



Greek Tycoon, Waitress Wife (Bedded by Blackmail)

By Julia James

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Greek Tycoon, Waitress Wife (Bedded by Blackmail) By Julia James Bibliography

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Editorial Review

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Alexeis Nicolaides glanced around him with displeasure. It had been a mistake to come here. A mistake to indulge Marissa. He was only in London for a twenty-four-hour stopover, and when he'd got out of the day-long meeting in the City and returned to his hotel suite he'd simply wanted to find her waiting for him. Then, once the bare niceties had been dispensed with, and they had made polite and completely empty enquiries about each other's well-being, he would have done what his fundamental interest in Marissa was: taken her to bed. Instead, however, he had ended up in this overcrowded art gallery, bored rigid and surrounded by yapping idiots—among whom Marissa was the key offender. At this moment she was giving full throat to her knowledge of the art market and the financial worth of the artist on display. Alexeis couldn't have cared less about either.

And with every passing moment he was caring less and less about Marissa, and about spending any more time with her. Not here—and not even in bed.

Even as he stood there, an expression of growing irritation in his eyes, he made his decision. Marissa was going to have to go. Up till now she hadn't been much of a problem—no more than any woman was, for they all, invariably, wanted to outstay their shelf-life with him. But three months on Marissa, savvy as well as beddable, was evidently starting to think she could start making demands. Like insisting he take her to this opening. Doubtless she thought that an absence of a fortnight would have whetted his appetite for her so much that he would be complaisant to her whims.

His dark eyes narrowed.

Mistake. His was not a complaisant nature. The Nicolaides wealth had always meant that he could call the shots when it came to women. He chose the ones he wanted and then they did what he wanted—or they were out. No matter how beautiful, how desirable, how highly they rated themselves.

Marissa Harcourt rated herself very highly. She was ferociously chic, with head-turning looks, a well-connected background, an Oxbridge degree and a fashionable and highly paid career in the art world. Clearly she considered these attributes sufficient not just to attach herself to a man like himself, but to hold him.

Did she even, Alexeis found himself speculating, consider them sufficient to hold him permanently?

Her predecessor had thought so. Adrianna Garsoni, whose exotic looks, soaring soprano voice and talent for self-promotion ensured her status as a diva at La Scala, had clearly believed that marrying Alexeis would mean the rich Nicolaides coffers could be put to work furthering her career. The moment Adrianna had shown her hand, making it clear she considered that marriage was on the agenda, Alexeis had disposed of her. Her reaction had been volatile in the extreme, but irrelevant to him. In comparison with Adrianna's tempestuous personality, Alexeis had welcomed Marissa's cool chic, as well as enjoying her highly sensual nature in bed.

Now, it seemed, much to his irritation, she would have to go too. He had quite enough going on in his life as it was.

Alexeis's thoughts shifted closer to home, and mouth tightened automatically. His father was currently marrying his fifth wife, and far too busy to bother himself with the intricacies and pressure of running a

global business. As for his half-brother, Yannis, he was the offspring of his father's second marriage, and far too busy pursuing his twin pleasures in life—fast sports and faster women. Alexeis's mouth tightened even more.

However, he knew that the last thing he'd welcome was his father trying to interfere in how he was running the group, or Yannis trying to muscle in on it. The latter, at least, was one thing upon which Alexeis saw eye to eye with his mother. Berenice Nicolaides was vehement in her determination that the son of the woman who had usurped her should not get his hands on what she considered her own son's rightful inheritance—nothing less than total and permanent control of the Nicolaides Group. Alexeis's reason for wanting Yannis out of the picture was less vindictive—he merely considered his brother feckless, hedonistic, and far too much of a risk to be involved in running so large and complex a company.

Alexeis didn't always agree with his mother. And on one aspect of his inheritance he was completely at odds with her. Alexeis's eyes darkened as they always did when his thoughts were called in that unwelcome direction. Berenice was convinced—obsessed, he amended—that he should marry an heiress, preferably Greek-born, both to bolster his own financial position and to present his father with a grandson to continue the Nicolaides dynasty. Her constant attempts to matchmake only exasperated Alexeis.

As did, right now, Marissa's discoursing on the art market. He made some perfunctory reply, still considering whether to end their relationship right now. The trouble was, if he did, he would be facing yet another night on his own. The dilemma worsened his mood and, peremptorily, he beckoned to a server circulating with drinks. As his fingers circled the stem of a champagne flute, he found himself glancing at her.

And holding the glance.

Long, blonde hair, caught back in a clip at her nape, an oval face with flawless features, translucent skin, a short straight nose and accented cheekbones. Wide-set, long-lashed clear grey eyes completed the package—the very delectable package. His first thought was automatic. What was a girl with looks like that doing working as a waitress?

He took the glass, murmuring a thank-you, and the girl's eyes met his.

He could see it happen as if in slow motion: her reaction to him. Her reaction to the way he was looking at her.

The soft grey-blue eyes widened, pupils dilating and her lips parted slightly. For one long moment she looked—helpless. That was the word, thought Alexeis. As if there was nothing she could do except meet his eyes and let him look at her.

Out of nowhere, Alexeis felt his mood improve. She really was very, very lovely—

'There's no mineral water.'

Marissa's voice was a snap of complaint. Suddenly the waitress looked flustered. Her eyes broke from Alexeis, and went to the woman at his side.

'I—I'm very sorry,' she stammered.

She had a low voice, Alexeis noted, and sounded nervous and under stress. The tray, crowded with brimming glasses, wobbled slightly in her uplifted hands.

Marissa rasped in irritation. 'Well, don't just stand there like a dummy. Go and get some. Still, not

sparkling—and no lemon.'

The girl swallowed. 'Yes, yes, of course,' she got out.

Jerkily, she turned to go. As she did, another of the guests in the crowded gallery stepped back abruptly and collided with her. Instinctively Alexeis felt his hand go out to balance the tray in the girl's hands, but it was too late. The glass of orange juice nearest the edge tottered crazily and then cascaded forwards, smashing to the ground and emptying its contents all over Marissa's cocktail dress.

'You *idiot!*' Marissa's voice was shrill with fury. 'Just *look* what you've done!'

A look of horror—and more—convulsed the girl's face.

'I'm... I'm sorry—' It was all she could get out.

A space had cleared around her, and someone was bustling up to her. A short man with an expression on his face that was both irate, and aghast.

'What's going on here?' he demanded.

'Isn't it *obvious?*' Marissa's voice was still shrill. 'This *moron* has *ruined* my dress.'

The aghast look on the short man's face deepened, and he launched into vociferous apology—which Alexeis cut short.

'Only the bodice is wet, Marissa,' he said coolly, cutting the man off. 'If you sponge it down it will dry out. It's dark; it won't show.'

Marissa was not consoled. 'You half-brained little *idiot!*' she raged at the girl again.

Alexeis put a restraining hand on her wrist. 'Go and find the powder room,' he said. It wasn't a suggestion.

Throwing him a fulminating glance, Marissa stormed off. Meantime, the short man had summoned two other waiting staff, who'd rushed up with cloths and a dustpan and brush, to clear up the shards and the spilt juice on the polished wood floor. He'd also banished the erring waitress whilst Alexeis had spoken to Marissa. Alexeis could see her scurrying, shoulders hunched, towards the back of the gallery.

Then the short man was turning his fulsomely dismayed apologies on Alexeis. Alexeis wasn't interested. 'It was an accident,' he said curtly, nodding dismissal impatiently.

The moment was too opportune to miss—he strode to the reception desk at the entrance.

'Tell Ms Harcourt I've had to leave,' he said. Then he walked out of the gallery, extracting his mobile to summon his driver. He'd send Marissa a cheque for a new dress, and a trinket to wear with it. That should dispose of her. It also meant he'd be facing a celibate night for certain.

Without volition, he found himself thinking about the waitress Marissa had railed at. He frowned—there had been no call to be so abusive to the girl. It had been an accident, not incompetence. His mind wandered back to his perusal of the girl. She really had been very lovely indeed. And in the black, tight-skirted, white-aproned outfit, with the close-fitting short-sleeved white blouse, she'd looked very—

Beddable—that was the word for it.

Oh, not too obviously, not too flagrantly, but there was no denying that the black and white uniform—together with her soft bloneness and those long-lashed wide-set eyes— did the business.

Involuntarily, he felt himself tightening.

Damn—that was *not* an appropriate response right now! However lovely she was, the girl was not the type of female he usually consorted with. Anyway, he was not in the habit of picking women up on a casual basis. He selected them carefully, not just on their looks, but on whether they would fit into his lifestyle—and, of course, not seek to outstay their shelf-life.

His car glided up to the pavement and he got in. Tonight he would just have to work, that ...

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Anthony Chan:

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