

A close-up portrait of a man with dark hair and a light beard, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and black tie. He has a serious expression. A pair of glasses is perched on his left shoulder. The background is dark and out of focus.

THE
Greek's

PLEASURABLE
REVENGE

ANDIE BROCK

MODERN™



Andie Brock

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Аннотация

Revenge...by seduction!The last person Calista expects – or wants – to see at her father’s graveside is arrogant billionaire Lukas Kalanos. Five years earlier, after an affair that stole her innocence, Lukas betrayed her family and disappeared, leaving Callie with much more than a broken heart...Seeking vengeance on the Gianopoulous family for framing him, Lukas finds Callie ripe for his seduction. She will pay for past wrongdoings – between his sheets! But discovering that Callie has had his child is a surprise that changes Lukas pleasurable plans of revenge...into a hunger to make her his own!

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Then tell me it's not true. Claspng hold of her wrist, Lukas held it in his grasp.

Very well. Callie indignantly tried to snatch back her hand, but Lukas held on. I do not have a lover, Lukas.

A boyfriend, then? A partner of some description?

No, none of those things. Now, kindly let me go.

What, then? Tell me. Because I can see it, Calista. I can see it in your eyes.

Callie hesitated. She could feel the moment closing in on her, weighing down on her with leaden pressure. Suddenly there was no escape.

I do not have a lover, Lukas. She summoned the words from deep inside her, where the truth had lain dormant for so long. But I do have a child.

â##A child?â## He dropped her arm as if it were made of molten metal. â##You have a *child*?â##

â##Yes.â## She watched as the shock that had contorted his handsome features settled into a brutal grimace of stone. â##I have a four-and-a-half-year-old daughter.â##

She paused, sucking in a breath as if it might be her last. This was it.

â##And so, Lukas, do you.â##

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The Greekâ##s Pleasurable Revenge

Andie Brock



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ANDIE BROCK started inventing imaginary friends around the age of four, and is still doing it todayâ##only now the sparkly fairies have made way for spirited heroines and sexy heroes. Thankfully she now has some real friends, as well as a husband and three childrenâ##plus a grumpy but lovable cat. Andie lives in Bristol, and when not actually writing might well be plotting her next passionate romance story.

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This one is for Bill. Don't worry, you don't have to read it! Love M. xx

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Extract

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CHAPTER ONE

“WE DON’T WANT any trouble, Kalanos.”

Lukas roughly shook off the hand on the sleeve of his dark suit, before turning to give its owner a bone-chilling stare.

“Trouble?” He let his eyes travel slowly over the sweating face of the middle-aged man who was trying but failing miserably to square up to him. “Whatever makes you think I would bring any trouble, Yiannis?”

The man took a step away, glancing around for back-up. “Look, Kalanos, this is my father’s funeral—that’s all I’m saying. It’s a time for respect.”

“Ah, yes, respect.” Lukas let the word slide through his teeth like a witch’s curse. “I’m so glad you reminded me. That must be why there are so many people here.” He swept a derisive stare over the sparsely populated graveside. “So many people wanting to pay their respects to the great man.”

“It’s a quiet family funeral. That’s all.” Yiannis avoided his eye. “And you are not wanted here, Lukas.”

“No?” Lukas ground out his reply. “Well, you know what? That’s too bad.”

In point of fact Lukas hadn’t wanted to be there. Not yet. Lukas had been far from ready to bury this evil man. He’d had plans for him. The man who had killed his father as surely as if he had driven a blade through his heart. Whose evil machinations

had seen Lukas thrown into prison for a crime he hadn't committed. Dark, unspeakable plans that would have seen him begging for mercy and, on realising there was none to be had, pleading for the oblivion of death.

Four and a half years. That was how long Lukas had been incarcerated in one of Athens's toughest jails, with only the dregs of society for company. Plenty of time to go over every detail of his betrayal, and worse—far worse—the betrayal of his father. Years of seething, boiling, melting rage that had solidified inside him until it had become all he was. No longer a man of flesh and blood but hard and cold, hewn from the lava of hatred.

Four and a half years to plot his revenge.

And all for nothing.

Because the object of his hatred, Aristotle Gianopoulous, had died on the very same day that Lukas had been released from prison. Almost as if he had timed it deliberately. Almost as if he had known.

Now Lukas watched the coffin being slowly lowered into the ground as the sonorous voice of the priest bestowing his final blessing filled the air. His cold eyes travelled round the circle of black-clad mourners, moving from one to the next. He let his gaze stay just long enough for his forbidding presence to register, to unsettle them, to shift their focus from the dead man to one who was very much alive. And who wanted them to know it.

Beside him Yiannis Gianopoulous fidgeted nervously,

shooting him wary sidelong glances. The son of Aristotle from his second marriage, he was of no interest to Lukas. His brother Christos was here too, scowling at him from the relative safety of the other side of the open grave. There were a couple of old business associates, Aristotle's ancient lawyer, and one of his lady-friends, quietly dabbing at her eyes as if it was expected of her. Slightly to one side stood Petros and Dorcas, Aristotle's last remaining faithful employees, who had worked for him for longer than Lukas could remember. More fool them.

An assorted array of damaged and broken individuals, the detritus of Gianopoulos's life, all brought together under the punishing heat of the midday sun on this beautiful Greek island to bury the man who had doubtless managed to blight all their lives in one way or another. Lukas didn't give a damn about any of them.

All except for one.

Finally he let his eyes rest upon her. The slightly built young woman standing with her head bowed, clutching a single white lily tightly in her hand. Calista Gianopoulos. Callie. The offspring of Aristotle's third wife, his youngest child and only daughter. The one good thing Aristotle had produced. Or so Lukas had thought. Until she had betrayed him, too. Playing her part in his downfall in the most treacherous way possible.

Lukas allowed himself a moment to savour her discomfort. He had recognised her immediately, of course, the second he had burst onto this touching scene. Marching through the small

graveyard, past the neglected resting place of his own father, he had stormed towards the freshly dug grave, enjoying the palpable wave of alarm that had rippled across the mourners.

And the look of panic that had gripped Calista. He had seen it, even though she was wearing a veil, had witnessed the flash of terror in those green eyes, registered the way her slender body swayed slightly before she had steadied herself and looked down.

Now he watched as she bowed her head still further, pulling at the black lace that covered her glorious red hair as if she could somehow disguise herself, hide from him. But there was no chance of that. No chance at all.

Look at me, Calista.

He found himself willing her to raise her eyes, to meet his searing gaze. He wanted to see her guilt for himself, to witness her shame, to feel it penetrate the solid wall of his contempt.

Or was some small, pathetic part of him still hoping that heâ##d got it wrong?

But Calistaâ##s eyes were firmly fixed on the grave before her, looking for all the world as if she would jump in with her deceased father if it meant she could get away from him. But, no. She would have no such escape. Aristotle might have died before Lukas could exact his revenge, but Calista was here before himâ##ready for the taking. It would be revenge of a very different kind, but none the less pleasurable for that.

Lukas stared at her through narrowed eyes. The young woman he thought heâ##d known. How wrong he had been. Over the

years they had built up a friendship, or so he had thought, sharing their summers on the island of Thalassa, a private idyll bought jointly by their two fathers when G&K Shipping had made its first million. A symbol of their success and their enduring friendship.

So much for that.

Lukas, eight years Calista's senior, thought back to the lonely little kid whose parents had divorced before she'd barely been out of nappies. Her neurotic screwball of a mother had whisked her back to her homeland of England, but sent her alone to Thalassa for the school holidays. Cutting a forlorn figure, Calista had trailed after whichever half-sibling had happened to be in residence at the sumptuous Gianopoulous residence at the time, her fair skin turning pink in the hot Greek sun, freckles dotting her nose.

She had trailed after Lukas too, seeking him out on his family's side of the island, obstinately settling herself in his boat when he was off one of his fishing trips, or clambering over the rocks to watch him dive into the crystal-clear turquoise waters before pestering him to show her how it was done.

Later she had become Callie the awkward teenager. Motherless by then, she'd been packed off to boarding school, but had still come back to Thalassa for the long summer vacations. Hiding her mop of curly red hair beneath a floppy straw hat and her pretty face behind the fat pages of a blockbuster novel, she'd no longer had any interest in her brothers nor,

seemingly, in Lukas, except for the occasional giveaway glance from those amazing green eyes when she'd thought he wasn't looking, and blushing to the roots of her hair when he caught her out.

Callie, now Calista, who at eighteen, had somehow metamorphosed into the most stunning young woman. And had tempted him into bed. Although technically they had never actually made it as far as a bed. Caught up in the moment, the sofa in the living room had served them well enough.

Lukas had known it was wrong at the time of course he had. But she had been just too alluring, too enticing to resist. He had been surprised, flattered, honoured, even that she had made a play for him, chosen him to take her virginity. But most of all he had been duped.

And now he was going to make her pay.

* * *

Calista felt the ground sway beneath her feet, and the image of the coffin bearing her father blurred through the black lace of her veil.

Oh, please, no.

Not Lukas, not here, not now. But there was no mistaking the figure of the man who was glowering at her from the other side of the grave, or the power of his intensely dark stare as it bored into her. He was broader than she remembered him, and his muscled torso harder, stronger, more imposing, filling the well-cut dark suit like steel poured into a mould of the finest

fabric. His sleeves tugged tight against the bulge of his biceps as he stood there with his arms folded across his chest, his feet firmly planted, clearly indicating that he was going nowhere.

All this Calista registered in a flash of panic before lowering her eyes to the grave.

This couldn't be happening.

Lukas Kalanos was in prison everybody knew that. Serving a long sentence for his part in the disgraceful arms smuggling business that had been masterminded by his father, Stavros her own father's business partner.

The sheer immorality of the venture had sickened Calista to the core it still did. The fact that her father's shipping business had gone bust because of it, and her family had been financially ruined, was only of secondary concern. At the age of twenty-three she had already experienced great wealth and great hardship. And she knew which one she preferred.

Which was why five years ago she had walked away, determined to turn her back on her tainted Greek heritage. Away from the collapse of the multi-billion-dollar family business, from her brothers' bickering and back-stabbing. From her father's towering rages and black, alcohol-fuelled depressions.

But most of all she had walked away from Lukas Kalanos the man whose dark eyes were tearing into her soul right now. The man who had taken her virginity and broken her heart. And who had left her with a very permanent reminder.

At the thought of her little daughter Calista felt her lip start

to quiver. Effie was fine—she was safe at home in London, probably running rings around poor Magda, Calista's trusted friend and fellow student nurse, who was in charge until Calista could hurry back. She didn't want to spend any more time here than she had to—she was intending to stay a couple of days at most, to sort through her father's things with her brothers, sign whatever paperwork needed to be signed and then escape from this island for ever.

But suddenly getting away from Thalassa had taken on a new urgency. And getting away from the menacingly dark form of Lukas Kalanos more imperative still.

The burial ceremony was almost over. The priest was inviting them to join him in the last prayer before the mourners tossed flowers and soil onto the top of the coffin, the distinctive sound as they met the polished wood sending a shiver through Calista's slender frame.

Not cold, surely? A firm, possessive grip clasped her elbow. Or is this a touching display of grief?

He spoke in faultless English, although Calista's Greek would have been more than good enough to understand his meaning. Using his grasp, he turned her so that now she couldn't escape the full force of him as he loomed over her, glowered down at her. If so, I'm sure I don't need to point out that it is seriously misplaced.

Lukas, please... Calista braced herself to meet his searing gaze, her knees almost giving way at the sight of him.

The tangled dark curls had gone, in favour of a close-cropped style that hardened his handsome features, accentuating the uncompromising sweep of his jawline shadowed with designer stubble, the sharp-angled planes of his cheeks. But the eyes were the same—so dark a brown as to be almost black, breathtaking in their intensity.

“I am here to bury my father—not listen to your insults.”

“Oh, believe me, agapi mou, in terms of insults I wouldn’t know where to start. It would take a lifetime and more to even scratch the surface of the depths of my revulsion for that man.”

Calista swallowed hard. Her father had had his faults—she had no doubt about that. A larger-than-life character, both in temperament and girth, he had treated her mother very badly, and had had a series of affairs that had broken her mother’s spirit, albeit already fragile. In turn that had eventually led to her accidental overdose. Calista would never wholly forgive him for that.

But he’d still been her father—the only one she would ever have—and she had always known she would have to return to Thalassa one last time to lay him to rest. And maybe lay some of her demons to rest too.

Little had she known that the biggest demon of all would be present at the graveside, sliding his arm around her waist right now in a blatant show of possessiveness and control.

“I thank you not to speak of my father in that way.”

She was grateful to feel her hot-headed temper kicking in to rescue her, colouring her cheeks beneath the veil. Pointedly taking a step to the side to dislodge his hand from her elbow, she pushed back her shoulders and had to stifle a gasp as his arm slid around her waist, the ring of muscled steel burning through the thin fabric of her black dress.

“It is both disrespectful and deeply insulting.” Her voice shook alarmingly. “Quite aside from which, you are hardly in a position to judge anyone.”

“Me, Calista?” Dark brows were raised fractionally in feigned surprise. “Why would that be?”

“You know perfectly well why.”

“Ah, yes. The heinous crime I committed. That something I want to talk to you about.”

“Well, I don’t want to talk to you about that or anything else.”

Particularly not anything else.

Cold fingers of dread tiptoed down her spine at the thought of what they might end up discussing. If Lukas were to find out that he had a daughter, heaven only knew how he would react. It was too terrifying an idea to contemplate.

Calista had never intended to keep Effie a secret from her father—at least not at first. She had been over five months pregnant before she had even realised it herself, convinced that stress was responsible for the nausea, her lack of periods, her

fatigue. Because no one got pregnant the very first time they had sex, did they?

Certainly the stress she had been suffering would have felled the strongest spirit, even before she'd found out she was expecting Lukas's child. What with Stavros's her father's friend and business partner dying so suddenly, and then the whole arms smuggling scandal coming out and the shipping business collapsing. And finally making the sickening discovery that Lukas was involved.

By the time she had seen a doctor Lukas had already been awaiting trial for his crime. And on the day she'd gone into labour, a full month earlier than expected, alone and frightened as she pushed her way through the agonising birth with only the midwife's hand to grip for support, Lukas had been in court, with the judge declaring him guilty and sentencing him to eight years in jail.

Effie's first screaming lungful of air had come at the exact moment when the judge had uttered the fateful words, "Take him down."

On that day—the day of her daughter's birth—Calista had resolved to wait to tell Lukas of Effie's existence until he was released from jail. Eight years had seemed a lifetime away. Time enough for her and Effie to build their own lives in the UK, to become a strong, independent unit. So the secret had been kept well hidden.

Calista had told no one—not even her father—for fear that

if he knew the truth word would spread amongst her Greek family and find its way to Lukas. But if she was honest there was another reason she didn't want her father to know. She didn't want her precious Effie tainted by any association with him.

He would have tried to take control, Calista knew that both of her and his granddaughter. He would have tried to manipulate them, bend them to his will, use them to his advantage. Calista had worked far too hard to build an independent life to let him do that. Simply not telling him about Effie had been the easiest solution all round.

Now Aristotle would never know he'd had a granddaughter. But Lukas... Calista moved inside the band of his arm, her heart thudding with frantic alarm and something else something that felt dangerously like excitement. Lukas would have to know that he was a father. That was his right. But not yet. Not until Calista had had a chance to prepare herself and Effie. Not until she had made sure all her defences were securely in place.

Calista, people are leaving. Beside her, but keeping a safe distance from Lukas, Yiannis tried to get her attention. They are waiting to speak to us before they go.

Leaving so soon? Lukas gave a derisive sneer. Is there to be no wake? No toasting the life of the great man?

The boats are waiting to take everyone back to the mainland. Yiannis wiped the sweat from his brow.

“You’ll be on one of them, if you know what’s good for you.”

Lukas gave a gruff laugh. “Funny, I was just thinking the same thing about you.”

“You have brought ruination and disgrace to our family, Kalanos, but Thalassa is the one asset my father managed to protect. You may own half of it now, but not for much longer.”

“Is that right?”

“Yes. We intend to make a claim for your half of the island as compensation for the financial ruin you and your father caused us. Our lawyers are confident we will win the case.” Yiannis struggled to keep his voice firm.

“We?”

“My brother and I. And Calista, of course.”

At the mention of her name Lukas released his arm from her waist, turning to give Calista a stare of such revulsion that it churned her stomach. She had no idea what Yiannis was talking about. She had never agreed to instruct a lawyer to sue for compensation. She wanted nothing to do with Thalassa—even the small share she assumed she’d inherit now, on Aristotle’s death. She certainly had no intention of fighting Lukas for his half.

“Well, good luck with that.” Narrowing his eyes, Lukas turned away, seemingly bored with the subject. “Actually, no.” Turning back, he fixed Yiannis with a punishing stare. “You might as well know—both of you. The island of

Thalassa now belongs to me. All of it.â##

â##Yeah, right.â## Christos had joined them, positioning himself between Yiannis and Lukas, sweating profusely. â##Do you take us for idiots, Kalanos?â##

Lukasâ##s pursed lips gave an almost imperceptible twitch.

â##You are obviously lying.â##

â##Iâ##m afraid not.â## Lukas removed a tiny speck of dust from the sleeve of his immaculate suit. â##Iâ##m only surprised your lawyers didnâ##t tell you. I managed to acquire your fatherâ##s half of the island some time ago.â##

Christosâ##s face turned puce, but it was Yiannis who spoke. â##That canâ##t be true. Aristotle would never have sold to you.â##

â##He didnâ##t need to. When he and my father bought the island they registered it in their wivesâ## names. A touching gesture, donâ##t you think? Or am I being naive? Perhaps it was simply a tax dodge? Either way, it has proved very convenient. My half, of course, came to me upon the death of my motherâ##God rest her soul. Acquiring your half was simply a matter of tracking down Aristotleâ##s first wife and making her an offer she couldnâ##t refuse. I canâ##t tell you how grateful she was. Especially as she had no idea she owned it.â##

â##But you have been in prison for years. How could you possibly have done this?â##

â##Youâ##d be surprised. It turns out that you can make some very useful contacts inside. Very useful indeed.â## Lukas raised

a dark brow. "I now know just the man for any given job. And I do mean any."

Yiannis visibly paled beneath his swarthy skin. In desperation he turned to Calista, but she only gave a small shrug. She didn't give a damn who owned the island. She just wanted to get off it as fast as she could.

Christos, meanwhile, always blessed with more brawn than brains, had raised his fists in a pathetic show of aggression. "You don't scare me, Kalanos. I'll take you on any time you like."

"Didn't I hear you say you had a boat to catch?" With a display of supreme indifference Lukas treated him to an icily withering look.

Christos took a step forward, but Yiannis grabbed hold of his arm, pulling him away to stop him from getting himself into real trouble. As he twisted sideways his feet got caught in the green tarpaulin covering the fresh earth around the grave and they both stumbled, lurching dangerously towards the grave itself, before righting themselves at the last moment.

Yiannis tugged at his brother's arm again, desperate to get him away from humiliation, or a punch on the nose, or both.

"You haven't heard the last of this, Kalanos!" Christos shouted over his shoulder as his brother hastily manoeuvred them away, weaving between the overgrown graves. "You are going to pay for this."

Calista watched in surprise as her half-brothers disappeared.

Weren't they supposed to have been staying a couple of nights on the island to go through their father's papers and sort out his affairs? Clearly that was no longer happening. Neither did they seem bothered about leaving her behind to deal with Lukas. It was obviously every man for himself or herself.

But it did mean that there was nothing to keep her there any more. Unless she counted the formidably dark figure that was still rooted ominously by her side.

Realising she was still clutching the single lily in her hand, she stepped towards the grave and let it drop, whispering a silent goodbye to her father. A lump lodged in her throat. Not just for her father—her relationship with him had always been too fraught, too blighted by anguish and tragedy for simple grief to sum it up—but because Calista knew she was not just saying goodbye to Aristotle but to Thalassa, her childhood, her Greek heritage. This was the end of an era.

She turned to go, immediately coming up against the solid wall of Lukas's chest. Adjusting the strap of her bag over her shoulder, she went to move past him. "If you will excuse me I need to be going."

"Going where, exactly?"

"I'm leaving the island with the others, of course. There is no point in me staying here any longer."

"Oh, but there is." With lightning speed Lukas closed his hand around her wrist, bringing her back up against his broad chest. "You, agape, are going nowhere."

Calista flinched, her whole body going into a kind of panicky meltdown that sent a flood of fear rippling down to her core. Bizarrely, it wasn't an entirely unpleasant sensation.

“What do you mean by that?”

“Just what I say. You and I have unfinished business. And you won't be leaving Thalassa until I say so.”

“So what do you intend to do? Hold me prisoner?”

“If necessary, yes.”

“Don't be ridiculous.”

She hardened her voice as best she could, determined that she would stand up to this new, frighteningly formidable Lukas. Pulling away, she looked pointedly at her wrist until he released it.

“Anyway, what is this unfinished business? As far as I'm concerned we have nothing to discuss.”

Her nails dug into her palms at the blatant lie. But he couldn't be talking about Effie. If he had found out about his daughter he would have blown her whole world apart by now.

“Don't tell me you have forgotten, Calista. Because I certainly haven't.”

Dark, dark eyes looked down on her, glittering with intent.

“Let's just say the image of you lying semi-naked on my sofa, your legs wrapped around my back, has stayed with me all these years. I've probably conjured it up more times than I should have. Prison has that effect on you. You have to take your pleasures where you can.”

Callie blushed to the roots of her hair, grateful for the black veil that still partially obscured her mortified face. That was until Lukas gently, almost reverentially, lifted the fine lace and arranged it back over her head. For one bizarre moment she thought he was going to kiss her, as if she were some sort of dark bride.

“There’s that’s better.”

He stared at her, drinking her in like a man with the fiercest thirst. She held her breath. Each testosterone-fuelled second seemed longer than the last. She shifted beneath his astonishingly powerful scrutiny, her skin prickling, her heart pounding in her ribcage.

“I had forgotten how beautiful you are, Calista.”

Her stifled breath came out as a gasp. She hadn’t expected a compliment not after all the bullying and the veiled threats. Except this was a compliment deliberately tinged with menace.

“I can’t tell you how much I am looking forward to renewing our acquaintance. I’ve been looking forward to it for almost five long years.”

No! Calista choked back a silent cry.

Surely he didn’t think she would repeat that catastrophic error? Panic and outrage stiffened her spine.

“If you imagine that I am going to go to bed with you again, Lukas, you are sorely mistaken.”

“Bed...sofa...up against the wall right here in front of your father’s grave, if you like. It’s all the same to me. I want

you, Calista. And I should warn you, when I want something I go all out to make sure that I get it.â##

CHAPTER TWO

LUKAS WATCHED THE alarm on Calistaâ##s face set her delicate features in stone.

He had been right to declare her beautifulâ##even if he had only meant to say it in his head. She was even more beautiful than he remembered. The intervening years had honed her heart-shaped face, the high cheekbones, the firmly pointed chin. But the small, straight nose was still speckled with a dusting of freckles and her mouth... That was just as he remembered it, wide and full-lipped and deliciously pinkâ##even now, when it was pursed in an attempt at defiance.

How Aristotle had produced such an exquisite creature as this was almost beyond comprehension. Calista obviously took after her mother, Diana, the actress-cum-model whose beauty had ultimately been her downfall. They certainly shared the same colouring, but whereas Diana had been all leggy height and stunning bone structure, which the camera had loved, Calista was petite, with full breasts and a slim waist leading to curvaceous hips that begged to be traced with the flat of his palm. Lukas could feel that urge powering through him right now, and he responded by reaching for her hand, relishing the soft feel of it beneath his own.

â##This way.â## He started off across the graveyard, pulling Calista behind him, all too aware that he was behaving like some

sort of caveman but not caring in the least.

###Lukas###stop this.##

No way. Her feeble protestation only made him all the more determined that she was going to come with him##back to his villa and back to his bed. He had waited far too long for this moment to allow any second thoughts to creep in, or even to let common decency stand in his way. Certainly not her breathless objections.

###Lukas, stop##let me go!##

They had reached the small copse behind the ancient chapel, where he had left his motorbike. Positioning Calista between it and him, Lukas finally let go of her hand.

Calista snatched it back, her eyes flashing with fire. ##Just what the hell do you think you are playing at?##

##Oh, I##m not playing, Calista. This is no game.##

##What, then? What are you trying to prove? Why are you behaving like such a...a horrible bully?##

##Perhaps that##s what I##ve become.## He gave her a casually brutal stare. ##Perhaps that##s what four and a half years in prison does to a man.##

Calista##s expression tightened. ##I don##t even understand why you aren##t still there. You were sentenced to eight years.##

##Time off for good behaviour.## His eyes glittered coldly. ##You see, I was a very good boy whilst I was in there##as far as the authorities were concerned, that is. Now I intend to make

up for it.â##

He watched her swallow.

â##I do hope my early release hasnâ##t inconvenienced you?
â##

â##It hasnâ##t. I couldnâ##t care less where you are...what
you do.â##

â##Good. Then get on the bike. We are going to Villa
Helene.â##

â##No, we are not.â## Her hand flew to her chest. â##Iâ##m
not going anywhere with you.â##

â##And there I was, hoping we wouldnâ##t have to do this
the hard way.â##

Easily spanning her waist with his broad hands, Lukas lifted
her off her feet and planted her unceremoniously on the pillion
seat of the bike. The thin fabric of her skirt rode up over her
thighs, pulling seductively taut, while her breasts heaved with
indignation.

Lukas fought down the kick of lust.

â##If you donâ##t get me off this thing right now I am going
to scream.â##

â##Feel free.â## He smiled darkly. â##It wonâ##t make any
difference. Your dear brothers, along with the other broken-
hearted mourners, are already on their way back to the mainland.
No one will hear you.â##

He saw the flicker of fear in her eyes but she didnâ##t move.
Her pride refused to give him the satisfaction. And for some

reason that only increased his admiration—and his arousal. Perched on the leather seat of his bike, she looked like some sort of erotic goddess, her back arched in defiance, her glorious Titian hair tumbling over her shoulders. The mourning veil, he noticed, had fallen to the dry ground at his feet.

—There's Petros...and Dorcas. They're still on the island. Villa Melina is still their home.

He gave her a telling look. That was something for him to decide—not her. Clearly she was forgetting who called the shots around here.

—Look... She suddenly changed tack, trying for a conciliatory tone. —What's this all about, anyway?

—You used to love this bike, Callie, don't you remember? — He deliberately used her shortened name, taking them back to the long hot summers of their shared past. —You were forever pestering me for a ride.

They had both loved this motorbike—the sleek black beast that had been Lukas's sixteenth birthday present to himself. He'd had other bikes since, and sports cars, luxury yachts, a helicopter—all the extravagant modes of transport that great wealth could afford. But nothing had surpassed the feeling of straddling this powerful beauty all those years ago, made even better by the feel of Callie's skinny arms clinging to his waist as they had roared off, the sound of her excited squeals in his ear.

Coming across it in the garage this morning, just where he had left it, he had felt as if he were meeting an old friend. One old

friend, at least, that hadn't let him down. She had obediently started first time after he had charged the battery.

"I think we've both grown up since then." Calista tossed back her flame-red hair, all sharp-angled defiance and dignified posturing. "Or at least I have."

"Indeed... I wouldn't dispute that." Lukas gave a derisive laugh. "I seem to remember we engaged in some very grown-up activity last time we met."

Again she flushed, as if she found the memory of what they had done intensely shameful. As well she might.

"Well, that's not something that is going to be repeated, I can assure you. Despite your earlier threats."

"Not threats, Calista. Think of it more as a promise."

"You are such an arrogant piece of work, Lukas, you know that?" Emerald eyes flashed with fire. "I promise you this: what happened between us will never happen again."

"No? You're sure about that, are you?"

"Quite sure."

"Then coming back to my villa for a couple of hours won't hurt, will it? Unless you don't trust yourself, of course?"

"I trust myself, Lukas. It's you I don't trust."

"Ah, yes, of course. I keep forgetting that I'm the villain of the piece here."

"Yes, you are!" Calista immediately fired back at him.

He had to hand it to her—her acting skills had improved

significantly over the years.

“In that case let me reassure you that nothing will happen between us unless you want it to.”

Was that true? It should be. His well-rehearsed plan had always been to trick her into wanting him, just the way she had him. But if she carried on looking at him the way she was now he wasn't sure he'd be able to hang on to his control.

He studied her from beneath lowered lashes, lazily, slowing himself down. Unless he was very much mistaken there was something else in that fiery look of hers. For all her prim deportment, her expression of outrage, her feisty comebacks, something simmered beneath the surface. Something that looked remarkably like sexual arousal. Yes. He would have her screaming his name with pleasure before the day was through. And then revenge would be his.

Swinging his leg over the bike, he turned the key in the ignition, gripping the handlebars and feeling the mechanical vibrations rumble through him.

“I'd hang on if I were you.” Speaking over his shoulder he twisted the throttle and the engine roared in reply. “Let's let this old girl off the leash and see what she can do.”

And with a sudden jolt and a screech they were off.

* * *

Calista had no choice but to wrap her arms around Lukas's waist as they sped away from the cemetery, leaving its occupants

in blissful peace as Lukas navigated the bike onto the coastal road that wound its way round the island. She leant her body into his, the wind whipping her hair back from her face, drying the breath in her throat as she clung on for dear life.

He was driving deliberately fast, she knew that, trying to frighten her, make her squeal. Well, she wasn't nine years old any more, and she certainly wasn't going to give him the satisfaction of behaving as if she was. In fact as soon as they got to the villa she would show him that she didn't intend to take any more of his bullying ways.

The stunning Greek scenery flashed past, the dramatic coastline with its towering cliffs and secluded coves stretching before them. Screwing up her eyes against the glare of the sun sparkling on the sea, Calista knew it wasn't fear she was feeling anyway. It was exhilaration. She felt alive, invigorated, realising how good it was to be back on Thalassa. More than that, realising how much she had missed it.

She adjusted her position slightly and felt Lukas's body respond, the broad width of his back heating against the crush of her breasts, the muscles of his waist shifting beneath the grip of her hands. A dangerous shudder of pleasure went through her. The island wasn't the only thing she had missed. And she was going to have to be very careful about that.

The twisty road took them past the turning for Villa Melina, her family villa, and continued east across the top of the island in the direction of Villa Helene's home to Lukas and his father,

Stavros, now deceased.

It was a road Calista knew well—probably a distance of six miles or so. She had cycled it many times as a child, frequently seeking out the company of Lukas and his kindly father in preference to her own curmudgeonly father and boring half-brothers, with whom she'd had absolutely nothing in common. But she'd never paid much attention to the names of the two villas before—Melina, the name of Aristotle's first wife and Helene, Lukas's mother. She hadn't known either woman, but it was obvious now she thought about it that the villas had been named after them.

What she hadn't known—what no one had known by the look of it—was that Thalassa had actually belonged to them. No one except Lukas, of course, who had used that information to buy the entire island—presumably as a way of getting back at her family. She had no idea what had happened to the Lukas she had once known. What had become of him...

Turning off the coastal road, Lukas bumped the bike up the dirt track that led to Villa Helene and pulled up in front of the entrance in a spray of dry dust.

Quickly dismounting, he held out his hand to her, but there was nothing gentlemanly about the gesture. It was done with an aggressively urgent air. Shepherding her before him, he unlocked the front door—an action that surprised Calista in itself. No one bothered to lock their doors on the island of Thalassa.

Inside, the villa was just as she remembered it. Even the smell

was familiar—somehow both comforting and unsettling. She followed Lukas down the cool hallway until they reached the large living room that ran the entire width of the villa. It was still and dark in there, until Lukas strode over to the bi-fold doors, unlocked them and pushed them wide open, undoing the shutters so that the light streamed in.

Calista blinked. The stunning panoramic view of the Aegean Sea appeared before them, but Calista's focus was solely on the room she now saw so clearly. Or, more specifically, on the sofa in the room. The one she had so recklessly fallen onto with Lukas that evening, in a tangle of fervid, scorching, pumping desire. The one where Effie had been conceived.

“Drink?” Lukas grabbed a couple of glasses from the sideboard and reached for a decanter of whisky.

“No, thank you.” Calista dragged her burning eyes away from the scene of their complete madness.

“Mind if I do?” Pouring himself a generous slug, he knocked it back in one gulp, then poured another.

Clearly he wasn't waiting for her consent.

Averting her eyes from the sheer brutal beauty of him, Calista quickly scanned the rest of the familiar room; the white walls displaying colourful local artwork, the rustic wooden furniture and the travertine marble flooring. She had always loved this villa. More so than her own family's, in fact, which Aristotle had massively extended over the years as a succession of different women had needed to be impressed and the urge to display his

wealth had become ever more important.

Villa Helene was more modest, more traditionally Greek, with towering walls affording much needed shade and the exterior woodwork painted that particular Mediterranean blue. Not that it lacked any modern comforts, with its large stainless steel kitchen, a beautiful infinity pool that glistened invitingly through the open doors, five bedrooms, a gymnasium and a library. There was even a helipad where, out of the corner of her eye, Calista had noticed a gleaming helicopter, heating up in the sun as they had walked in. So that was how he had got here...

“So, what is this unfinished business?” She decided to take the lead rather than wait for Lukas like a fly in his web. She watched as he set down his glass, swallowing hard as he started towards where she stood in the middle of the room. “What is it you want to talk about?”

“The talking can wait.” He stopped before her, towering over her as he gazed down her flushed face. “Right now I am more interested in action.”

With no warning he reached forward, sliding a hand around the back of her neck, lifting the weight of her hair for a second, before dropping it so that it rippled down her back. “Right now I want you to kiss me the way you kissed me the last time we were here, agapi mou. Do you remember?”

Calista felt herself sway. His hand was branding the back of her neck...his hot, whisky-tinged breath was shooting sharp waves of longing throughout her body. Of course she

remembered. She remembered every minuscule, heart-stopping, life-changing detail. She had been living it for the past five years.

It had been her eighteenth birthday party—a gloriously warm June evening. Calista had finished her exams and finally left the boarding school that she had disliked so much, and she'd been intending to soak up a few weeks of Greek sunshine before returning to the UK to start university.

She had been looking forward to the party—not so much to the actual event, the guest list for which had mostly comprised her father's business cronies and their families, rather than her friends, although that had partly been her decision. Aristotle had told her to invite as many people as she wanted, offering to pay for their flights from the UK and to put them up at the villa, "So they can see the sort of wealth you come from." But she hadn't had that many friends—she'd always been the outsider at school, a motherless red-haired creature with a Greek name—and she hadn't intended to scare off the couple of friends she had had by subjecting them to the full force of her father.

Because far from wanting to show off Aristotle's wealth she had been embarrassed by it—or, more precisely, embarrassed by Aristotle. Over the years he had become ever more boorish, more overbearing, and the large quantities of alcohol he'd consumed, along with the banquet-type meals that he demanded every night, had not helped his general health or his temper. It had seemed the larger he'd got, the more obnoxious he'd

become.

But there had been one person Calista had wanted to see—Lukas. He had promised her that he would be there, and that alone had been enough to see her struggling to straighten her unruly tumble of red hair, carefully applying some lipstick and eyeliner and easing herself into a short emerald-green silk dress that had hugged her youthful curves in just the right places. Donning a pair of strappy gold sandals, complete with killer heels, she had been ready to go—or, more importantly, ready for Lukas.

Except he hadn't showed up.

The disappointment had been crushing. Calista's fragile hopes had been dashed every time another group of guests had appeared and he hadn't been amongst them. It had seemed as if more and more people had come, spilling out onto the terrace, laughing, drinking, dancing...

Finally Lukas's father Stavros had arrived, bursting onto the terrace in a highly agitated state, seeking out Aristotle and demanding that he go inside with him so that they could talk in private. Calista hadn't even had a chance to ask him where Lukas was.

In the end she had decided to take matters into her own hands. Suddenly she had no longer just wanted to see Lukas. Being with him had become an all-consuming compulsion, taking on a frightening urgency that would have seen her do almost anything to achieve her aim.

Which had turned out to be stealing a car. Or rather borrowing it from Stavros, who had left the keys of his SUV in the ignition. Calista had only had a handful of driving lessons she had certainly never passed her driving test but such had been her determination to see Lukas that she hadn't been about to let a little thing like that stand in her way.

Somehow she had managed to negotiate the twisty coastal road without tumbling the car off the cliff and then, armed with a bottle of champagne and what she hoped was a winning smile, she had burst into Villa Helene and found Lukas anxiously pacing the floor.

He had looked astonished to see her. "Callie! What on earth are you doing here?"

"I've come to find you, of course. It's my birthday, in case you've forgotten."

"No, I've not forgotten. Happy Birthday."

He'd said the requisite words but there had been none of his usual warmth, no kiss on the cheek or birthday hug.

Instead he had looked distractedly over her shoulder. "Have you seen my father?"

"Yes, he's at my birthday party. Which is where you should be. You promised, Lukas."

"Did he seem okay?"

"Yes why?"

"It's just that he left here in a hell of a hurry and refused to tell me what was going on."

â##Well, he seemed fine to me.â## It had only been a small lie. Calista could have had no idea of the consequences. â##He was chatting with Papa. He told me to come and get you.â##

â##He gave you the keys to his car?â## Clearly puzzled, Lukas had obviously tried to work out what was going on. But Calista hadnâ##t gone there to talk about Stavros. Right up until that moment she hadnâ##t been entirely sure why she was there, but suddenly she had known with an all-consuming certainty.

She wanted Lukas to make love to her.

She still remembered his look of surprise as she had moved towards him, the way he had finally smiled when she had flung her arms around his neck, the bottle of champagne still in her hand, clunking heavily against his back. He had laughed, telling her to stop being silly, that she must have had too much to drink, but when he had pulled back to look into her eyes he had seen the truth.

That she wasnâ##t a child any more. That she knew what she was doing. That she wanted him.

Even so, he had resisted. But as she had shamelessly pressed her body up against his, chucking the bottle of champagne onto a chair so that she could thread her fingers through his dark curls to pull him closer, she had felt him weaken. And when she had finally claimed his lips, when the first split second of panic and insecurity on her part and complete shock on his had vanished, rapidly melting into desire and then into a burning passion that had seen them stumble backwards onto the sofa, there had been

no turning back.

And now they were here again in the exact same spot. And Calista was horrified to find that the pull of his attraction was just as strong...that she still wanted him every bit as much as she had that June night, even knowing what he had done, even having seen the man he had become.

For Lukas was no longer the warm, funny, laid-back guy she had originally fallen in love with. Along with the dark curls, the mischievous twinkle in his eyes had gone, to be replaced by a cruel stare and a grim determination that sent a shiver down her spine.

And yet still she wanted him.

Her whole body thrummed, all but begging to be his. He was too close...far too close...his head bent so that there was no escaping the searing intensity of his eyes.

Of course I remember. She dragged up the words from somewhere, fighting to find some control. But, believe me, I won't be making the same mistake again.

So it was a mistake, was it? That's an interesting choice of word.

Yes...yes, it was. Heat flared in her cheeks.

Because, you see, I don't think it was a mistake at all. He lowered his head until their lips were only a fraction apart. I think it was all very carefully planned.

What do you mean? she whispered hoarsely against the seduction of his mouth.

And now it's time for my plan to be put into place. My turn to seduce you.

No, Lukas, don't be ridiculous! She tried to pull back but he held her firm.

And you know what? I have to say I am very much looking forward to it.

Suddenly his mouth was on hers, his hand pushing up through her hair, grasping the back of her head and holding her to him. She was powerless to escape. Even if she had wanted to. Even if she had somehow managed to harness the will-power that had scattered in all directions at the very first touch of his mouth.

His tongue had easily parted her lips and he continued his relentless assault, kissing her with a force driven by need, by hunger and by the dark greed that had clearly overtaken him. It was totally uncompromising, ruthless in its pressure, devastating in its delivery. And impossible to resist.

Because despite everything despite the whole damned mess of their lives Calista felt herself melt, dissolve. Molten heat slid through her, unerringly finding its way to her core, where it settled, pulsing hot and deep and hard and relentless. As Lukas continued his skilful assault she found herself leaning in to him, shuddering with pleasure when his hand lowered to the swell of her bottom, tantalisingly skimming over her buttocks before clenching tight in a blatant display of dominance and possession.

She moaned softly, but it was swallowed by Lukas's mouth as he changed the angle of his head so that he could plunder

her mouth more deeply, take her completely. His hand flattened, searing into her, pressing her against the thick swell of him. If she had had any resistance before it vanished completely at the shockingly real evidence of his arousal and the deeply carnal response that ricocheted through her body.

He was moving them now, propelling her eager body backwards, one hand still holding her bottom, the other pressed into the small of her back so that he could steer her where he wanted her to go. Together they stumbled as one entwined unit, until Calista felt the wall behind her and realised she had nowhere else to go. Nowhere else she wanted to go. Nowhere except into the drugging dark oblivion of Lukas's power.

For a second their eyes met, and Calista felt her breath stall at the darkly savage look that shadowed his handsome face. But then his mouth was on hers again, and she was lost in the rush of sensual need and the burning hunger that shook her entire body.

She felt his hand move to her thigh, lifting her leg over his hip. She wrapped it around him to steady herself, to expose herself more to the pulsing throb of him. She heard his low growl of approval or maybe it was victory...she didn't have the capacity to tell. His hand pushed up her skirt, his impatient fingers tugging aside the flimsy fabric of her panties so that he could feel her, slide against her, letting out a grunt, a mirthless sort of half-laugh, as he felt her buck against his touch, her shudder of pleasure immediately starting to build and grow.

Quickly pulling away, he released her from his grasp, letting

her leg drop to the ground. Feeling in the pocket of his jacket, he took out a condom, ripping open the packet with his teeth at the same time as shrugging off the jacket and unbuttoning his trousers so they fell to the ground. His boxer shorts went next, before he rolled the condom onto himself with one deft movement.

Then he was all hers again, picking up her arms and moving them around his neck, so that when she clung on, holding him as tightly as he knew she would, he was able to lift her off her feet and wait for her legs to wrap around his waist, as he knew they would, her shoes clattering to the floor.

With his free hand he tugged her panties aside again. Only this time it wasn't his finger that nudged against her, it was the head of his arousal—hot and hard and silky and perfectly positioned to sink into her.

It felt like the most erotically glorious promise in the world. And a second later that promise was delivered.

Suddenly he was inside her, smooth and hard and deep, filling her body and soul, and her every heightened emotion tuned in to nothing except this one incredible moment. Her mew of pleasure turned into a shriek of need, wordlessly commanding him not to stop, to keep going, faster, deeper, to take her to that place she had feared she would never find again.

Which was exactly what he did. Their bodies banged heedlessly against the wall behind them, until Calista could hang on no longer and, screaming out his name, found her shuddering,

hollowing release. She felt Lukas stiffen, his body go into a rigid spasm, before he too gave in to the inevitable and roared his surrender into the tangle of her hair.

CHAPTER THREE

PUSHING HIMSELF AWAY from the wall with the palms of his hands, Lukas caged Calista between his locked arms. He wasn't going to give her any more space not yet. Not while his breath was still heaving in his lungs, his heart hammering in his chest. He stared down at the top of her head, registering the way her slight figure shook, even though she had returned both feet to the floor, rearranging the skirt of her dress as if to pretend nothing had happened.

Well, it had. He had exacted his revenge.

All the hours he had spent plotting and scheming had finally come to fruition. Exactly as he had planned. Exactly on his terms. All done in the name of retribution.

At least that was what he had told himself. But, in truth, lying awake at night and reliving that fateful evening they had spent together had become something of an obsession. And conjuring up Calista's image had not been purely about revenge far from it. It had become his guilty pleasure. The soft swell of her breasts, the silky touch of her pale skin, her fresh scent, her sweet breath... The memory had transported him from the dismal walls of his cell to a very different place indeed.

He had lost count of the number of times he had travelled the length of her body in his mind, leaving no part of her soft curves

untouched by his attentions, and his own body had responded in the most carnal way as he'd listened to the dry snoring of his cellmate in the bunk above him and cursed to hell the situation he had found himself in.

But now he was free. Now he had achieved his goal.

So why wasn't he feeling it? Why wasn't he getting the satisfaction he so badly craved? Why wasn't it enough?

The sex itself had more than lived up to its promise. Just like the first time, there had been something about the connection between them—the chemistry, the fit—that had taken it beyond just sex to another level, as if they had been created solely for the gratification of each other. Not in an easy, comfortable way—not in the way of friends or gentle lovers—but with a wild, dramatic energy.

Like asteroids colliding in the vastness of space, their paths predetermined by a higher being, they had exploded against one another, set each other alight. And ultimately they had blown each other apart.

He could take her again—right here and now—he felt himself harden at the thought of it. In fact he could take her over and over again—keep her here in his villa until he had got her out of his system once and for all. After all, didn't she deserve it after the way she had treated him?

He was halfway to crazily convincing himself it was a good idea when he stopped, looking down at himself. A thirty-one-year-old man, standing there with his pants around his ankles. A

man whose desire for the woman in front of him was dangerously close to being out of control.

Perhaps he needed to take a step back to examine his motives. And fast.

Dropping his arms, he wrenched off the condom and quickly disposed of it, then saw to his pants and trousers, buttoning the waistband as he turned away.

“Do you want that drink now?” He spoke over his shoulder, not wanting to look at Calista for fear of what he might see in her eyes. He needed another drink before he could do that.

“Lukas...?”

She whispered his name like a baffled question. The way she might speak to a person she had come across after a very long time—someone who had changed so irrevocably, so much for the worse, that she couldn't be sure it was him. Well, this was him now. And she had better get used to it.

With two glasses of whisky in his hand he turned, bracing himself for what he would see. But still she got to him, those green eyes of hers instantly finding their target, making the glasses clink together in his hand. It was a look of turmoil—of confusion and hurt and something Lukas refused to acknowledge, let alone try to analyse.

He had made her feel bad. But hadn't that been his intention? He refused to let his conscience prick him now.

Striding towards her, he handed her a glass, noticing the way her hand shook as she reached for it, immediately raising it to

her lips to take a sip. The whisky seemed to restore her, and the flush of colour in her cheeks lessened from feverish red to a gentle pink.

“Yes, Calista?” He returned her question with the mocking sarcasm built up over five bitter years. He saw her flinch.

“Whatever has happened to you?”

“Let me see...” He pretended to consider. “Lies, betrayal, deceit, the death of my father, and...oh, yes, four and a half years rotting in an Athens jail.”

He watched as she shook her head. “I have no idea who you are any more, Lukas. Do you know that?”

“No? Well, maybe that makes two of us.” He took a deep slug of whisky. “And yet still you let me push you up against a wall and have my way with you. Why is that, do you suppose?”

“I... I don’t know.”

“Still you come apart at the very first touch of my hands, urging me on as if you can’t get enough of me, screaming my name as you take what you so badly need from me.”

This felt better—dishing out the punishment he knew she deserved.

“And you are still dressed in black, your dear, departed father scarcely cold in his grave. It’s hardly becoming, is it, Calista? It’s hardly fitting behaviour for a grieving daughter.”

“No, it’s not. It should never have happened. And,

believe me, I regret it now.â##

â##Oh, Iâ##m sure you do. But that doesnâ##t mean it wonâ##t happen again.â## He closed the space between them with one menacing step. â##Because you and I both know, Calista, that I can have you any time I want, any place I want.â##

He watched the way his words inflicted pain, sawed away at her just the way heâ##d intended them to. But with the pain came adrenalin, swiftly followed by that glorious flash of temper.

â##So thatâ##s what all this is about, is it?â## She threw back her shoulders, her hair rippling down her back. â##You have lured me here to prove that you can have sex with me in some sort of pathetic attempt to get your own back?â##

â##Something like that.â##

She opened her mouth, but for a second words failed her. â##You are a despicable, vile creatureâ##do you know that? A lousy piece ofâ##â##

â##Yeah, yeah.â## He shut her down with a bored flick of his wrist. â##Iâ##m sure Iâ##m all that and more. You can call me all the names you want, if it makes you feel better, but it wonâ##t change the facts. And do you know what the worst of it is?â##

He let his eyes drift lazily over her outraged face.

â##You didnâ##t even put up a fight. I had been looking forward to the challenge, the thrill of the chase, to working out how I was going to win you over. But in the end it was so easy it was almost pathetic.â##

It was as if heâ##d punched her. The shock of his words made

her fold at the stomach, reach for the back of a chair beside her to stop herself from falling. Raking in a breath, she pulled herself upright. Then, shooting him one last look of utter revulsion, she turned to go.

With lightning speed Lukas reached the doorway before her, easily barring her way. “Not so fast.”

“I would like you to move, please.” Her voice was brittle with anger and hurt.

“Uh-uh. You will leave when I say so.”

“Is this part of your master plan?” She put her hands on her hips, as if to try and anchor herself. “To hold me against my will? Keep me here as your prisoner so that you can prove just what a detestable macho bully you have become?”

“And supposing I did?” Lukas arched her a lethal look. “You and I both know what would happen. You would be all over me, Calista. Oh, you might pretend to be outraged...put up a display of resistance in the name of decorum. But in truth I would only have to click my fingers and you would be mine. Writhing beneath me, on top of me, down on me, begging for my attentions and then screaming for more. Look how you behaved just now. It’s pitiful, really. I should feel sorry for you.”

Slap.

The weight of Calista’s palm connected with the side of his jaw with an impressive crack.

He had seen it coming. He could have stopped it. Spending time amongst some of Greece’s most notorious criminals had

honed his instincts, taught him to read the situation before it happened. Lukas had always had fast reactions—now they were razor-sharp. But for some reason he had let it happen. For some reason he had wanted to feel it—that burn, that most primitive connection—to show that he was alive. To show that he could get to her. And the sting from her palm had set his heart racing.

Calista Gianopoulous—the young woman he hadn't been able to get out of his mind, whose betrayal had consumed him so obsessively that it had become part of the fabric of who he was. Now he had her where he wanted her. Now her humiliation was in his grasp. And he could squeeze as tightly as he wished.

He studied her intently, standing there with her chin held high, her breasts heaving seductively beneath the demure black dress, pulling the fabric tight with every gasping, defiant breath. Her eyes flashed with a green so intense, so wild, it was as if she had been stripped of her sanity.

He should be feeling vindicated, triumphant. But he didn't feel either of those things. Instead he was simply consumed with the overwhelming need to possess her body again. His only conscious thought was how utterly magnificent she looked.

He let a second of silence pass and tried to pull himself together, waiting to see what she would do next—almost willing her to strike him again so that this time he could intercept it, grasp her wrist and feel that physical connection between them again, see where it might lead. But instead she let her hand drop by her side, lowering the tawny sweep of her lashes. The pink

pout of her lower lip, he noticed, had started to quiver.

“Resorting to violence, Calista?” He gave a derisive laugh. “I would never have thought it of you.”

“It’s no more than you deserve.”

“No? Maybe not. But if we’re dishing out home truths, perhaps it’s time that you took a look at yourself.”

Her head came up and there was fear in her eyes. “What do you mean by that?”

“Oh, come on, Calista, let’s drop the pretence. You see, I know.”

“Kn...know what?”

If Lukas had had any doubt about her part in his downfall it was well and truly dispelled now. Guilt was written all over her pretty face—not just written, but spelled out in big, bold capitals. She positively shook with it, her hands trembling as she raised them to her mouth, her legs looking as if they wouldn’t be able to hold her up much longer.

He let out a grim laugh. “Do you really need me to spell it out for you?”

“Lukas... I...”

“Because I will if you want.”

Taking a couple of steps away he then turned, his eyes pinning her to the spot, as if they were in a courtroom.

“Let me take you back to the night of your eighteenth birthday party. The night my father discovered that the police had boarded one of the ships and found it was loaded with

arms. While Stavros was over at Villa Melina, trying to find out what the hell was going on, your father dispatched you to entertain me. And you did a magnificent job! I have to say that.

He paused, his whole body brittle with seething contempt.

Aristotle must have been very proud of you. While my father was suffering a heart attack you were in full seduction mode...while people were mobilising a helicopter to get him to the mainland we were in the throes of passion. And by the time they got him there it was too late.

No, Lukas. Calista bit down hard on her quivering lip. It wasn't like that.

Oh, but it was, Calista. It was exactly like that. Before my father had the chance to confront yours, to defend himself, he conveniently had a heart attack and died. I bet Aristotle couldn't believe his luck.

That's...that's an awful thing to say.

It was an awful deed. He mocked her use of the totally inadequate word. Not only was he profiting from his vile trade in arms, but when he got caught out he set up my father to take the blame. He betrayed his oldest friend. It doesn't get much more awful than that.

No! I don't believe you! Calista let out a cry of anguish. My father had nothing to do with the arms-smuggling. And he would never have betrayed Stavros.

And I don't suppose he was responsible for getting me

arrested and banged up in jail for four and a half years either?
Lukas gave a harsh laugh.

No! I don't believe that either. How would that even have been possible?

Remarkably easily, as it turned out. It seems your father had villainous friends in remarkably high places. Or should I say low places?

No! You're making all this up.

Don't insult my intelligence by pretending you didn't know. Lukas ran a hand over his close-cropped hair. No doubt you have tried to dress it up over the years—reshape your traitorous actions to ease your conscience, help you sleep at night. But the fact is you betrayed me in the same way your father betrayed my father. You traded your innocence for my guilt. I just hope it was a price worth paying.

Calista turned away from him, stumbling across the room towards the open doors of the terrace. She clearly couldn't face him—well, that was hardly surprising. He stared at her silhouette, dark against the azure blue of the sea meeting the sky. He could feel the thrum of his pulse in his ears, a tightness in his chest that had yet to be released.

He wasn't done with her yet.

So you see, agape mou, this is my little payback. My turn to let you see what it's like to be used. To be taken advantage of. To have your body violated by someone for their own gain.

Closing the gap between them, he placed a hand on her shoulder, turning her so that she couldn't avoid the hard, dark glitter of his eyes.

So tell me, Calista. How does it feel?

* * *

Calista tried to swallow past the shock that was blocking her throat. Her heart was thudding wildly in her chest, her palm still stinging from where it had connected with Lukas's jaw. But her brain had gone into slow motion, struggling to process all the terrible things he had said.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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