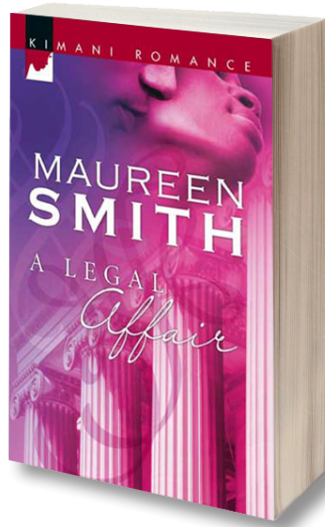


MAUREEN SMITH



AN EXCERPT FROM A LEGAL AFFAIR

Daniela shook her head at Caleb as their waitress moved on to the next customer. “Is it just me,” she muttered, “or have you ever noticed the effect you seem to have on every female that crosses your path?”

Caleb took a sip of steaming coffee, dark eyes glinting with amusement over the rim. “How would you know that? We’ve been acquainted all of, what, two days?”

“Three days. I met you bright and early on Monday morning.”

“Not so early,” he pointed out dryly. “You were ten minutes late to my class.”

“Semantics.”

He laughed, a strong, deep sound that rumbled up from his chest and made Daniela’s toes curl inside her wood-heeled Jimmy Choo sandals.

“You’re going to make a fine lawyer someday, Miss Moreau,” he drawled.

“I’ll choose to take that as a compliment,” she quipped, enjoying the repartee so much that she didn’t bother correcting him on the formal address. She spooned vanilla ice cream into her mouth, then followed up with a sip of espresso.

A deep, languorous sigh escaped her lips. “*Mmm-mmm.*”

Caleb was watching her, cup halfway to his mouth. “That good, huh?”

His voice sounded rough, tight.

Daniela nodded, grinning. “It’s a sensory thing. You know, the combination of rich, hot coffee mixed with sweet, cold ice cream. Mmmm, heavenly. You should try it.”

He shook his head. “No, thanks.”

“Come on, try it,” Daniela coaxed, holding out a spoonful of ice cream to him. “I think you’d really like it. Try it. I insist.”

Caleb hesitated, then leaned forward to accept the sweet offering. As she slid the spoon into his mouth, she was caught off guard by the sudden heat that bloomed in her belly and spread outward like a slow, thick liquid.

Her heart thundered at the very male look that filled Caleb’s eyes as he watched her watching him. Slowly he ran his tongue over the sensuous curve of his bottom lip, removing traces of the creamy concoction.

“You’re right,” he said silkily. “It is good.”

Her breasts felt tight and achy against the lace bra she wore. Without

thinking, she drew the spoon into her own mouth and licked off the remainder of vanilla ice cream, imagining she could taste *him*. It was the most erotic experience she'd ever had. The only thing that'd be more erotic would be Caleb licking ice cream from her body.

She shivered convulsively.

“You, uh, were supposed to take a sip of coffee right afterward,” she said huskily. “To, uh, get the full effect.”

His eyes darkened, stoking the flames already building inside her. “I think I did.”

Her pulse accelerated, and she felt a thrill of wicked pleasure at his words. Another minute of this, and she'd be begging him to take her into the bathroom and do unspeakable things to her.