

NAUGHT  
GOOD



*Alessia Brio*

# Naught Good

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I tried to keep the inflection out of my voice as I said goodbye, but he caught it anyway. Something about my tone or my expression, body language—whatever. My composure amazed me as I watched my stoic self from a distant emotional perch. I promised that self, that hurt and angry woman, ample time to deal with the raw feelings later. Alone. At that moment, I simply wanted to get the hell out of there before things went from bad to worse. I almost made it, too, but in the split second between speaking and turning away, I saw my true meaning register in his eyes. Goodbye.

They grew rounder as they instantly filled with tears, but he didn't speak. There really wasn't anything left to say. All my fears, my warnings, about the evening's potential for disaster materialized as if foretold by a gypsy's crystal ball. Part of me wanted to scream, "I told you so!" Part of me wanted to ask, "Did you think I was kidding?" My voice, after uttering that last word, wouldn't allow anything else to pass my lips. Rendered mute by anguish, I continued on my way—without hesitation, but with heaping buckets of regret.

In a twisted way, I took solace in the fact that a conflict that had gnawed at my soul for months was now resolved. Not resolved in the manner of my choosing, but the weight dissipated just the same. With it went unbelievable potential. The void created by that loss sucked the air from my lungs, and the hemorrhaging emotional wound threatened my ability to remain conscious. *Walk!* I commanded my legs.

I didn't look back, but I listened for the door to close as I extracted my cell phone from my purse. For all I knew, he watched me until I was out of sight. I never heard the door close.

In the taxi, I managed to croak the name of my hotel before the tears overpowered my defenses. The driver passed me a tissue and awkwardly asked if I needed help. I needed something, but help wasn't it. Pulling myself together—or, at least, the semblance of such—I made two calls from the cab; one

brief and one much longer, the bulk of it spent on hold listening to orchestrated renditions of 80s hits.

As soon as I'd taken care of the arrangements, I turned off my phone. I asked the driver to return for me in an hour and gave him a generous tip. Passing through the hotel lobby, I informed the front desk that I did not want to be disturbed. *Keep moving*, I repeated to myself. *Keep moving*.

The tossed bed, echoes of passion mere hours distant, undid me and I collapsed in a heap on the floor of my room. I sobbed—great, racking sobs—until anger pushed its way to the surface. With the anger came the contents of my stomach, fortunately just a glass of wine and some nosh. Finger foods for polite, if strained, conversation.

"You knew better," I scolded myself, lifting my bloodshot eyes to the mirror as I spat into the sink. Every fiber of my being had told me not to go there; that naught good could come of it. I did it anyway—because he wanted it and I wanted to please him. Simple, really. The reason why he wanted it was not lost on me, though. It added to my anger.

Packing wouldn't have taken nearly as long if not interrupted several times by dry heaves. I saw his eyes as I squeezed my own closed. Not the eyes I cherished—the ones that studied me with a mixture of amazement and adoration—but the placating, angst-filled eyes. The pleading eyes. I never wanted to see *those* eyes again.

I heard his voice as I ran the tap water to wash my face. Not the voice I cherished—the one that promised me all his tomorrows—but the appeasing, soothing voice. The ass-kissing voice drifting through a closed door. I never wanted to hear *that* voice again.

I knew as soon as he came back into the living room that he was going to ask me to leave—to give him time to smooth things over—with that same voice. *That* voice, only turned toward me. It made me sick. I didn't speak. Just nodded. I'll go.

He was apologetic and grateful. *You're making it worse*, I

wanted to shout.

"I'll call you later, baby."

That word turned my stomach. *Don't bother... baby.*

I told him she'd know. That no matter how innocent our behavior, she'd know. It was obvious to anyone looking for it, and she was undoubtedly looking. I should've refused to go. I should've trusted my instincts. Love fucked up my better judgment. I compromised my ethics, and now I loathed myself for it.

I made it back to the lobby with my luggage just as the taxi pulled to a stop in front of the hotel. Placing the room key on the counter, I scrawled my name on the check-out receipt.

"We hope you enjoyed your stay. Come back soon!" the desk clerk recited. I didn't respond. "You have messages," she added, holding up a few slips of paper with a wan smile.

I took a deep breath, tucked my copy of the receipt into my purse, and grabbed the handle of my suitcase. I felt my stomach lurch. "Too bad you didn't get a chance to deliver them before I left."

# # #

#### AUTHOR'S NOTE:

Electronic publishing has gone a long way toward lessening the layers between authors and readers. This helps to ensure more of the money readers pay for books actually reaches the authors, which is a very good thing. Still, there are middlemen nibbling—sometimes taking big bites—of the sale price: vendors and payment processors. Some even censor the content they allow to be sold. That pisses me off royally, and it should piss you off, too.

I respect the law, and I will never attempt to sell erotica that violates it. I do not, however, respect the imposition of someone else's values on my artistic endeavors. Thus, to ensure

you have access to all of my available publications, I encourage you to buy my books directly from [www.PurpleProsaic.com](http://www.PurpleProsaic.com)

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## About the Author

1Take one part Appalachian redneck, one part aging wet dream, and one part filthy-minded wordsmith. Mix well and serve with chocolate-covered cherries. There you have the one and only Alessia Brio.

Alessia writes all colors and flavors of erotica, from heterosexual to ménage to same sex, and from twisted to humorous to deeply touching. Sometimes, usually by accident, it even qualifies as Romance (with a capital "R").

Her work has earned her critical acclaim in the form of an EPIC eBook Award for Best Erotica (*fine flickering hungers*), two EPIC eBook Awards for Best Erotica Anthology (*Coming Together: Against the Odds* and *Coming Together: Into the Light*), a Romantic Times Top Pick (*Coming Together: For the Cure*), and two Next Generation Indie Book Awards for Best Erotica (*Coming Together: For the Cure* and *Squeeze Play* with partner, Will Belegon) in addition to a plethora of glowing online reviews.

Since 2005, Alessia has also been the driving force behind the *Coming Together* erotica series. Each title in this series benefits a specific charity. Please check out the site at [www.the-erotic-cocktail.com](http://www.the-erotic-cocktail.com) and support it by purchasing a title or three. You'll be doing good while being bad!

The Internet is both Alessia's office and her playground. She can be found online at various social networking sites:

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## About the Author