

An Unexpected Exile

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Risa Weinberg is a fairly attractive and mostly independent junior merchandiser for Nordstrom's flagship San Francisco store. Nearly thirty, she dreams of someday being promoted to fashion buyer. But with no other romantic prospects on the horizon, Risa becomes unexpectedly smitten with Arturo, a recent Nicaraguan immigrant whom she meets on the bus one morning. In spite of a riotous culture-clash, Arturo's captivating life story and arresting sensuality soon overwhelm Risa as Arturo, a self-described Sandinista insurgent, cunningly muscles his way into Risa's good graces. With a conscious but faulty deliberation, Risa manages to ignore the signs of Arturo's possessive and abusive nature; she succumbs to the allure of romance and falls deeper and deeper under his spell in her misguided pursuit of passion. Meanwhile, her passive-aggressive rapport with her widowed father grows increasingly strained, and her career aspirations derail, as she stumbles into what quickly becomes a highly charged and subtly abusive relationship. When faced with the prospect of Arturo's deportation, Risa reluctantly agrees to marry him against her better judgment. She then becomes so caught up in planning the perfect wedding that she cannot see beyond the ephemeral appetizer of flowers and photographers to the enduring main course of being married to this most unsuitable man. Set in the aftermath of the Nicaraguan contra war, An Unexpected Exile takes a comedicyet-dark look at how easily a woman can become consumed by feverish sexual obsession while sacrificing not only her professional ambition but her self-worth in the process. A cautionary tale of lust gone awry, An Unexpected Exile is a sobering twist on romantic comedy.



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