

THIEN-KIM LAM

Full EXPOSURE

A NOVEL



AVON

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FIRST EDITION

Designed by Diahann Sturge

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data has been applied for.

ISBN 978-0-06-323729-2

ScoutAutomatedPrintCode

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing one book—much less two—is a monstrous quest. This book wouldn't exist without the guidance and cheerleading of my badass party.

This book kicked my butt—in a good way. Thank you to my editor, Erika Tsang, for helping me whip it into shape. As always, Tara Gelsomino, your guidance keeps me grounded yet pushes me to shoot for the stars. Much gratitude to my publicist, Jes Lyons, whose astounding skills have gotten my books into the hands of so many readers.

I'm so lucky to have found a writing community who gets me. Thank you, Tracey Livesay and Farrah Rochon, for your wise advice for this new author. To my fellow Asian romance writers Jackie Lau, Cathy Yardley, Ruby Lang, and Julie Tieu: your work continues to inspire me. Thank you, Donya Coles, for calling me out when I overthink things and for encouraging me to play with my art supplies when I'm stressed.

Shout-out to my local indie shop, Loyalty Books, for all of your support. Hannah, Christine, Gene, and the rest of the Loyalty crew are passionate about books and the people who read

and write them. I was honored to be your guest bookseller for Indie Bookstore Day. (I still have my name tag if you want me back!)

I can't forget my Bawdy Bookworms community. You've supported my books every step of the way. I'm glad to have found my crew of romance readers who enjoy inclusive, spicy reads *and* love discussing our new favorite vibrator.

Jennifer Seneca, thank you for indulging me on a whirlwind (and very cold) weekend in New Orleans. We had a blast eating our way around town. Get yourself a friend who enables you to buy that fancy fountain pen while simultaneously pitching your New Orleans romance novel to the owner of a stationery store. We need to go back there and then hit up the Vampire Café for bottomless brunch again.

I can't forget my IRL Boss Babes, Leticia Barr and Lisa Frame. Your unconditional love for me keeps me steady. I'd be lost without you two.

Huge gratitude to my sister, Thien-Kieu Lam, who has taken on the role of family historian. Her research into my grandparents' and parents' journeys from Vietnam to the United States has helped me better understand what they went through and what they sacrificed to raise us. Cảm ơn Ba Mẹ.

To my husband: thank you for keeping me stocked with chocolate, coffee, and seltzer water. Most of all, thank you for believing in me and encouraging me to do what I love. Thank you to my teenagers who still think I'm cool—for a mom, at least. They slipped me meals and coffee as I tried to type out the movie playing in my mind. I love you all.

Last but not least, thank you to my readers, especially those who messaged me to share how much *Happy Endings* meant to you. I'm writing the Vietnamese American characters I wanted to see in my romances, and I'm thrilled that they resonate with you, too.

BÁNH MÌ SLIDERS WITH SRIRACHA MAYO

Prep time: 20 minutes, plus time to marinate

Cook time: 20 minutes

Hawaiian rolls evoke memories of picking up greasy but delicious Church's fried chicken (a Southern fast-food chain). I inhaled the rolls they tossed in with our take-out orders. The sweet, soft bread complements the savory pork and pickled carrots to give you the typical Vietnamese salty, sour, and sweet flavor combo.

The dry rub also works well on other proteins, such as tofu and chicken. If you substitute with tofu, I recommend deep-frying or air-frying it before adding the seasoning for optimal flavor.

1½ tbsp five-spice powder

1 tsp each garlic powder, onion powder, ground black pepper

3 tsp of kosher salt

2 pounds country-style pork ribs, boneless

1 tbsp sugar

½ cup of white vinegar
1½ cup of matchstick or grated carrots
1 tsp cilantro leaves, finely chopped
2 tbsp of mayonnaise
sriracha chili sauce
Maggi seasoning (to taste)
12 small sweet rolls, such as Hawaiian rolls

Combine the five-spice powder, garlic powder, onion powder, ground black pepper, and 2 teaspoons of kosher salt (you'll use the rest later) to make the spice rub. Sprinkle generously on the pork. Place in zip-top bag and let it marinate for at least 4 hours (overnight is good too).

Preheat broiler for at least 15 minutes. Place country-style pork ribs on rack inside a roasting pan and broil for 8–10 minutes per side, until pork is golden brown and cooked to 145° F. Remove from oven and let rest for 5 minutes before cutting into ¼-inch slices.

You can also grill the pork.

CILANTRO CARROT SLAW

In a medium bowl, combine sugar, 1 teaspoon of kosher salt, and white vinegar. Stir until salt and sugar are dissolved. Add carrot and chopped cilantro leaves. Mix well. Let sit for at least 15 minutes. Toss it halfway through. Squeeze out any excess liquid before adding to the slider.

SRIRACHA MAYO

In a small bowl, combine mayonnaise and sriracha. Stir until well mixed. Keep refrigerated until ready to assemble sliders.

ASSEMBLE SLIDERS

Cut rolls in half. Spread sriracha mayo on each side of the roll. Place the sliced pork and carrot slaw on one side of the roll. Drizzle with Maggi seasoning and sprinkle with more cilantro leaves if desired. Top with other half of roll and enjoy!