

MAUREEN SMITH



AN EXCERPT FROM **ROMANCING THE M.D.**

Dr. Tamara St. John was feeling murderous.

It was too bad she'd taken an oath to do no harm. Otherwise, Victor Aguilar García would be a dead man. A gorgeous one, but a corpse nevertheless.

They squared off in the hallway outside the room of a patient who'd been readmitted to the hospital after developing a postoperative wound infection. The two interns had struck a combative pose, hands on hips, lab coats spread open as they argued with each other. Tamara hated that Victor's six-two frame forced her to angle her head back to meet his flashing gaze, and she hated that the dark blue color of his eyes reminded her of the most beautiful sapphire she'd ever seen.

"You're not listening to me," he said, the words gritted through straight white teeth. "Naphtomycin—"

“—is still in the clinical trial stage,” Tamara interrupted sharply. “So that means the jury’s still out on the drug’s safety and effectiveness. Unlike you, I don’t like hedging my bets on a wildcard. I think we need to administer another course of antibiotics—”

“Because that’s been working so well, right?” Victor countered mockingly.

Tamara bristled. “Let’s not forget that this is *my* patient—”

“—who’s been readmitted twice for a postoperative sternal wound that won’t heal. It’s time to pursue more aggressive treatment options.”

“Naphtomycin isn’t an option,” Tamara said unequivocally.

“Well, it should be.”

“I disagree. Until it’s been approved by the FDA—”

Victor interrupted, “German physicians are already using Naphtomycin on their patients, with proven results.”

“That doesn’t matter,” Tamara said obstinately.

“What do you mean it doesn’t—” He broke off, shaking his head in angry exasperation. “Look, St. John, you have the potential to be a good cardiothoracic surgeon, but if you want to be the best, you’re gonna have to start thinking outside the damn box.”

“How dare you?” Tamara hissed furiously. “I don’t need career advice from you! Last I checked, we *both* graduated from top medical schools, and we’re *both* finalists for the same research grant—”

“*Me importa un carajo!*” Victor swore in Spanish, striking his fist against the wall. “Why does everything have to be a damn competition with

you? This isn't about you and your egotistical need to be right—”

“*My* egotistical need?” Tamara sputtered in outrage. “What about you? Every decision you make is based on the false assumption that you can never be wrong. You take risks with patients’ lives like you’re rolling dice on a craps table. Don’t you *dare* lecture me about my ego when *you’re* the one with the God complex!”

Victor scowled blackly. “I don’t have a—”

“Like hell you don’t!”

He glared at her another moment, then scrubbed his hands over his face and shook his head at the ceiling, as if he were petitioning God for a flood that would sweep her away. He needed a shave and a haircut, Tamara noted irritably, eyeing his stubble-roughened jaw and the thick dark hair that brushed his collar. He always looked like he’d just rolled out of bed, tossed on some clothes and hopped onto his Harley to ride to work. Tamara supposed that the ruffled, sexy look worked for some women. But not her. Everything about the man grated on her damn nerves.