

ANNICK'S BED  
A TREVOR GANTT  
EROTIC MYSTERY



GEMMA STONE

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Annick's Bed  
*A Trevor Gantt Erotic Mystery*

by

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## Chapter One Annick's Bed

Annick Bouchet and Julia Spoleto awoke in each other's arms. Both were naked but warm under the plush bedcovers. As Julia opened her eyes to the morning light, Annick kissed her lightly on the lips and whispered, "Good morning, my wife."

"Good morning, my wife," Julia breathed back.

Annick threw back the covers, causing Julia to shiver. "I know it was not in our vows, but I promised to awaken you every morning with cunnilingus," she said as she slid down in the bed.

"It probably should have been in our vows, but I am not sure your priest would have approved. You were the one who insisted on being married in the Church. I made the same promise to you. Do you want to go first, or should we do it together?"

"I'd hate to make you break your promise to me, *ma chérie!*"

The two shifted into a sixty-nine position. They had been lovers for a decade and were so practiced that they each knew just what the other liked and needed. As their tongues flicked over each other's clits, they sighed with contentment. Soon the sighs turned to moans, and they both began to buck gently. They climaxed together.

Annick tapped Julia on the shoulder. "Thank you, *chérie*. That was wonderful, as always. Shall I get us some breakfast? Or should I just make coffee? We can pull the lamb fur blanket off the bed and go out on the terrace and snuggle. It will be chilly, but I can light the fireplace."

"I vote coffee." Julia paused. "And champagne."

Annick rose and disappeared into the kitchen. She turned on the coffeemaker and pulled a bottle from the refrigerator. As the coffee brewed, she returned to the living room with the wine and two flutes. "It's not Armand de Brignac, but

Krug is perfectly serviceable champagne—and it comes with the room.”

Annick was the heir to the Bouchet Industries fortune. Though she sat on the family company’s board of directors, her main occupation was socialite. She traveled all over the world, wherever the mood struck her, following the smart set. She had married her longtime lover, Julia, a supermodel who used her life savings to open Letto di Giulia, the best Italian restaurant in New York. It was, however, a restaurant with a difference. Upstairs she kept eleven fellow models as her personal slaves. For those who could afford to join her *Circolo di Giulia*, her private club, she granted exclusive access to them to satisfy their special desires.

The pair was on their honeymoon. They were in the penthouse of Eichardt’s Private Hotel in Queenstown on the South Island of New Zealand. Annick had made the arrangements because the skiing in the Southern Alps in August appealed to her.

Annick put the glasses and the wine on the table. She pulled the wool throw off the bed and handed it to Julia. Then she went back to the kitchen and returned with two steaming mugs of coffee.

The penthouse at Eichardt’s came with its own private terrace. Located on the top floor, it was secluded from anyone’s sight. Still naked, Julia grabbed the glasses, bottle, and blanket and opened the door. Annick followed with the coffee. A cold blast hit them. “It’s bracing. I’ll give you that,” Julia said.

They scampered to the sofa, placing their drinks on the coffee table. Julia wrapped herself in the bedspread. Annick, seemingly impervious to the frigid temperature, ignited the fireplace. When she reached the couch, Julia swaddled them both, and they cuddled. “Better now, *chérie*?” Annick asked.

“Yes, my love, better.” Julia took a sip of champagne, and shivered. She quickly grabbed the coffee and drank. As they huddled beneath the covers, pressing their bare flesh

together to share bodily warmth, they gazed out at the unobstructed view of Lake Wakatipu. The sun rose in the sky behind them. "It's beautiful, isn't it? Thank you for bringing me here."

"It's just one beautiful place we've shared and will share," Annick replied. "So, what shall we do today? Do you want to ski, or should we wait until lunch and then join the *après-ski*?"

Julia wiggled and snuggled closer to Annick. "I'm enjoying this, and I'm warming up now." She slid her hand between Annick's legs and fingered her labia. "Let's stay naked as long as possible. Rather than going down to the bar, let's order up the private chef that comes with these swank digs and have him cook for us. I think I can stand to wear a robe for as long as he's here, if you can. Then we can go to the bar when the skiers return."

In truth, Julia loved the Eichardt bar. It began as a woolshed. In 1867, that gave way to the bar and the beginnings of the hotel. Queenstown grew up around the hotel, and it was still a focal point for the city's social life. She loved it, but she loved Annick more.

"*Bonne idée!*" announced Annick, as she gently pushed Julia's hand away from her lap. "You stay here and stay warm. I'll call and reserve him." Annick, still impervious to the cold, rose and went into the suite. Returning, she climbed under the blanket again. "We are all set. He will be here at 11:30. We'll be eating by half past twelve. We should be at the *après-ski* by 2:30." She kissed her wife. "Let me run an idea past you, *ma chérie*. Letto di Donna Giulia has been doing well, *non?*"

"Very well. You know that."

"I am thinking that we need to open a branch in Paris."

"Franchise?" Julia asked.

Annick exploded. "*Mais non!* What do you think I am suggesting? Do you think I suggest we become that supposed celebrity chef Todd English? As far as I'm

concerned, he just sells his name. Or Wolfgang Puck? Does anyone think those things in airports carrying his name bear any relationship to the cuisine that won him two Michelin stars at Spago or to the chef who trained at Maxim's? No! Even Maxim's isn't Maxim's anymore, since they sold out to Pierre Cardin and opened restaurants of that name in Tokyo, Beijing and Doha! The best restauranteurs—the best chefs—like Paul Bocuse, Roger Vergé, Alain Ducasse with twenty-one Michelin stars, or Joël Robuchon who had thirty-one opened a select number of restaurants, which they closely supervised and closed if they did not live up to their standards.

“You succeeded by living up to the philosophy Sirio Maccioni followed at Le Cirque: ‘Give the people what they want. If they want a whole fish, grilled, then give it to them. Don't give away the best table, so that it's there when you need it. Give the early people the center tables, so they think they are important. Never have an empty table in the room. Do the impossible. Never say no.’ You did the impossible, *ma chérie*, with Letto, and we can replicate that in Paris.”

Julia smiled and kissed her spouse. “Putting aside for the moment your Gallic hauteur, all the chefs and restaurants you name are French. Assuming—*just assuming*—we were at to open a place in Paris, if the principle is to give people what they want, shouldn't it be a *French* restaurant? Shouldn't it be La Lit d'Annick?”

“*Pas du tout! Mon Dieu*, you are not usually so dense! Trust Annick's business sense. Opening a French restaurant in the heart of *haute cuisine* would be—what do the *Anglais* say? it would be bringing coals to Newcastle. It would be like *les rosbifs* bringing *fromage* to France,” said Annick, employing a derogatory term the French use for the English—the roast beefs—much like calling the French “frogs.” “Italian restaurants are very popular in Paris. It has to be you! We need open Letto di Donna Giulia, with Paolo's

Umbrian cuisine and complete with the *Circulo*. Two things always sell in France—fine food and sex. We’ve got the total package with Letto. And being inside the European Union, all that Italian product you import will be a great deal cheaper.”

“I adore that you are thinking as *we*,” Julia replied. “Again, assuming—and I am just *assuming*—how would we do such a thing?”

Annick giggled, giddy that Julia was giving her proposition real thought. “I could find an appropriate space and buy it. I could help you finance it. With our connections, we could recruit the girls. Paolo could train the chef and kitchen staff. We could divide our time between New York and Paris. We do anyway. Rebecca could help. She’s Vietnamese. She must speak French.”

Their discussion was interrupted by a knock at the door. Annick glanced at her watch. “Where has the morning gone? We had better grab robes. Our chef is here, and I need to open another bottle of Krug!”

“What?!” Rebecca Nguyen shrieked. “Have you lost your mind?”

Rebecca was one of the models Julia had recruited to be part of her personal *hareem* of slaves. Besides serving her, they acted as the waitstaff at her restaurant. As part of the sexy vibe of Letto di Donna Giulia, the servers did their job wearing only the skimpiest of lingerie. They also serviced the wealthy members of her *Circulo*. Rebecca was, in fact, the first recruit. Though she was only in her mid-twenties, she had demonstrated a natural aptitude from the start. She no longer acted as a regular server but regularly staffed the captain’s desk. She functioned as Julia’s assistant, and during Julia and Annick’s month-long honeymoon, she managed the entire operation. Julia was always just a phone call away, but Rebecca had never had to call.

“That was my initial reaction when Annick pitched it to me,” replied Julia, “but she convinced me it makes good

business sense.”

The only thing that made this business meeting unusual was that all three women were naked and sitting on the bed in the master suite in the New York townhouse that housed both the restaurant and the women’s living quarters. “Well, she had four weeks of pillow talk to persuade you, didn’t she?”

“That’s unfair, pet,” Julia protested. “It would mean more responsibilities—and a salary hike—for you.”

“*If* it works, and that sounds like a big reach to me.” Julia trusted Rebecca’s judgment, and she relied on her.

Fearing Julia might be swayed by her protégé’s skepticism, Annick interjected, “We thought you could be a tremendous help. As a Vietnamese, I assume you speak French.”

Rebecca huffed. “Oh, you French! You think the world revolves around you and that time stands still for you—the way Joshua asked God to make the sun stand still during the Israelites’ battle against the Gibeonites.” Her voice was a mixture of exasperation and bemusement. Julia wondered about the wisdom of her assistant speaking in such a manner to someone who was now one of her employers, but she said nothing. Again, she thought the situation was somewhat defused by their mutual state of undress.

Rebecca forged ahead. “I’m Vietnamese-*American*. You left more than sixty-five years ago. My grandparents were just children at the time. They speak—or spoke—a little French, but no one does now. Since then, the Vietnamese have cycled through learning more useful languages, first Russian and then Chinese. Today, the most spoken foreign language is English.”

Annick said, “No need to apologize, my dear. I’ll pay for lessons for you at the Alliance Française Or, if you think your duties do not permit you the time, I’ll buy you the Babel app.”

Rebecca laughed out loud. Julia and Annick joined in, the potentially tense moment defused. “Exactly how is this new venture to work?”

Julia jumped in. “Annick has it all figured out.” She nodded at socialite, urging her to explain.

“I’ll find the appropriate venue and buy it. Julia and I will build it out. The three of us will recruit and interview the women. Paolo will find and train the chef and kitchen staff. We’ll replicate Letto, complete with *Circolo*. Circle members in New York will have privileges in Paris and vice versa. Just as Europeans constitute many members here, so they have place to visit in New York, I imagine Americans who travel frequently to France will join there. Julia and I will split our time between the two cities. When we’re away, you’ll manage here. You’ve proved yourself quite capable of that. Of course, you’ll be called upon to travel to Paris with some frequency.” Annick looked at Rebecca expectantly.

The young woman was quiet and pensive, gazing off into space. “Well?” Julia asked.

“It’s not so much of a plan as an outline,” Rebecca replied. Julia felt anxious. Though she didn’t need Rebecca’s approval in the strictest sense, her cooperation would make things infinitely easier. After a long moment, she said, “But it *is* an idea. Done right, it just might work.”

Julia had been holding her breath. She exhaled and said, “And you’ll help ensure we do it right.”

“If you two are ever going to be able to spend any time together, one of you can’t always be on a different continent. Of course I’ll help, but we’ll need to find my equivalent in France.”

*The gears are starting to work,* thought Julia. *She’s thinking in terms of ‘we.’*

Annick also recognized the opportunity presented. “We couldn’t agree more. We thought you could join us when we interview potential employees and help identify that person. Then you could supervise her training.”