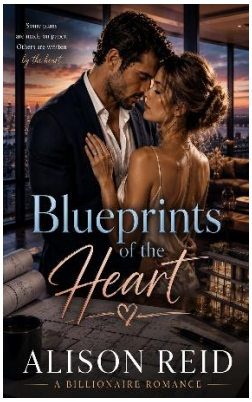
Blueprints of the Heart

by Alison Reid



Damian studied her face intently, his gaze warm, and there was something in the way he looked at her that made her feel both seen and cherished.

After a moment, he leaned in just slightly, his voice dropping to a low, almost hesitant tone, as though testing the waters. "Do you mind if I kiss you, Soph?"

Sophie blinked, caught off guard by the question. Her heart raced as she met his gaze, feeling the warmth from the wine and the closeness between them. For a brief moment, she hesitated, her breath catching as she processed the unexpected question.

She didn't quite know how to respond at first. She wasn't used to being asked so directly, or so respectfully. Her mind swirled with emotions, and she could feel her cheeks flush. Her breath caught in her chest as she looked up at Damian, her pulse quickening. "I—" she started, her voice shaky but honest, the vulnerability of the moment creeping in. "I haven't really done this before."

Damian's expression softened immediately, a mix of understanding and respect washing over his features. "You don't have to say yes," he said, his voice calm and reassuring, the sincerity in his tone making her feel at ease. "I just… couldn't leave without asking."

A rush of something unfamiliar, something she hadn't anticipated, swept through Sophie—trust. It was so sudden, so real, that it startled her. She felt herself nodding slowly, her lips parting into a small, tentative smile. "Okay," she whispered, the words leaving her with a surprising sense of certainty.

Damian didn't move immediately. He seemed to pause, ensuring she was ready, and when he leaned in, it was with a tenderness that spoke volumes. The kiss was soft and unhurried, a quiet promise of something more, a slow unfolding. His lips were gentle against hers, as if he was giving her all the time in the world to decide, to feel it out. It was brief but full of unexpected tenderness, a sweetness that made her heart flutter in a way she hadn't expected. When he pulled back, it wasn't far, his eyes searching hers carefully, looking for any sign of discomfort.

"Thank you," he murmured, his voice barely above a whisper, as though the kiss had been more of a privilege than a mere action.

Sophie's heart raced in her chest as she gazed into Damian's eyes. The kiss had been gentle, respectful—completely different from what she had imagined it would be. It was far more tender than she'd expected, and yet, it had left her wanting more. The feeling of his lips on hers lingered, the sweetness of it unexpectedly stirring something deep inside her, a longing she wasn't used to.

A soft blush crept across her cheeks, her gaze dropping for a moment as she whispered, her voice small but teasing, "No… thank you." Her lips curved up into a playful smile, a glimmer of warmth dancing in her tone. "You could do it again if you wanted to."

Damian's eyes sparkled with surprise and delight. His smile spread slowly, appreciating the change in her. He leaned in closer, his breath soft against her skin, and she felt a shiver run down her spine as his lips hovered near her ear.

"Well, since you asked so nicely," he murmured, his voice low and teasing, the hint of a smile in his words.

This time, when their lips met, it felt more certain, more confident. Sophie felt herself relax into it, her body responding naturally to the tenderness in his touch, to the way he was giving her space, yet pulling her in at the same time. The world around them seemed to fade away, the noise of the bar, the clinking of glasses, the murmurs of other people—everything else melted into the background. All that remained was the warm, steady connection between them, like a silent understanding shared only between two people who'd found something real.

When Damian pulled away this time, his forehead rested gently against hers, and for a moment, they just stayed there, their breaths mingling, their eyes closed in the warmth of the moment. He smiled, a slow, satisfied grin that made Sophie's heart race. "You're full of surprises, Soph."

Sophie could hardly believe the words as they left his lips. Her chest was still pounding, and the flush on her cheeks deepened. She wasn't used to this—the boldness, the teasing—but something about Damian made her feel different. Daring, even. She blushed, feeling the heat in her cheeks, but instead of retreating into herself, she met his gaze, her smile now softer, more curious.

"Do you like surprises, Damian?" she asked, her voice a mix of shyness and newfound confidence, a subtle shift that felt almost empowering.

Damian raised an eyebrow, clearly intrigued by the change in her demeanour. His green eyes glinted with interest, and the corner of his mouth curled into a playful smirk. He leaned in just a little closer, his voice dropping lower, his tone rich with amusement and admiration.

"I think I'm starting to," he replied, his voice warm and teasing. "Especially if they're anything like you."

Sophie's blush deepened, but she didn't shy away. Instead, she held his gaze, feeling a surge of something—exhilaration, maybe—run through her. She wasn't just the quiet, reserved one anymore; tonight, in this moment, she was something else, something unexpected. Something bold. She found herself revelling in it, in the way Damian made her feel alive in a way she hadn't anticipated.

This time, Sophie didn't wait for him to ask. The pull of the moment, the warmth between them, was too strong to ignore. Before she could second-guess herself, she leaned in and kissed him, her lips brushing his with a soft, hesitant touch. It was gentle at first, tentative, but there was something so real about it, something that made her heart race.

Damian, caught off guard but pleasantly so, responded slowly, savouring the unexpected boldness. His hand came to rest lightly on her waist, pulling her a little closer, and the kiss deepened, growing more confident as their connection deepened with each passing second. The world around them—everything—faded. All that existed was the space between them, their breaths, their hearts, and the soft pressure of their lips meeting.

When Sophie finally pulled away, her heart was pounding, her mind still reeling from the intensity of the kiss. She looked up at Damian, waiting for his reaction, her cheeks flushed and her breath a little unsteady. She hadn't planned it, hadn't even imagined herself being so bold, but somehow, in that moment, it felt right. She hadn't overthought it for once. She just let herself feel it, let herself *be*.

Damian smiled, his eyes filled with admiration and something else—something deeper. "Well," he said, his voice low, filled with both amusement and a touch of awe, "I wasn't expecting that… but I'm not complaining."

Sophie smiled, her heart still racing as she met his gaze. For the first time in a long time, she wasn't second-guessing herself. She wasn't just the quiet, thoughtful woman she always thought she was. Tonight, with Damian, she was *more*. She was the woman who could surprise herself, who could take a leap and land on her feet.

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