

Lucia's life captures the diversity of the Mexican culture and delves into the double standards imposed on women who want equal footing with men. She strives to control her life and expects more from herself than Mexican tradition allows. Her trysts are usually with experienced older men university professors, artists and other intellectuals.

LUCIA by Ty Spencer Vossler

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TY SPENCER VOSSLER



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ISBN: 978-1-64438-785-6

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Published by Abuzz Press, St. Petersburg, Florida.

Printed on acid-free paper.

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Abuzz Press 2019

First Edition

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data Vossler, Ty Spencer Lucia by Ty Spencer Vossler FICTION: General | Erotica | Romance Library of Congress Control Number: 2019943034

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CHAPTER 1: Lucia (1987)

Lucia lifted the hand-mirror to examine herself. She was up earlier than usual—before the rooster determined it was time. In early mornings, Lucia had a few minutes for herself, to think and to dream. She undressed and climbed into her tiny shower. She brought the hand-mirror with her and gazed at the twenty-two-year-old woman she had become. Her naturally wavy hair was kept short because it was unconquerable when it grew longer. She never needed makeup, choosing a red lipstick to highlight her full lips. She touched her eyebrows and wondered if she should thin them with tweezers. *No*, she thought, *a waste of time*.

It was a rare morning. Her mother, Giselle, had taken a bus with the younger half-brothers to visit the family of her latest lover. He was a truck driver, and they had found each other a month earlier at the open-air market in Zacatelco. He had purchased quesadillas for Giselle and the half-brothers, which entitled him to move in with her. Lucia called it the *Mexican repayment plan*. She and the halfbrothers would be introduced to this man's mother. The mother would ignore them, judge harshly, and that would be the end of it. That's the way it always happened.

Yet, this morning was Lucia's. She had time to review her life, to feel proud of her accomplishments. For the first time in her life, she liked herself. She let the shower warm up before she stepped beneath the water, and then she closed her brown eyes to feel it pouring down her body. As she soaped, her fingers slipped over her wellrounded behind, and she washed her moderately-sized breasts, topped with tall, brown nipples.

The water felt good—rinsing bad memories, replacing them with dreams. Shampoo was applied to her head, then she washed her dark pubic hair, allowing fingers to slide over sensitive areas. She closed her eyes to think about her boyfriend, Enrique, and shivered. It had been a long time since she had the luxury of pleasuring herself. Between juggling classes at the University, helping with the halfbrothers, and the other responsibilities on the family ranch, there was precious little time for self-indulgence.

Lucia imagined Enrique kissing her, hardness pressing, his tongue slipping over hers. She shuttered, "Mmm, ayyy," and felt her sphincter contracting, the tiny bud of her clitoris pulsing beneath her fingers. She slipped a finger passed the lips, and pushed until it hurt to go further. Her voice changed, and the confines of the bathroom amplified the sound of pleasure.

"Ayyy," the climax caused her knees to buckle. She imagined Enrique driving through the resistant tissue and filling her.

After recovering, she finished rinsing. Sooner or later it will happen, she thought. Yet, every time Enrique suggested it, she was reminded of her cousin, Chela. They were the same age. Chela had four children with three different men, and lived in squalor. She thought of her own mother—three children, each by a different father. Lucia used delay tactics to keep Enrique at bay. *I'm not ready yet*, was a favorite. Yet, as she dried herself, she wondered what the first time would feel like.

The community where she lived was called, Domingo Arenas. Many families sold things out of their homes. Her mother sold basic necessities, such as rice and beans, soap and tortillas. No one in Domingo Arenas had finished high school. Girls usually got pregnant very young and stayed home. If the father stuck around, the girl was scorned by his mother. Most of the men in the community worked in nearby foreign-owned factories, and drank away their paychecks.

Lucia received a small academic scholarship after high school and was accepted into the BUAP (Universidad Benemérita Autónoma de Puebla). She took as many classes as she could find time for. It would take her longer to finish, yet she was determined never to become like others in the community. This was the reason she had put Enrique off for months, even though she ached for him.

Lucia's mother resented that her daughter was determined to rise above her station in life. She treated Lucia like Cinderella. Before

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being allowed to devote herself to academics, Lucia was required to help with the cooking, cleaning, and the care of her half-brothers. Nearly every night, she was up until the wee hours, studying at a folding table beneath a single bulb that dangled from the cement ceiling of her bedroom.

Most Mexican ranches are built on *ejido* land, properties that were stolen by rich hacienda owners, and returned to the people after the revolution. They remain unchanged after generations. Most campesinos (farm workers) still plow fields with stoic burros, or wasting away horses, using primitive farm implements to scratch out an existence. Outbuildings and homes are gypsy-style affairs, constructed of brick, adobe, or cement blocks, seldom plastered or painted. It's common for sons or daughters to marry and to live on the ranch. Another simple cubicle is added on. Aesthetics takes a back seat to function.

The ranch house where Lucia lived was a two-story cinderblock, the color of a cloudy day. Steel rebar was left uncut at the corners of the roofline, resembling insect antennae. A gravity tank provided water to the household and was only good for washing and watering animals. Parasites swam the underground waters, making it dangerous to drink.

Corrals were constructed with wooden pallets, strung together with bailing wire. Inside the ones at her house were two pigs, a dozen chickens, a rooster, and two filthy cows. On weekends Lucia mucked out the corrals, and during the weekday, she helped feed the animals. A few times she had attended an early university class smelling like animal dung. Lucia's mother ran a tiny commodity store from the front window of her bedroom. Lucia's eighty-twoyear-old grandmother sold handmade blue tortillas to help make ends meet.

Yes, Lucia pondered, *life is tough. Yet, I will never give up.* She smiled in the hand-mirror and hung a pair of earrings fashioned from kernels of red corn. Enrique had purchased them at the market in Zacatelco. As she organized the clothes she planned to wear to the university, she proudly surveyed her bedroom. She had built it herself, along with the bathroom.

For eight years Lucia had worked summers, weekends, and school vacations with her cousin, Chela, making jackets to sell in the neighboring town of, Xoxtla. She gave half her earnings to Giselle, and hid the rest, taped beneath a drawer in her closet. After eight years she hired a pair of local construction men to build two rooms on top of the main house.

"How do you have so much money? Who gave it to you?" her mother demanded.

"I saved it."

"Hmph, you think you are a princess?" Yet, upon reflection, Giselle knew her daughter's upstairs rooms would add value to the property. When it was finished, Giselle demanded to move in with her latest boyfriend.

Lucia burst crying and screamed, "It's mine! I worked for it!"

Giselle had raised her hand, and then lowered it, seeing that her daughter could no longer be threatened this way, and realizing how much harder life would be without Lucia's help. She balled her fists and walked away.

Lucia imagined life after the university. *How will my life change?* she often wondered. Even as a little girl she believed education would provide opportunities for a better life. Some of her professors at the university had earned Ph.D.'s in Russia, Germany, Canada, and England. Lucia's dreams took her far from Domingo Arenas.

"Sweden," she whispered to herself as she combed through a tangle of wavy hair, "Sweden, France, and Japan. Mathematics will take me there."

Math fascinated Lucia. Its logic was appealing. Female mathematicians were rare in Mexico. Tradition held that Math and science were subjects best left to men. "I'll prove them wrong," she whispered as she pulled up her jeans. *If it were up to men, I'd teach public school, and stay living like this for the rest of my life*.

"No thanks, I have other plans," she murmured. A mosquito buzzed near her ear and she clapped it between her hands. "That's what will happen to anyone who gets in my way." She noticed a spot of blood in the palm of her hand. The mosquito already had its fill.

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Lucia applied red lipstick to her lips and remembered her mother's stinging words when she shared college dreams.

"Who'll help with your brothers and the rest of the work? Hija, take my advice, find a husband, get a job close by. Get your head out of the clouds. We must accept who we are and learn to live with it. It is God's will."

God, she mused, the same God that keeps Mexicans coughing up their identity to make the Vatican rich. Lucia was an unbeliever—no Easter Bunny, Santa Claus, Jesus, and certainly no virgin Mary. Such myths did nothing but promote ignorance and poverty in addition to keeping its followers hostage.

CHAPTER 2: Enrique

Enrique was a gentleman and Lucia liked him. They had been novios for three months. He was less macho than most young Mexicanos. They had met at the university, where Enrique studied engineering. He was poor, yet his mother doted on him. He was the man of the house since the father left for the United States fifteen years earlier.

Lately, he had been obsessed with getting Lucia alone in a cornfield, had put in a respectful amount of time waiting, and almost saved enough for a cheap motel.

Lucia's focus on mathematics helped her avoid familiar traps— Enrique's declaration of undying love, subsequent promises, an unexpected pregnancy, followed by his immediate departure. Her own mother had made the same mistake three times. Other men had showed interest in Lucia in the past, yet she only allowed hugs, handholding, and brief kisses.

The *libro* running in front of her house was a toll-free road, and a considerable amount of traffic sped through, slowed only by unmarked speed bumps that would disable an unsuspecting driver's vehicle. Enrique lived in San Marcos, further down the pitted dirt highway from Domingo Arenas. Each morning, Lucia rode a string of buses with him to the university. Depending on class schedules, they sometimes returned together, walking three kilometers along the dirt highway until they arrived to Lucia's door. From there, Enrique rode a passenger van seven miles further to San Marcos.

Early Sundays, Enrique and Lucia sometimes met at the outdoor market in Zacatelco, where they held hands and purchased fresh fruits and vegetables for their respective families. Lucia enjoyed strolling in the market. It was colorful and vibrant, alive with laughter and gossip.

"When will you marry me?" Enrique would often ask.

"When we graduate and have good jobs, and if we still like each other," Lucia replied.

"That is too long," he complained.

Lucia shrugged and smiled, "The time will go fast enough."

"Not for me."

Sometimes, as Enrique walked her home from the final bus stop, he pulled her behind a large oak tree next to the side of the road. They kissed and he pressed against her. His hand would often wander, yet she would capture it. Each time, he would give a frustrated sigh, and they would continue walking. Months earlier Lucia had allowed their first lingering kiss behind the same tree. As her tongue slipped over his, she felt him shiver and his knees buckle as he cried out.

"What happened?" she asked.

"Nothing." He sealed further queries with his mouth, feeling a sticky warmth crawling down his thighs.

These moments reminded Lucia that natural instinct was stronger than logic. Afterward, she immediately went upstairs to shower, letting her fingers dissolve the ache between her thighs. She desperately wanted Enrique, yet she thought, *not in a cornfield, and not without protection*.

Beneath the water, she squeezed a nipple, and her finger rubbed circles around her sensitive bud. Sometimes she sat to avoid fainting with pleasure. After her shower, the half-brothers needed help with homework, clothes needed washing, and the animals needed to be fed. The oldest half-brother was Edgar, almost ten. Hugo was five years younger. Given her mother's propensity for finding men to share her bed, it was a miracle there weren't more.

Lucia's academic aspirations unsettled Enrique. She was determined to finish university and apply to graduate school. She even talked about earning a doctorate. Her intelligence was intimidating. Enrique knew he would have to act soon, or else lose her among the dreams she had created. *The quickest way*, he thought, *is to make her pregnant. Then we will marry, I'll get a job, eventually finish my degree. In the meantime, we can live with my mother.*

Enrique's friends bragged about their conquests. His only experience was at a party he had attended some weeks earlier at an apartment rented by three girlfriends. After several slow dances, and more than a few drinks, one of the girls showed Enrique into a bedroom where a dirty mattress lay on the floor. She slipped out of her jeans and underwear, laid down and lifted her knees.

"Get inside, handsome," she slurred.

He nearly fell over getting out of his pants. After crawling between her legs, she reached down to place him, and he pushed eagerly inside, spurting immediately.

"Done?" she asked. "That has to be some kind of a record." She found a tissue next to the mattress and redressed. They returned to the party, and his buddies gave a thumb's up. The girl repeated the process with several others. *Nothing to brag about,* he thought, *yet it is something to go on when I get my chance with Lucia.*

The following semester, Enrique and Lucia took Calculus together. One night they studied late in an empty classroom at the university. Lucia charted problems on a chipped, portable blackboard at the front of the lecture room. For Enrique, Calculus was a hoop to jump through for engineering. He was interested with finding answers, not in understanding the process along the way. Shortcuts were important. Lucia enjoyed pure math, savoring each step along the road. Her unhurried approach frustrated Enrique.

"Isn't this beautiful?" Lucia said as she worked.

"Certainly," Enrique said, staring at the outline of her body as she scratched ideas, erased, and tried something else. The chalk turned her hands snowy.

Lucia recalled a Cuban professor saying Havana University was so poor it often ran out of chalk. Lucia preferred the screech of chalk, announcing ideas to the darkness of the board. Dry markers sounded like squealing pigs, and smelled bad.

Behind the blackboard was a long, black laboratory table, a nonfunctioning relic left over from when the room was a science lab. Shiny chrome gas valves and aluminum sinks adorned its top. Enrique studied the location and walked slowly toward Lucia, who had her back to him.

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Enrique's friends joked that Lucia was a reincarnation of Frida Kahlo. In the eighties, long filigree skirts were fashionable, paired with construction-boots, indigenous blouses, and jewelry made from seeds. Most knew it as hippy dress. Lucia wore round, black-framed glasses mostly for reading, which furthered her retro-countenance. She carried an unconscious aura of sensuality. Even now, her well-rounded behind swayed as she moved side-to-side, scratching formula on the board. Enrique felt his hardness insisting against the front of his pants. He joined her at the board. Lucia turned, expecting an academic contribution, and saw the look on his face. He took her into his arms, and his tongue skimmed over hers, causing a reflective moan to issue from her throat.

"Ay, Enrique, what are you doing?"

"What I've wanted for a long time," he replied. Enrique's hand slid up the back of her blouse to find the catch. As they kissed, he lifted the blouse over a breast and sucked a large, brown nipple into his mouth.

Lucia's head was spinning, and her legs quivered as his tongue flicked. "Ay, not here, ayyy," she felt wetness. "This isn't..." her legs were quivering.

"No one's around." Enrique was trembling with anticipation. He lifted Lucia's skirt to peel down her panties. She stepped out of them, and he steered her to the lab table. They kissed, and he left a blue mark on her breast. After helping her onto the table, he drained his pants to the ankles and crawled between her uplifted knees. Lucia kept her glasses on.

"Ay, what if someone...?"

"There's no one," he reassured. The loveliness of her triangle was entrancing. The black pubic hair was soft, thinner at the outer edges, with dense tufts surrounding the outer pedals of her lips. When he spread her legs wider, the outer lips parted to reveal supple pink inner flesh. Enrique had never seen anything so beautiful in all his life.

He scooted forward and probed with his thick, uncircumcised hardness. Finding her, he pushed.

"Ow," Lucia gasped and stiffened, "Slow ... ay, ay!"

Enrique felt Lucia's scalloped lips surround him. He pushed again. The tissue barrier gave away incrementally, as he slipped down, down, in, in. "Ohhh, baby, you feel so good."

Lucia took a deep, gasping, discomforted breath, and released a deep groan as he pulled back a bit, and pressed down again. "Ay, ayyy, ow, ayyy." Her head lolled to the side and her mouth opened. Tears rolled down her cheeks.

Enrique was completely buried. "Awww Jesus," he gritted his teeth to keep from spurting. *So much different from that girl at the party*, he thought.

Lucia panted, "Huh, ayyy," and felt him tapping the beginnings of her womb. Despite the pain, it was also pleasurable.

Enrique paused at the bottom and the sensation was overpowering. He stayed motionless, holding back. Lucia lifted her head to kiss his chest, and rubbed hands over his shoulders. Enrique pulled back slowly and returned.

"Huh, ahhh, ayyy," Lucia moaned, pleasure overpowering the pain. "Yes, ayyy, huh, oyyy." This new feeling made her want to cry out loudly, yet she muffled her voice in his chest.

Enrique growled abruptly, "Rrrr, oh shit, ay Dios!" His testicles leaped with the force of his spurt and he nearly fainted. "Rrrraw! Aw, aw, awww!" As his testicles pulsed and emptied, Lucia moved beneath him.

Warm semen coated her insides. Enrique stopped moving, yet she wanted him to continue. Sperm mixed with blood and seeped out, traveling down her butt crack, clinging to her sphincter, before dripping to the black tabletop. Her clitoris ached. She had been so close. Enrique softened and slipped out. A rush of spunk accompanied his departure, adding to the pool below.

He sat up to stare at the radiant, yellowish-white leavings. Squeezing another glob from the tip of his staff, he dabbed it at her glistening entrance. Then, pulling back on his foreskin, he scooped semen with his tip and tried to slip back inside. He wanted sperm to find an egg and make Lucia his forever. Yet, his manhood was now pliant, and Lucia was too slippery. He kissed her and she returned

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them fervently, hips still moving. Desperately she wanted an orgasm, yet the moment was gone.

Enrique helped her off the table and they put themselves back together. "I need a bathroom," Lucia said.

"Okay," Enrique buttoned his pants and barely looked up.

Lucia found an open bathroom down the frigid hallway. While sitting in a stall, she captured blood and semen with the tip of a finger. Her flower was swollen, the outer labia lips were curled back slightly and tender to the touch. She looked at the thick substance on her finger, and lifted it to her nose. It smelled briny.

Regaining her self-control, Lucia began to worry. *Men enjoy bragging about conquests*, she thought. *In Mexico it makes them heroes and turns women into whores*. Lucia didn't think Enrique was like that, but how could she be sure? Another glob dripped into the cold water. She hadn't notice the lack of toilet paper. *Should have known, there's never paper in public bathrooms*. She used the bottom of her skirt to wipe.

Enrique took her into his arms when she returned. Maidenhead vanquished, he covered her with conquering kisses and asked her to marry him, run away that very night. They would be together, raise a family and live happily ever after.

It's what Lucia feared most—having dreams deferred, or watching them dissolve slowly over time. Enrique would quit school to find a factory job. She would stay home, have babies, cook, and clean—weekends spent with his family and friends, any thoughts about earning a degree, traveling the world, living her own life, terminated with extreme prejudice.

Lucia placed her hands on his chest. "We'll talk later. Let's go home, I have a lot of homework."

"Still early," he replied, although it was well past midnight.

She felt his hardness pressing and warned, "My mother will have my suitcase packed and sitting by the road."

"Then we will be together," he whispered, his hand lifting her skirt. "You can stay with me. My mother won't mind. She likes you." Lucia closed her eyes, thinking, *No, she doesn't. You're her precious little boy and no one will ever be good enough in her eyes.* "No," Lucia pushed him away, gathered her notes and stuffed them into a faded backpack. A further thought stormed into her head. *What if I'm already pregnant*? A chill ran down her spine.

It took four buses to return home to the everyday lives they had begun the morning with. As they walked the dirt road toward Lucia's house, Enrique tried to pull her into a dry cornfield.

"Enrique please, I'm sore and I have a lot of homework."

His head was still swimming as they walked to the metal entrance of her house. Giselle's face appeared in a window and Lucia knew she was in for it. Enrique gave her a small kiss and waved to the mother. Then he walked down the road, hoping for a ride to happen along. It was too late for a passenger van. Yet, if he had to walk the seven miles, so be it. He reached down the front of his pants and felt stickiness. Then he lifted fingers it to his nose and smiled.

Lucia's mother tolerated Enrique. After all, he represented the possibility that her daughter would forget the college nonsense, settle down and marry. *They will live here and Enrique will help with the work*, she considered. *Yet, creeping in at such an hour...*

As Lucia closed the door behind and turned, her mother slapped her hard across the face. "If you think you are grown up enough to be out all night, think again! This is my house and you will obey my rules!"

Lucia saw her mother's latest boyfriend eavesdropping from a side window. "Yes, Madre," she said.

Her mother continued to rant until she had covered each and every threat she could think to make. Then she stormed back into her bedroom. Lucia went upstairs. She let her backpack drop to the cement floor, turned on the bulb dangling from the ceiling and heard a sizzle before it burned out. She stood in the dark doorway and sobbed.

Perhaps Mother's right, maybe I'm already on my way to fulfilling her expectations. Lucia shuffled out of her clothes in the

darkness and stepped into the shower. The water did nothing to lighten her mood.

A few weeks later, Enrique paid for a cheap motel in Zacatelco. Motels in Mexico have one purpose. Depending on quality, the garage had an electric aluminum door, or a heavy canvas drawcurtain to protect customer privacy. Steps led into the bedroom and there was usually a cold shower to rinse off in. Payment was made through a lazy Susan built into the bedroom wall, or from an small trap-door in the garage.

After taking a transit van, they strolled into the courtyard, and an employee waved them into a garage. He closed the canvas curtain, and Enrique handed seven hundred and fifty pesos (four dollars) through a hole.

It was a humble room—a bed with a nightstand, and an ancient television sitting on a stack of plastic soda crates. The TV was hooked into an adult cable network. There was a condom in an ashtray. The tiny bathroom had a dripping showerhead. The couple next door was having a good time.

"Ay, papi, qué rico...ay si!" the lady screamed, followed by the sound of the headboard banging the wall and the steady squeak of bedsprings.

Enrique kissed Lucia and slowly removed her clothing. When he finished, he took his off. Lucia gazed at the thick, brown, uncircumcised staff protruding from his body like a living spear. She grasped it, pulled the skin back, and was fascinated by how the mushroom tip emerged glistening with pre-emergent—how it pulsated in her fingers. He lowered her to the bed and she scooted to the middle.

"Shouldn't you wear that?" she asked, pointing to the ashtray.

"No, it's okay, I'll pull out."

"Please?"

Reluctantly Enrique tore the foil, and rolled the condom over his hardness. He crept between Lucia's open thighs, lifted her knees, and wasted no time. The condom was lubricated, and he slipped in easily. Once he was completely submerged, the urge to spill made him dizzy. He focused on the blank walls of the bedroom, listened to the steady sigh of the broken toilet. The woman next door was exhorting her lover to cum, "Al dentro de mi, ay si mi amor, ayyy!" Enrique gritted his teeth and squeezed his eyes tightly shut.

Lucia felt less discomfort this time. She moved her hips, hoping to arrive to the threshold, to spill over. The woman next door was climaxing, and her voice was deep and guttural, "Oh, oh, ohhh, ayyy papi!" The lovely ache returned and she swiveled faster to match Enrique's long thrusts.

She was so close, "Ohhh, right there, ohhh yes," she felt herself peaking.

Enrique unexpectedly buried his face in the pillow, "Awww! Awww! Awww!" The man next door was doing the same. Enrique filled the reservoir tip. Lucia kept moving, yet she felt him soften.

"Dios mío, that was incredible," he said breathlessly.

Lucia arched and wrapped her legs around his back to keep him in, yet he slipped out. Sighing, she turned her head away from him.

"You felt so good." He stroked the smoothness of her back. "Wait a bit," he said, getting up to turn on the television. A blonde was riding a black man. His long, thick manhood plunged savagely, and she screamed and gnashed her teeth.

"Is it normal to have one so big like that?" Lucia asked.

Enrique laughed, "Those guys get paid to be like that."

"Must be painful," she said.

"Doesn't sound like it."

Lucia propped her head on a pillow to watch. Enrique still lay on his side observing her. *No more condoms*, he thought. He stroked Lucia's smooth belly, kissed her there, licked her nipples, and explored between her thighs with a hand. She absently lifted a knee. The sight of her moist lips, surrounded by tufts of dark hair, made him stiff. He slipped two fingers inside, and she began moving as she watched TV. He liked the feel of her smooth inner walls. The man in the porno announced, "Here it comes!" The woman replied, "Give it to me, baby!"

Enrique's fingers glided back and forth, and Lucia liked it. "Ayyy," she gasped, "that feels good." Enrique was ready again, yet

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when he started to slip his fingers out, Lucia gripped his wrist. "Stay there."

He stroked back and forth until her frantic movements made it difficult to keep his fingers inside. Then he rolled on top, balanced on his elbows and plunged in to the hilt. Lucia reached down to touch herself.

Why's she doing that, Enrique wondered? Yet, without protection, such thoughts were soon overpowered by her velvety snugness.

"Ahhh, yes," she encouraged. Blossoms were prepared to burst open in the sun. "Oh, oh, ohhh..."

Enrique cried out and collapsed over her, trapping her hand to prevent further movement. Almost immediately he softened and slipped out. A crawly flood of semen followed. She wanted to finish, yet her hand was trapped until his breathing was normal again, and the feeling of impending release was broken again. Enrique rolled to his back and stared up at the ceiling, finished for the afternoon.

After showering Enrique admired the large wet spot on the bottom sheet. "There's a cheaper place we can go next week." Lucia didn't answer. He watched her dress and pictured them in their own place, making love whenever they felt like it.

Lucia slipped into her pants and looked at herself in the tiny bathroom mirror. She felt like slapping herself harder than her mother recently had. A voice echoed inside her head, *What the hell are you doing? Look at you, nothing more than a cheap slut!* Lucia realized at that moment her relationship with Enrique was finished. "Yes," she nodded to herself.

"What?" Enrique said from the bed.

"Nothing."

The television was still on. A Latina was slurping on a black man's penis as a white guy took her from behind. Lucia watched a close-up as he moved steadily in and out. She felt a dull, unfulfilled ache return, and it made her angry.

"Let's go, I have to study."

"What's the hurry, baby? We can watch for a while and see what happens." He tried to kiss her.

"We have to go." She pushed him away.

"Ay baby..." he reached out again as she brushed past to find her shoes.

"No!" The word emerged with so much force that she hardly recognized her voice.

"Hey, no need for that," Enrique said. "Okay, okay, we'll go."

They hardly spoke on the way back. The passenger van let him off, and she continued on to her house. When she arrived, she lit a candle, and although she wasn't a believer, she prayed just to be on the safe side.

Four days later, Lucia started her period. A week later she broke up with Enrique. It was a pitiful scene. He poured out his heart, promised her the world on a golden platter. She held her ground, knowing the world wasn't his to give. She would discover it on her own terms.

CHAPTER 3: Domingo

Domingo was strange and suspicious. He had been purposely bumping into Lucia lately at the university, repeatedly asking her to coffee or lunch. She politely refused each time, yet now he was parked in front of her house in an old, faded blue Beetle.

She shivered and wondered, how does he know where I live? Perhaps Enrique told him. Enrique was furious after the breakup. His only consolation was bragging to anyone who would listen. She was certain he would leave out the part about him lasting a total of four minutes inside of her. Yes, she thought, Domingo knows Enrique. That explains why he's sniffing around here. I am marked territory—a target to be zeroed in on.

Since ending their relationship, Lucia focused on mathematics, determining that men only got in the way. Studies kept her up most nights, and sometimes her head ached trying to accommodate difficult concepts. Added to this, she was expected to do even more on the ranch because her mother was working for a rich family in Puebla. They had three young daughters, and Lucia was certain they enjoyed more attention than she had ever gotten from Giselle. Lucia's grandmother helped as much as possible, yet no longer had the vigor to keep up with the younger brothers. Lucia's own father was a ghostly memory, a man who strayed in and remained long enough to impregnate her mother.

Giselle didn't understand Lucia's passion for academics. She had quit elementary school when she was eleven to work in a gringo fabric factory. Nearly everyone in Domingo Arenas worked for the North Americans. Misogyny, imbedded in Mexican culture, declared women unfit for math and sciences. Their rightful place was in the home, a factory, waitressing, working as a secretary, or else they got pregnant. Domingo Arenas—where burros still pulled wooden plows in the fields, and gaunt horses towed carts filled with corn to the marketplace. Higher expectations were unreasonable. *Mexican men are threatened by smart women*, she thought. Because of Enrique's loose tongue, other men were on her trail. There were times when she went to lunch, or to a movie with a suitor, yet they were put off by her self-assuredness. After coming up empty in their attempts to bed her, word spread that she was frigid. *Good*, she nodded, *let them think that I am an Arctic wind*.

Domingo wasn't intimidated by Lucia. He liked that she was smart, and invited her to a communist rally instead of a motel. Lucia had politely refused. Now he was parked in front of her house, pretending to read a newspaper.

As she passed by he rolled down a window. "Hey, I wrote something for you."

"What are you doing here? How did you find me?"

"Please," he answered, holding out a paper for her.

She folded her arms and tapped a foot before accepting it. "Okay, and then I have to go."

"Fair enough."

As she read the poem, he recited it from memory in a soft baritone voice. Despite her reserve, it stimulated a pleasure zone in Lucia's brain:

"Sleepy blue oceans sigh and awaken, tempestuous, churning waters, cresting waves, riptides pull me deep and yet, any risk is worthy. Your tempest triggers a tidal wave, a tsunami, a hurricane, my pleasure."

Lucia blushed. No one had ever written a poem for her. She smiled.

"Like it?"

"Yes."

"Good, that makes me very happy. I'll go, you probably have a lot of studying to do."

"Yes," she smiled, "I do."

He took her hand in both of his, "Goodbye Lucia." He kissed her fingertips.

Strange, this Domingo character, she thought as she finished washing dishes and readying the brothers for bed. Domingo's

LUCIA

attentions made her feel different than Enrique. With Enrique. She had felt in control. Yet this man—she was flattered by his pursuit, yet unsettled by his methods. *Perhaps*, she thought, *I should give him a chance and see what happens out of curiosity*.

Domingo certainly wasn't handsome. His face was pockmarked, and he grew a thin, black mustache. Yet, his smile was charming. Physical appearance had never been a priority for Lucia when it came to men. She was attracted by what they possessed inside.

Late that night, Giselle returned from her job in Puebla. She was in a foul mood because a recent boyfriend dumped her for a younger woman. Now, she was faced with sleeping alone. Loneliness drove her upstairs to talk with her daughter.

Lucia's first reaction was to wonder what her mother wanted. She smiled wanly and asked her to come in. Lucia offered a cup of tea, and they sat on a threadbare sofa.

"How are you doing?" Giselle asked.

"Okay...tired as always," Lucia answered.

"Me too."

Lucia's guard went up. She sipped her tea and narrowed her eyes. Giselle did look tired. Her eyes were sad, and she avoided her daughter's steady gaze.

"I want to say something. I want to say that I am sorry."

"For what?"

"For...for not being a very good mother." A tear streamed down her face and gathered at her chin.

Lucia put a hand on her mother's shoulder. "You did the best you could, mother." The words came out stubbornly because she knew it wasn't true.

Her mother broke into sobs, and Lucia pulled Giselle into her arms. "It wasn't good enough," she gasped, "I could not see what you...what you needed."

"It's okay, mother, it's alright."

"No, I want to...tell you how proud I am...of you." The words came in short bursts between sobs.

Lucia cried too. "Thank you, mother, thank you."

"I feel lonely."

"Yes mother, I know the feeling. We are together now."

"So sorry."

"Yes."

After a few moments, Giselle pulled away and framed Lucia's face with her hands. "Mi hija hermosa. Follow your dreams. Do not let them dry up and blow away."

"I won't."

Giselle got up to leave. Lucia's legs felt weak, and she could hardly stand. They hugged and her mother kissed her. Then she heaved a heavy sigh and left. Lucia stood until she no longer heard her mother's footsteps, feeling a crazy mixture of happiness and sorrow.

The next day, Domingo found Lucia at the university and asked her out again. This time she agreed.

He drove her to a posh restaurant called, Mi Ciudad, in downtown Puebla. Lucia had never been in such a place. She didn't know why there were two forks on the white cloth napkin. She copied him closely so as not to appear ignorant, placing the napkin on her lap, eating slowly, deliberately sipping her wine. She fought the urge to use a piece of bread to mop the plate when she finished.

Domingo admitted that he wasn't a student at the university, and confessed to seeing her exit a bus close by. "I double-parked and followed you into a classroom. I sat in the back for a while. When I returned to my car, a transit officer was removing my license plates with a screwdriver. I paid him two hundred pesos." Furthermore, Domingo acknowledged that he worked as a security advisor for the Tlaxcala government.

"You followed me?" A lump formed in Lucia's throat.

"So that I would know where to find you again. By the way, you look wonderful," he finished.

"How did you know where I lived?"

"Asked around."

"The word, stalking, comes to mind."

"The whisperings of the heart—sometimes you must follow blindly. How are your studies coming?" Domingo quickly changed the subject.

"Slowly. I can't attend full time, but I will get there sooner or later."

"And then?"

"A Ph.D."

"You know exactly what you want. That is a rare and admirable trait. Have I said how wonderful you look?"

"Several times."

He asked about her dreams after she finished school, interrupting at intervals to sigh and regard her. Lucia blushed each time. He didn't talk much about himself, only that his job was to ensure the safety of important politicians.

"I protect pendejos from other pendejos."

"Do you like the work?"

"Not especially. I have my own dreams, to start a security company."

"Who will you be protecting then?"

"Me," he chuckled, "from bankruptcy."

Lucia wasn't thrilled that Domingo protected the wealthiest one percent. Mexico was the fifth most corrupted nation on Earth thanks to them.

When they had finished dinner he lifted a hand and a waiter presented the check. She excused herself to the bathroom, and then they left. Domingo opened her car door, yet before she climbed in he pulled her into his arms. The combination of exotic food, wine, the ambiance, inspired her to return his first kiss. Another followed and lasted until they were breathless.

"Let's go somewhere," he whispered in her ear.

Silence made her complicit. In silence, they drove a short distance to the *Motel Hacienda*. Lucia's heart was sprinting, and she fidgeted with her hands as a hotel worker sprinted out from the main office to direct the Beetle into a garage. The aluminum door thundered shut behind them.

Domingo paid two hundred and fifty pesos through a trap in the garage door, and they took the stairs into the bedroom. Kisses led to a frenzied removal of clothing until she was naked, and he stood in his underwear.

"You are a goddess," he whispered as he lowered her to the bed. Domingo pulled down his underwear and Lucia noticed that his penis was considerably smaller than Enrique's had been. Following her gaze he said, "It's not the size of the spoon, it's how you stir the pot." He removed Lucia's glasses and set them on a nightstand.

Domingo crawled between her uplifted thighs, sucked her nipples and circled the areolas with his tongue. He kissed his way down, down, until he arrived at her dark thatch. Spreading the outer lips, he flicked his tongue over the diminutive nub of her clitoris. Lucia had never experienced such a thing, though she had knew of it. When he found her pearl-drop, pleasure overwhelmed any selfconscious feelings she may have had. The joyous ache grew and she knew, this time something would happen.

Her breathing became labored and the movements of her hips, frenzied. Domingo felt her trembling beneath his tongue. Lucia drew in a deep breath, and the orgasm nearly doubled her over.

"Oyyy, ay, ay, oyyy!" Her voice sounded unnatural to herdeep, guttural, and desperate. As another orgasm took hold, Domingo sat up and buried himself to the hilt. The suddenness of the act took Lucia's breath away, and the subsequent climax made her black out for a moment. "Mmm, oh God, huh...mmm-ayyy!"

Domingo positioned himself so that the top of his diminutive shaft contacted her clitoris. Lucia came again as he paused to suckle her breasts, leaving blue marks on the surrounding hills of flesh. Lucia thrust against him, contracting, transported to a universe she had previously known only in the privacy of her bathroom at home. This universe was considerably larger and more beautiful.

After considerable time, Domingo clenched his teeth and growled, "Me vengo! Aw, aw, aw, awww, oh Jesus...awww!"

Lucia with saturated with spunk. She felt it varnishing her insides, oozing out, trickling slowly to gather at her sphincter. When he pulled out, another rush followed, creating a thick cobweb before dripping to the top sheet. They faced each other on their sides, and she gazed appreciatively into his eyes.

"You really know how to stir the pot," she remarked.

"Mmm, you can't imagine what a pleasure it was."

She patted the large wet spot on the comforter. "I see the evidence."

"Did you like it?"

"What do you think?"

He answered with slow, luxurious kisses. After a short time, he stiffened again. This time, he guided her over him.

"I'm not sure what to do," she said as she impaled him.

"I'll teach you," he said, putting hands on her hips, and guiding her forward and back.

Lucia found her rhythm quickly. He clutched her backside, rubbed an index finger over her sphincter and tried to insinuate it inside. She reached back to stop him.

They finished with Domingo positioning her on all fours. This time she allowed his moistened finger slowly up her rectum. Lucia climaxed again and again, finally collapsing to her stomach, exhausted. Domingo grunted, pulled out, and spurted over her rump.

Lucia rested on her tummy after he climbed off to rest on his side. He kissed her shoulders and face. Then he whispered into her ear, "I think I love you."

"I think you're nuts," she answered dreamily.

"Crazy about you."

"We'll see," Lucia hedged.

For nearly two years, Domingo and Lucia experimented. He taught everything he knew. She learned to give skillful head, twisting and jacking him back and forth as she moved him past her lips, pausing to paint his frenulum with her soft tongue. He taught that you didn't need to take a man all the way down your throat. Sometimes he asked her to leave her glasses on so that he could spurt on them. When he didn't pull out, Lucia she held his spunk in her mouth and then let it dribble from the corners of her mouth before spitting into a tissue and rinsing in a sink. Swallowing made her shiver, and she only did it when he was driving and there was nothing to wipe with.

"Tastes dreadful and smells like chlorine," she told him.

"Try it in your coffee."

"No thanks."

They moved into a small apartment in Puebla, and she continued at the university. Some weekends they went on small trips to explore towns they didn't know. Occasionally they visited her mom. Giselle's attitude toward her daughter changed a great deal. She welcomed Domingo, and saw that they looked happy.

Giselle no longer had men staying with her. The grandmother was sick and needed care. Her nurturing side came to bear, and she lovingly attended her mother until the night she died.

A car struck down Lucia's grandmother as she picked wild tomatillos along the toll-free road that ran by the house. The driver didn't stop and Lucia's grandmother died, sprawled in the dust. A tiny cement altar was erected at the site, where flowers were placed every few weeks by loved ones. No one had seen the accident, and investigators were useless. To become a police officer required no training, and the results spoke for themselves. Crime went unpunished, and most laws were unenforced, or ignored.

Lucia's had always been closer to her grandmother than her own mother, and her passing caused her a great deal of grief. She was buried in the local cemetery next to Lucia's grandfather. Her halfbrothers were older now, able to help with the chores, so that Lucia didn't feel guilty when she returned to her life with Domingo.

A few weeks after her grandmother's death, Lucia visited her mother. "How are you doing?"

"Ah well, you know...I keep busy so I don't have time to think about it."

"Good strategy."

"I have been thinking that I need to make a will so that there's no confusion about the ranch when I die."

"We don't need to talk about this now, Mother."

"It is as good of a time as any."

"Okay."

"I'm going to let the boys have the farmland, and you'll keep the house."

"Whatever you want, Mother."

"Someday you may wish to return and raise a family here."

"Maybe." Yet, she knew that would never happen.

"I'm going to miss your grandmother's blue corn tortillas." Giselle said.

"Me too. When I hugged her, that's what she smelled like."

Domingo moved up in rank to become chief security advisor to the Governor of Tlaxcala. Lucia discovered that his new job came with perks. He began staying out late, or not returning home at all. When she questioned him, he got angry and said it was job related. It wasn't difficult to find the evidence that he enjoyed other women. Domingo was careless. She found motel receipts and undeleted messages on his cell phone. When Lucia confronted him, Domingo didn't deny it. Instead, he asked if she wanted to try swinging.

Lucia moved out of the apartment while he was away on business, returning to the ranch until she could make it on her own again. Domingo pursued, promising to be faithful, proposing marriage, and telling her that they could soon afford to buy a house, raise a family. *The trap*, thought Lucia.

"You can continue your studies," he added. "You know I love you, baby. I made mistakes, but that is all over now."

His assurances fell on deaf ears. From now on, I'll use men just as they have used me. I'll chew them up and spit them out. Nothing will ever come between me and my studies—especially not a penis.

Giselle was disappointed about the breakup even when she knew the truth. "That's the way men are, and as long as they help pay the bills and return to you, why should it matter?"

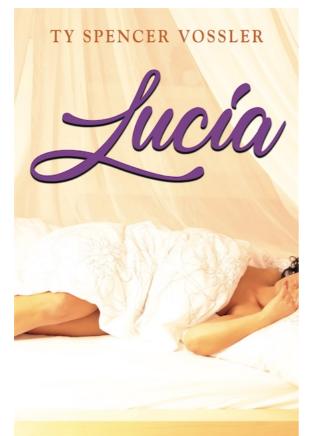
Lucia just stared at her mother. The cutting words on her tongue stayed where they were. She put her house in order upstairs, didn't answer the phone, and called the police when she saw Domingo's blue Beetle parked in front of the house. Of course they never came. Mexican police were as useless as the politicians and just as corrupted. Domingo tried to get to her through Giselle. Her mother was sympathetic, yet reminded him that her daughter had her own mind, and was old enough to make her own decisions.

"But I love your daughter," he pleaded.

"Perhaps you should have thought about that before you went with other women."

"It was a mistake. It will never happen again."

"I know from experience that it will," Giselle said.



Lucia's life captures the diversity of the Mexican culture and delves into the double standards imposed on women who want equal footing with men. She strives to control her life and expects more from herself than Mexican tradition allows. Her trysts are usually with experienced older men university professors, artists and other intellectuals.

LUCIA by Ty Spencer Vossler

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