



## Just One Taste

*Lexi Blake*

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### **Just One Taste** Lexi Blake

One Hot Chef...

Eric Vail has always loved a challenge. After leaving the Navy, he mastered his passion for cooking. As the sous chef at Top, one of Dallas's hottest restaurants, his skills are pushed to the limit every night.

Unfortunately, his ultimate prize still eludes him. Server Deena Holmes is the sweetest thing he's seen in forever, but she's as distant as she is beautiful. When they're put together in the same training class at the infamous club Sanctum, he knows this is his shot. And this former SEAL never misses.

A Woman Who Lost Her Taste for Love...

Deena thinks Eric is the most gorgeous man she's ever seen, but her heart has been burned too many times before. She's sworn off relationships for good and she can't trust herself with a man that easy to fall in love with. She takes a spot as a trainee at Sanctum in the hopes of finding a safe place to explore and experiment. When she discovers her partner is the same chef she dreams about every night, Deena knows she may have bitten off more than she can chew.

A Perfect Recipe for Passion

While exploring the world of Sanctum, Eric and Deena find themselves learning about each other and finding an intimacy neither expected. But when the ghosts of her past resurface, old wounds are reopened. Can their newfound love survive when it's put to the test?

### **Just One Taste Details**

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## From Reader Review Just One Taste for online ebook

### Kat Desi says

Just realized that I had not been able to write a review this book when I read it a couple of weeks ago. Anyway, first, I have to say this: what's better than having a hot chef for a lover? A hot chef who was also a Dom and a veteran. Total fantasy man, right? Now that we have that out of the way... I'm really enjoying this spin-off Masters and Mercenaries series so far. I love getting to know the characters that didn't hold significant roles in the other series.

While Deena Holmes did have the hots for the sous chef of Top, Eric Vail, she was done with getting seriously involved with men. Yet she did miss sex and she signed up at Sanctum as a submissive trainee for that purpose.

But much to her surprise, she was partnered with Eric. Relationship and work did NOT go together, it was a recipe for disaster--especially if the relationship was a D/s one.

Eric wanted Deena the moment he first laid eyes on her, but she kept herself out of reach. He had always loved a challenge and he'd do anything to finally get this woman tied to his bed.

To be honest, it was quite hard to like Deena for most part of the book. When I finished it, I wasn't even sure if I did eventually like her. Even in this case, Lexi Blake made it impossible for me not to like this book while I was busy being annoyed at the heroine. It's probably Eric. What a sweetheart. I have long lost taste for too-indulgent Doms but like I said, the author wrote the book so well that I still ended up loving it.

Really looking forward to the rest of the series!

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### Amy says

“He was the deep end of the pool and she wasn't ready to jump in.”

Just One Taste was my first book by Lexi Blake, so I wasn't really sure what I was getting myself into. I was intrigued by the synopsis and just had to check it out. What I got was a really fun, sexy and entertaining read. This is one of those books that I would consider a guilty pleasure. The story-line was entertaining and pulled you in from the very beginning. The characters were fun and had excellent chemistry. They had me wanting to know what was going to happen next.

Just One Taste was a quick sexy read. I enjoyed every second of it from start to finish. I loved Lexi Blake's take on BDSM. Eric and Deena were scorching together. I couldn't get enough of the two of them. Overall, I really enjoyed this read and would definitely be open to checking out more books from this author in the future!

\*I was provided an ARC copy of this book, via InkSlinger PR in exchange for an honest review\*

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### ? BookAddict ✍ La Crimson Femme says

As soon as I read the first book, I ended up buying this second book immediately to read. There is just something about Ms. Blake's writing style which pulls me in. I enjoy it every time. This one is sweet and tart. Eric is a man with a lot of patience and he's the sweet one. Deena is the tart one. Really, for the love of good, Deena, pull your head out of your ass and stop driving the man crazy!

This one is feisty with an insecure female with major daddy issues and a man who could possibly be a Daddy Dom if he wanted to be. I thought Eric was dreamy and kind. Yes, he did have a bit of a fear when it comes to business. Deena has a chip the size of a boulder on her shoulder. She needs to get that looked at. As strong and manly as Eric may be, he doesn't have the strength to knock that boulder off her shoulder. Thankfully, Big Tag has no problems. I liked this one because the characters I love from the original series pop in and out. Big Tag always makes me laugh. I love him. CODE RED!!!! Now that is funny stuff.

The kink in this one is a little bit more than the first one. Let the spankings for the bratty submissives commence! And that is probably why I didn't really take to Deena. Yeah, she got a totally shitty deal between her dad and her ass-hat ex-husband. Ms. Blake does a good job of showing Deena's weaknesses and strengths. I liked her journey of growth and self actualization. She became a likeable person at the end and it's clear she is worth waiting for. Eric is just dreamy for me all around. This erotic romance is recommended for kinky readers who love the strong and silent type who have a dirty kinky mind.

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## **Z-squared says**

Scarred veteran and chef Eric has it bad for waitress, student, and man-hater Deena. Deena can't stop thinking about what it would be like to have a bad boy -- perhaps one that looks exactly like her nice guy coworker Eric -- spank and screw her silly. While a hot club fling sounds like fun, though, there's no way she'll ever let a man make her vulnerable again. But Eric is on a mission to be the last Dom she'll ever need.

Although I sympathized with Deena, it was difficult to like her. She was surprisingly selfish, even if it came from an understandable need to protect herself. Eric was ridiculously patient, to the point of straining credulity. At one point, Deena finds herself wondering if she even deserves the attentions of a man like Eric. The answer is a resounding no. Lucky for her, this is fiction, because otherwise there isn't a man on the planet who would put up with her. And the blow-up at the 80% mark, at which point Captain America turns into a complete stranger, also blew up any remaining believability.

On the plus side, this spin-off series continues to deepen the characterization of some of my favorite Masters and Mercenaries. The Topped series is designed to be read on its own, nor do M&M readers need to read them to be caught up. But any M&M fans not reading these are really missing out on a treat!

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## **Shayna says**

Forget the gorgeous billionaires, the sexy lawyers, and the brooding motorcycle men. I want a beautiful man who can tie me up and cook me a damn good meal. Ladies, get ready to meet chef Eric Vail. He will bring you to your knees in more ways than one. This man who dominates in the bedroom, as well as the kitchen, is looking to settle down with a certain stubborn and sassy server. Eric and Deena's story takes us on a scorching hot, beautiful journey, that will leave you hungry for more.

This ex-Navy Seal does not hide the fact that he wants Deena in every way a man wants a woman. Deena has been burned badly in the past by her ex-husband. He used her and took her for everything she's got while

leaving a mountain of debt behind. She has been working her ass off while attending school. She has NO interest in getting involved with men again. Her ex ruined it for her and now her trust is shattered. She's incredibly polite and giving, but she throws up this wall when anyone gets close. Now, Eric is a very patient man, but the urge to claim Deena for his own is at an all time high. He wants to take care of her. He wants her in his bed and in his life.

There is no escaping Eric Vail. As they explore the world of Sanctum, lines get blurred. Deena gets a taste of Eric's dominance and she HATES that she can't get enough. What was supposed to be a place of escape and self discovery turns into the start of something deep and real. Too bad the past always has a way of screwing things up.

OMG! I had a smile on my face the ENTIRE TIME I was reading this. Lexi Blake always hits the spot, giving us page after page of sexy goodness! When you throw good food in the mix of all this sexiness, there is no going back my friends. Masters and Mercenaries is one of my all time favorite series, and this TOPPED spin-off series, is following very close behind. We get the excitement of meeting great new characters, as well as, the amazing treat of catching up with the likes of Big Tag and the rest of the gang. If you loved the Masters and Mercenaries series, then you will absolutely DEVOUR the TOPPED series. Lexi Blake fanatics, get ready to settle in for the night, because you will NOT be able to set this baby down. Newbies to the series, in the wise words of the great Ian Taggart...

**"Welcome bitches."**

\*Gifted copy provided by the author in exchange for an honest review\*

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## **Elle says**

**4\* *so tasty yet delicious* STARS!!**

Top is a high quality restaurant owned by Sean Taggart/Little Tag who hired some veteran/ex-soldier who have passion in culinary and cooking. You know him from the first book in the Master and Mercenaries series. After the previous book about Macon, the pastry chef, now Just One Taste came with new MCs.

Eric Vale already attracted to Deena Holmes since the first time. Eric was a Captain America who has good heart and gentleman attitude. He is a sous chef at Top. Deena came from broken marriage because her ex dumped her for new woman also a lot of debt. She works her ass of to pay the debt from her divorce and college. When Top offer 'new program' which is a BDSM experience in Sanctum, Deena agreed to try it. Surprisingly (with some intervention), she paired with Eric for six weeks. She never thought that Eric has taken interest with her.

Apparently, Deena has trust issue with a man and she always like Eric as a friend. But Eric wants more with Deena and he's plotting to get close to her through the BDSM program in Sanctum. At first, Deena seemed trouble with Eric. I found her character is hardly likable. I only see her flaws until half of the book. She hide herself really well and shut down others. Until Eric confront her (patiently). Eric is a (wet)dream for every woman, I think. His personality was really charming. My most memorable moment with him is when he

tried to calm his turn on with replaying a whole recipe in his head.

The BDSM and vanilla interaction are well balanced. Outside bedroom, Eric still give her attention even when she's going through final exam for graduation. He's very understandable man. Finally, until 70% I found his flaw and it became problem. But with his friends' help, Eric and Deena quickly recovered and realized it. I always love when the M&M group are making appearance. How addictive Big Tag with lemon, Charlie's mischievous, and others. Just One Taste was very entertaining and great read. It was romantic but not too sweet. I'm looking forward to read another Topped story, maybe Tiffany? Javier? Hmm... Can't wait, Ms. Blake!

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### **Darcy says**

I was really looking forward to this one, but Deena ruined it for me. From the start I didn't like her, didn't understand why everyone else did. She was so closed off, contrary and a bit of a bitch but only to Eric. I hated how Eric, who was a Dom, let her walk all over him. It seemed like he only brought out the Dom when they were playing, which seemed a bit odd to me. I hated how everyone had to keep telling Deena what a good guy Eric was. I felt like he deserved someone better. Late in the book Eric turned into a douche and I just wanted to be done with the book. The only saving grace was all the cameos from Ian and his quips about people, especially those at Sanctum. He's quickly becoming a favorite to read as he brings much needed levity.

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### **Vintage says**

I love the world of Big Tag. It's fun, it's ridiculously out there in terms of the alpha, not so bad, bad-boys and the women they spank AND dote on. The only reason this book gets a second star at all is we get to spend a little time with the original characters. Big Tag is as grumpy as ever.

Unfortunately, the heroine totally ruined it for me. Any idiot off the street knows more about BDSM than this idiot. She irritated the hell out of me. The hero was not a whole lot better. He's had a crush on her forever and let's her walk all over him.

The complete and total lack of chemistry between the two was unfortunate. Part of the problem is the primary focus of the story is the development of their relationship. The other books in this Tag universe deal with espionage, suspense, danger, betrayal etc that serve as a counterpoint to the love stories. This was lacking in every category. Skimmed it at the speed of light.

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### **Eve Recinella (Between The Bookends) says**

First let me just say anything that comes out of Ian Taggart's mouth is gold, PURE gold! I think he may be the single most awesomest H EVER! \*lol\*

Ok, on to the book review. I didn't love this one as much as some of the others. I just never warmed up to Deena, I found her judgey, whiny, and cold most of the time. I get her marriage left her bitter, but the

constant pushing away went on to long for me. That said I LOVED Eric, he was perfect, he was sweet, he was hot, and devoted. I think had he been more of a douche, or Deena had come across as less cold, I would have enjoyed it better.

That said, Lexi Blake can really do no wrong in my eyes, and even the books I enjoy less are ten times better than some of the recent crap I have had to wade through!

I'll just leave you with this most hilarious quote..

**"Or you can come in and talk about rehabbing McKay-Taggart's image. We've run into some trouble after Ian got pissed at a rival firm and sent the managing director a big box of glitter dildos," Charlotte said. "He rigged it so they blew up and went all over the dude's office. We're getting sued for glitter injuries, and one of the flying dicks might have poked an eye.**

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## **Ivy Deluca says**

Review posted => <http://afterdarkbooklovers.com/2015/1...>

**It's everything I've come to expect in a M&M read:** Lexi Blake helped me realize exactly how much of a kinky chick I am. True story.

One of the first BDSM romances I ever read was *The Dom Who Loved Me* because, seriously, look at the cover. <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/1...>

Anyway, I didn't know much about BDSM but I knew I wanted to know more. Once Sean introduced Grace to a set of nipple clamps, I was hooked and I've been enjoying the *Masters & Mercenaries* books ever since.

It's a solid BDSM romance series that shows the lifestyle in a safe, sane and consensual way, mixed with hot alpha Doms and sassy heroines. It's a formula that has had many imitators, but I still think this is one of the best, especially for those who are more into the D/s side of BDSM. It gives me the happy naughty bits without getting too deeply into the play.

**The setup is familiar:** The main series is more action-oriented, primarily with Mackay-Taggart, a firm that's, well, more spy/mercenary than straight up security. But it's a longstanding story arc that's fun for me to read. The *Sanctum* and now *Top* books are offshoots of the main series, and they give peeks into the HEA of the M&M couples while introducing characters who aren't deep into the spy game. It's a shade lighter in tone than the main series, but still entertaining.

Deena and Eric both work at *Top*, Sean Taggart's restaurant, and they are both in the training program at *Sanctum*, the BDSM club run by Ian Taggart. Deena's grown up with a bitter man-hating mother, and emotionally hurt by her ex. Eric's been scarred in war. Emotionally though, Eric's wide open and wanting Deena. She's still figuring out if she can play with Eric without losing her heart. We all know how that's going to go. The camaraderie you expect from this group is in full force, and they help Deena and Eric navigate their way through this thing called love.

**Good character development:** One of the reasons I keep coming back is Ms. Blake does take time with her characters and really delves into their motivations and the reasons for seeking out BDSM or why they have relationship woes. While sometimes the character work's a bit stronger in some books than others, but I'm

happy to say that Deena and Eric's is the strongest I've seen outside of the main M&M books. I really loved Eric's protectiveness and sweetness for a Dom, and Deena's no one's pushover. Even when she's protective of herself, much time and care is given to giving the reader a clear insight as to why she is the way she is and I appreciated it.

**Helps to read this series in order:** This is an ever growing and expanding 'verse, and as a consequence, events in earlier books do impact what happens here. The Taggarts are integral to this story and some of the best lines come from Ian, as usual. Knowing the group from book one certainly made me appreciate the little comments about events from earlier books and know who all the players are, since there are many for such a short book.

One caveat - I've got a couple of them still waiting on my kindle and there's some info imparted that I wasn't aware of. I'll still go back and catch up, but if you're not into spoilers, be forewarned.

**BDSM wasn't plentiful:** Deena and Eric have good chemistry but due to the length of the story (it's more novella than full novel), the BDSM wasn't as big a part of it as I'd expected. Having said that, the scenes were well done and in this case it's more of quality vs quantity. I was still satisfied.

I really enjoyed my time back in the Masters & Mercenaries world, and getting to know Eric and Deena. If you're a fan, I think you'll enjoy it. If you haven't tried it yet but like a little BDSM with your romance, I'd encourage you to check out the series.

\*\*ARC provided by author via inklinger PR for review\*\*

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### **Aly is so frigging bored says**

This was a very enjoyable novella. The main characters were employees at Top(Sean's restaurant): Eric and Deena, but we got to see some of our favorite McKay-Tagart people(laaaaan!).

Eric is an ex-SEAL who didn't know what to do with his life after leaving the Navy. He found cooking and he's loving it. Now he wants to find that perfect someone. He's reliable and sweet and a great bet.

Deena is a divorcée whos husband fucked over. She manages to put herself through school while working a full time job and she doesn't want to have anything to do with men beside sex. It doesn't work well for her because Eric totally set his sights on her.

There were some misunderstandings, Deena being stubborn and a bit stupid, but all is well when it ends well :)

ARC received from the author and the publisher for an honest review.

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### **Guilty Pleasures Book Reviews says**

Shadow's review posted at Guilty Pleasures Book Reviews

In just One Taste, Lexi Blake returns to her recurrent theme of people creating families from the people around them - and also to her lighthearted way of dealing with some serious issues.

Eric has been in love with Deena for some time, but the wary submissive has major relationship issues and he has to exercise patience to claim her.

They have time to learn each other as they both work at Top, the restaurant owned by Sean Taggart. They are also paired together in classes at Sanctum, the BDSM club operated by Sean's brother Ian. Deena wants to explore the BDSM lifestyle without getting serious, but she is far too attracted to Eric. Can these two find their way to a long term relationship in spite of her past and need to close herself off.

Deena proved to be a strong woman, holding down a job, taking college classes, and emarking on the exploration of BDSM. Her attempts to shut herself off from others stem from a series of bad relationships, particularly her last one.

Eric served in the marines before coming to Top, where he learned to cook. He has plenty of experience as a Dom, but no particular place to recommend him so he is required to take the BDSM classes as well. He doesn't mind as long as Deena is his partner. He is almost too perfect, but as the story unfolds, he reveals his flaws as well, but overall, he is a loving, generous, indulgent Dom who takes great care of his submissive in all ways.

This was a delightful story with an interesting plot, likable characters, steamy sex scenes (including mild BDSM), and laugh out loud humor.

Review copy provided for an honest review.

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## **?Flo? the coffee addict says**

### **4 \*\*yummy\*\* STARS**

*“She didn't know it yet, but he was the knight in slightly tarnished armor waiting for the princess to wake up.”*

Just One Taste is the second instalment in the Masters & Mercenaries spin-off series Topped. If you follow my reviews you probably know how much I love the original M&M series and there was no question in my mind that I would enjoy this as well.

The spin-off series has everything I love. A freaking awesome surrounding cast, cameos by my favourite M&M characters, hot and kinky play time and of course a main couple that makes you all warm on the inside and leaves you with a good feeling in the end. Ms. Blake knows how to write an alpha male with a rough exterior and a heart of gold, and she sure knows how to pair him with a strong and slightly complicated female character.

*Just One Taste* tells the story of **Eric and Deena**. Eric is an ex navy-seal and the sous-chef at Top. He just entered the training program at Sanctum, Ian Taggart's BDSM club and is paired with the woman of his

dreams, Deena, the waitress working under him at Top, who is about to graduate with a BA in business. Both are interested in each other, but Deena has reservations about putting herself in a position where she could possibly fall for another man, let alone let anyone into her life -due to some bad experience with men in her past. Eric has his work cut out for him, to say the least.

This book really is a nice combination of good food, scorching hot chemistry, human struggle and family. I love this universe and the characters in it. So yes, a fan of Ms. Blake's M&M series will love this book and for those who are completely unaware it might be a good gate-way drug to peak into the world of dominating commandos and cooks; as well as kick-ass and dangerous girls.

*\*\*ARC very kindly provided by the author in exchange for an honest review.*

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### **Kate's Corner says**

**It started off strong and I love me some Lexi Blake but Deena Holmes is a thorn in my side when it comes to this book. She ruined it for me. She constantly went behind Eric's back and deflected everything. Quite frankly she doesn't deserve Eric. So the stars are for Eric only. And Ian let's not forget Ian.**

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### **Kristie says**

This one was okay. I found myself liking Eric much more than I liked Deena. I have a hard time with any character who is as closed off as she is. The best parts of this were the incredible bits of wisdom that both Ian and Sean give both Eric and Deena. Also, Charlotte. The seasoned couples of Sanctum have already been through it and know what they're talking about.

I'm also happy to see that we're kept in the loop with regards to the search for our dear departed, you know who. It makes me more anxious for that book to come out.