to the black bra and lacy knickers she was wearing underneath. As if he could see how her body was responding to him of its own volition, as if he had cast some kind of magic spell over her. It was shocking and yet somehow wickedly thrilling to feel as if she had no control over her body or her senses. It was as if the universe had heard a whisper of her desire to step out of her good girl shoes and was offering her up the most tempting bad boy man on the planet. No man had ever singled her out in such a brazenly sexual way. No man had ever triggered such a primal need in her. It pumped through her body like a potent steroid, making her aware of every inch of her flesh.

As he walked across the dance floor Daisy was reminded of Moses parting the Red Sea. Not that this particular Moses would be taking any notice of the Ten Commandments, she thought wryly. He had probably broken every one of them before breakfast. She watched as people stepped back in unison like a standing Mexican wave, and even the strobe lighting seemed to highlight his progress as if his coming over to speak to her was the main event of the evening.

He came and stood in front of her, so close her crossed over right knee was almost touching his trou-ser zip. Her kneecap began to twitch, the nerves beneath the skin doing frantic little somersaults at the thought of brushing against that hard and potent male body.

His mouth curved upwards in a smile so arrantly sexy it should have had an Adults Only rating. '*Hola.*'

Daisy practically melted into a pool of molten wax at his feet when she heard his deep baritone voice greet her in his native tongue. Spanish was delightful to hear from just about anyone's mouth but never more so than from an Argentinian's. The influences on Argentina from large migrations of Italians in the nineteenth century gave the accent in some regions an Italian flair that was as lyrical as music. But reading such information in a travel guide hadn't prepared her for the real thing.

She sat spellbound and speechless for five full seconds as the sound of his voice moved its way through her body like a seductive caress. She felt a slow blush creep over her cheeks and finally managed to get her voice to come out of her throat. It was a little mortifying it came out like a mouse squeak, but still...

'Hi...erm...hello.'

Luiz Valquez's eyes were even darker up close. She couldn't find his pupils in that glinting sea of bottomless black. His mouth was even more tempting now she could see its contours so intimately. His philtrum running down from beneath his nose was so well defined she could have placed her pinkie fingertip in the dish between the stubble-coated lines. She curled her fingers into her hand to stop from actually doing so. The force field of his body was so strong she felt like a microscopic iron filing in front of an industrial strength magnet. Pull. Pull. Pull. It was all she could do to remain upright on the bar stool.

'Would you like to dance?' He asked the question in English but with that distinctive accent wrapped around every word it made her spine feel as if someone was unbolting each vertebra.

But the confidence and self-assurance she had admired just a moment before now began to annoy her. He *expected* her to say yes. Kate and Belinda expected her to say yes. The whole nightclub crowd expected her

to say yes.

Physically she wanted to say yes, but her rational mind snapped back to attention like a soldier clicking his heels in front of a drill sergeant. The one thing she loathed in a potential date was cocksure arrogance. Who the hell did he think he was? He could go and crook his little finger someplace else. If and when she got involved with someone it would be with someone who had the decency to treat her as an equal, not like some desperate little sports star groupie looking for a quick trophy shag.

'No.' Daisy softened it with a brief smile that didn't show her teeth. 'Thanks anyway.'

Something in his pitch-black eyes sharpened. His nostrils widened as if taking up the challenge of getting her to change her mind privately excited him. His charming smile, however, didn't falter. 'You're with someone?'

'No...I mean yes. My friends from school. The school I teach at. *We* teach at. In London.' Daisy pointed at her friends, only to find they weren't there. They had slipped off the bar stools next to hers and were currently dancing on the dance floor with two men she'd seen them chatting to as she'd come in from shaking off her bodyguard.

*Thanks a bunch, girls.*

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