

RANDOM HOUSE  BOOKS



Risky Business

Lisette Allen

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'It's a well-known syndrome,' said Rebecca to her friend, Annie, 'that independent feisty women often long to be dominated, shamed even, as a release from the pressures of work.'

'But wouldn't you fancy it?' said Annie. 'Imagine a crowd of power-suited men, all gorgeous, all gathered around you in a secluded expensive house, all with their cocks out and playing with themselves. I'd like to go around each man in turn and tease them until they were panting with lust. Then I'd make them lick each other while I watched, purring like a contented cat.'

'I bet you would,' said Rebecca. It was three weeks since she'd had sex with Liam and her hunger for him was a constant torment. She used to share Annie's men-in-suits fantasy but things had changed since she'd met Liam. Now she had her own, very different fantasies, and her appetite for non-stop partying was vanishing as quickly as the champagne in her bloodstream. She'd found something much, much better.

RISKY BUSINESS

Lisette Allen



Chapter One

‘**O**h, well done, Rebecca.’ The girl with the coppery mane of hair and big amber eyes leant her forehead reproachfully on the leather steering wheel as her expensive sports car stalled yet again. She straightened up and turned the ignition key sharply, then tried once more to wedge the open-topped car into the tiny parking space alongside the busy Islington pub. The sultry heat of the June evening seemed to envelop her, making her skimpy dress cling uncomfortably to her warm skin. A bunch of drinkers, mostly male, were lounging at the tables just outside the pub, making the most of the lingering sunshine. They turned to nudge one another and laughed openly at her efforts.

Rebecca wrestled anew with the short thick gear lever, trying not to hear their appreciative comments about her technique. At last, she managed to get the thing into reverse and squeeze it into the gap alongside the pavement, just a few yards from her amused spectators. Damn them, she thought. Ignoring them, she leant back, pushing her sleek hair away from her face, and made an effort to appear nonchalant.

It was almost ten o’clock, and she was terribly late for the party, for Max. ‘You must be there, Rebecca,’ Max had told her down the phone last night. ‘And wear something stunning. Look expensive. This guy is important to me, right? I need to make a good impression.’

Rebecca needed to make a good impression too, on Max. That was why she was so late. She’d suffered the usual last-minute panic over what to wear and, by the time she’d pulled up in the elegant north London street to which Max had given her such careful directions, the kerb outside the

house had been lined with expensive cars, and the only space left had been outside the flower-festooned pub a little way down the road. So, getting hotter and wearier, Rebecca had manoeuvred her way into it.

Her eye-catching car was still attracting hot looks from the assorted male drinkers gathered outside the pub. She wondered fleetingly if it would still be there when she came back for it; and then she remembered that it was hardly hers anyway. She'd lost track of how many repayments she'd missed. Her bank manager had given up writing and had now resorted to ringing her, his voice growing increasingly stern. 'We seem to have a cash-flow problem here, Miss Lansdowne.'

Rebecca, resisting the temptation to reply, as her friend Annie would have done, 'Oh, dear. Have you really?' kept thinking up desperate excuses to put off the inevitable meeting with him. He wouldn't, she knew, be fobbed off for much longer.

But tonight, Thursday night, she'd forced herself into optimism, because the party beckoned. Time for fun, Rebecca, she told herself resolutely. Time to forget the awful last two months, during which her cosy and affluent world had fallen shatteringly apart. Time to prise Max away from his rich business associates, so that she could talk properly to him - that was, if she could keep her hands off his tantalising body for long enough to engage him in some serious conversation. Conversation was something she and Max tended to neglect. They were usually too busy contemplating another frenzied sex session to waste much time on talking.

She felt hotter than ever at the thought, and her breasts tingled pleurably in anticipation. She was wearing a dress she'd pinched from her friend Annie's chaotic but enticing wardrobe, since her own favourite clothes were at the dry cleaners'. She only just fitted into the tight little sheath of black silk that Annie had left dangling temptingly on its satin

hanger. Rebecca was undoubtedly slim, thanks to a constant battle with the calories; but Annie, an ethereal, waiflike blonde whose delicate exterior hid a most determined appetite for fleshly pleasures, was barely a size ten, so the sleeveless number with its row of tiny silk-covered buttons down the front hugged Rebecca like a corset.

Rebecca was worried that Max, ever the perfectionist, might point out how it over-emphasised her feminine curves. But the dress certainly met with approval in this north London street. The flashily dressed Islington lads outside the pub, their keen eyes glittering with thoughts of sex instead of beer, had gathered closer, drinks in hand, to leer at her with open relish. And she knew why.

It was because she had to get out of the car.

The car was low. Her heels were high, for Max's benefit - Max loved her in sharp stilettos because they indicated, he said, a readiness for sex - and her skimpy dress was short and tight. Her long legs were covered with sheer smoky-dark stockings, and the lacy tops were barely covered by her hemline.

Resolutely, Rebecca pressed the button to close the hood. She felt a momentary pang of loss as she realised just how much she was going to miss this car. Then she ran her fingers through her hair, and checked her dark bronze lipstick and charcoal mascara hastily in the mirror. Taking a deep breath, she thrust the door open.

The air of expectation on the hot dusty street was almost palpable. Defiantly, she swung her legs out on to the pavement, then straightened up as quickly as she could, hurriedly pulling down her dress. All around her, the silence seemed absolute, except for the distant throb of music from inside the pub.

And she knew, she was sure, that the watching men had glimpsed a bare expanse of suntanned thigh above her lacy stocking-tops.

The silence broke suddenly. The colour rushed to her face as she heard lecherous whistles of approval, and an ironic outburst of clapping. Someone called out, 'Nice one, darling!' and she whipped her head round as soon as she'd pressed the remote-control lock, to glare at them with all the scorn she felt. They were ignorant, stupid.

But then one of the men, whom she'd not noticed before because he was leaning back in his chair a little way from the others with his hands clasped lazily behind his head, gave her a slow, secret grin; and Rebecca almost fell back against the car door.

He was gorgeous. Utterly, heart-poundingly gorgeous. He had tousled sun-streaked hair that was swept back casually from his face, and a narrow, wicked smile that was so openly erotic, she became hotter than ever. She had the sudden sensation that his glorious blue eyes, sleepy though they seemed, could see all of her, from the tips of her rosy nipples down to her mound beneath the skimpy black panties that were all she wore under the tight sheath of her dress. Prickly beads of moisture trickled beneath her breasts, between her buttocks, down to the satiny folds of her sex. Her eyes roved, horrified at her own fascination, over the blatant virility of the man's body.

He obviously wasn't with the others because, instead of wearing sharply fashionable clothes like them, he was dressed simply, almost scruffily, in an open-necked white shirt and faded jeans. His muscular thighs were spread casually apart, emphasising a potent-looking mound at his groin that made her think instantly, helplessly, of bed.

And he knew it, damn him. She tore herself away from his grin, her cheeks colouring, her head held high, and hurried to cross the road in her ridiculously strappy shoes. She was followed by a collective ripple of laughter from her hormone-charged male audience. Oafs, she thought angrily. Idiots.

But she couldn't forget the face of the quiet one. The one who'd been watching her with smiling, narrowed blue eyes.

Oh, God, he'd set her pulse racing sweetly, tormentingly.

She'd been aroused all evening in anticipation of meeting Max at the party. She'd soaked herself in an exquisitely scented bath, caressing her own nipples with dreamy restlessness. Afterwards, the first thing she'd put on had been the chunky gold bracelet Max had given her last Christmas. It made her feel like a slave, his slave. Then she'd pampered her skin with the lusciously perfumed body lotion she'd treated herself to, in defiance of her bank manager, and let her fingers touch softly between her thighs, aware that a tiny lascivious pulse was already thrumming at her loins.

Oh, yes, she'd been hot for Max all evening. And yet it was the fair-haired man outside the pub, with his tough, blatantly physical body and his sleepy smile, who had sent all her hormones into overdrive. In fact, Max was pushed from her mind completely as she found herself fantasising wildly that the stranger was coming after her, catching up with her with long purposeful strides as she tottered along on these ridiculously flimsy heels in what she hoped was the right direction. What would he do then? She caught her breath. He would swing her round, his strong fingers digging hard into her quivering buttocks. Then he would kiss her, his tongue probing deep, while he ground his blatant erection against her silk-clad stomach, just to let her know exactly what he intended.

Rebecca almost tripped over an uneven paving stone. Steady, she told herself warningly. You're late already. Concentrate. What had Max told her about the house? 'You can't miss it, Rebecca. Find the King's Head in Calham Street, and the house is further along on the opposite side of the road, a little beyond the row of white terraces. It's set back behind a high wall, rather imposing. We're talking serious money here, Rebecca.'

Max always talked serious money. He was a banker: rich, smooth and eligible. She'd been seeing him for almost eight

months now, and the thought of his perfectly proportioned, exercise-honed body never ceased to send shivers of sensuous delight racing down her spine. Yet even as she slowly wandered past the elegantly stuccoed terraces Max had described, it was still the image of the fair-haired man smiling that slow, insolent smile that kept stimulating the aching little pulse of torment at her groin.

She must be going mad, she told herself a little weakly. It was all Annie's fault, and of course the fault of the game.

Rebecca and Annie had a secret game, a challenge. No matter how broke they were, they put ten pounds each, every week, into a kitsch blue sugar bowl in the kitchen of the little Kensington house they shared; and the one who could recount a really stunning erotic fantasy claimed the money. Annie had been the last one to win it, just over a fortnight ago, as they shared a bottle of wine Annie had pinched from the restaurant where she worked.

'Think of a gorgeous man working on a building site,' Annie had said dreamily, 'just like the one on the advert - you know? Well, in my fantasy, it's a glorious sunny afternoon, and everyone's lounging about, too hot to work. So, I go up to this man and put my hand on his bare arm, which is warm from the sun, and thick with muscles. I ask him, beg him, to fuck me there and then.'

'In front of everyone?' breathed Rebecca.

'Oh, yes!' Annie's face was serenely angelic. 'Don't you see, that's half the fun? I sidle up to him, and whisper in his ear. And all the other workmen would stop what they were doing, and passers-by gather round us to watch, as I kneel submissively at his feet. I undo his jeans and caress his thick, pulsing cock with my fingers and tongue - it's huge, so huge I can barely take it in my mouth.'

'How long?' interrupted Rebecca intently.

'Oh, eight, nine inches, at least.' Restrained, for Annie. 'And then,' the blonde girl went on eagerly, 'just when he's on the point of exploding, with all those people watching, I

push him to his knees, and pull my skirt right up, above my hips. Then I lower myself astride him, and feel his lovely thick dick pounding into my juices, while everyone watches, breathless with jealousy . . .’

‘You win,’ Rebecca had said, pushing the sugar bowl towards her.

Annie nearly always won their fantasy pot. She had three key words relating to her ideal man’s anatomy – long, thick and strong – and, once those basic requisites were satisfied, she told Rebecca seriously, anything – literally anything – could act as a stimulant to her wild imaginings. Rebecca just wished that her beautiful yet somehow vulnerable friend could find some man who would fulfil her dreams, instead of the selfish scumbags she usually seemed to end up with.

Rebecca had a strong suspicion that Max wanted to sleep with Annie. She’d once told him about their game, and now he questioned her about it persistently, lingering especially over Annie’s more exotic stories. Max liked talking dirty: it got him hugely aroused.

She shivered just thinking about his lean body, his lovely penis, and reminded herself that she was going to see him very soon at the party. She also reminded herself, reluctantly, that she must try to stay cool and calm for as long as possible, because she had rather a lot to talk to Max about. In fact, she had rather a lot to ask him. The conversation, she feared, would be somewhat one-sided, because she needed to ask him for money.

Her heart beat fast with apprehension. She recognised the high brick wall Max had described, behind which stood the imposing house where the party was being held. This guy must be rich – in fact, hadn’t Max told her so earlier? Climbing the stone steps that led to the forbidding gate, she tried rather desperately to remember what Max had told her about their host when they had met briefly for lunch, a couple of days ago. ‘He’s one of the success stories of the decade,’ Max had said. ‘Started off as a City whizz-kid, then

saw how the market was going, and turned his attention towards environmental credibility – after all, that’s where the strong money’s going now. People are looking for ethical soundness in their investments. He launched his own development company earlier this year, to concentrate on enterprise projects that positively help the environment, and it’s been a phenomenal success. Of course, Hugh can be relied on to keep his finger firmly on the pulse of all the latest growth areas. This party is a kind of thank-you for the people who’ve supported him.’

Rebecca was unimpressed. ‘So the place will be full of people talking business. You really think I’ll enjoy it, Max?’

He pulled her close, and let his mouth trail down her cheekbone. ‘I’m sure you’ll enjoy it,’ he murmured. ‘This guy has a reputation for hard play as well as hard work. This party will be something to remember, believe me.’

The big gates set into the high wall were shut, and there was an entryphone. Rebecca hesitated, wishing Max could have brought her, but he’d said he would be pushed for time, and would have to come here straight from the office. Behind the wall, the sumptuous four-storeyed house twinkled with lights, and the air throbbed with some subtle jazz melody. It was still oppressively hot, and the lingering sunset was turning the white façade of the house into softest pink. Rebecca looked slowly back down the street. She could still see the pub in the distance, with the crowds round its pavement tables thinning out now. But she imagined that the man with blue eyes was still watching her, and she shivered suddenly, rebuking herself for her stupid fantasy.

Time to go inside. She was late enough already. Hoping fervently that Max was already here, because she wasn’t sure that she would know anyone else, she pressed the entryphone button and suddenly realised that she couldn’t even remember the name of the man whose house this was.

'Yes?' The voice crackling down the entryphone sounded forbidding. Security, of course: he must have his staff on the alert all the time at a place like this, even when there was a party. Especially, perhaps, when there was a party.

'I'm Rebecca,' she said desperately. 'Rebecca Lansdowne. I'm with Max Forrester.' She smoothed Annie's sleek black dress down over her hips, wishing she'd resisted diving into the box of Belgian chocolates that Annie had left lying temptingly in the sitting room. Silence. Then, to her huge relief, she heard the lock clicking, and the big gates swung open. She walked slowly up the wide steps as they closed again behind her, and caught her breath in wonder.

The front garden of the stuccoed house had been turned into a miniature lamplit world of enchantment, filled with terracotta tubs of exotic flowers and glossy potted palms. A fountain shimmered delicately in the centre of a tiny pool, and throngs of fashionably dressed guests circulated languidly, sipping at the glasses of champagne and iced vodka that were being handed round by uniformed waiters. And there, thank God, were some people Rebecca knew: a magazine editor, and another friend who worked in a fashionable West End gallery.

Rebecca moved towards them with a smile on her face, feeling instantly at home in the privileged circle she'd been used to all her life. As people opened up to take her in their midst, it was as if nothing, nothing at all, had changed.

But the trouble was that everything had changed. She suddenly remembered the bank manager's stern voice on her phone that morning, and her legs felt weak. After a few moments with her friends, she began, somewhat apprehensively, to fight her way inside to find Max. Oh, please, Max, she prayed. Please understand.

Back down the road where her car was parked, the sun glinted with fading glory on the gaudy signs and bright petunia-filled windowboxes of the King's Head. The

customers outside the pub had moved on, heading for the nightclubs and wine bars of Soho or Covent Garden. Only the man with the tousled blond hair and scruffy jeans was still sitting at one of the tables, on his own.

He drained the remnants of the half-pint of lager that had lasted him all evening, then got up slowly. He'd meant to move earlier, but the arrival of the girl in the sports car had delayed him a little, because of the diversion she'd caused: a diversion he himself had not been immune to. She'd looked cool and classy in that little black dress, with her sleek coppery hair and her exquisitely made-up face. Some rich man's plaything, no doubt. He'd met her kind before.

Letting a lazy smile play around his strongly chiselled mouth, he imagined kissing her until she was hot and feverish, her immaculate hair all ruffled, her mouth swollen. He would take her somewhere quiet, perhaps round the back of the pub, where the gathering darkness already cast long shadows. There he would gently ease her tight black dress up over her hips; and then he would free his erect penis from his jeans, and press her against the sun-warmed wall, feeling her sweet silky flesh as he slowly ravished her. She would utter little gasping cries of pleasure, quivering against him, clinging to his strong shoulders as he gazed down into her dazed, avid face. He would take his time as he brought her to the edge of ecstasy and beyond. He would tantalise her, tell her exactly what he had in mind for her; and she would love every moment. He knew, because he'd had plenty of experience of women of her kind: rich, spoilt, and utterly bored, whether they knew it or not, with the effete attentions of men of their own class.

Her eyes were amber, he'd noticed, a feline orangey-gold. They would blaze with fire as the convulsions of sex shook her body.

He grinned at his own imaginings self-mockingly. Sex was just a complication at the moment. He had other, far more important, things on his mind. Slowly he picked up his black

leather jacket from the back of his chair, slinging it over his shoulder. Then he took one last look down the lamplit street where the girl had gone. So she was going to the party, too.

He still had a hint of a smile on his face as he made his way inside the smoky pub, walking with a distinctive loping stride that had female eyes watching him from every corner of the room. He paused on his way to the bar, his gaze resting on a girl who was sitting at a table by herself, smoking nervously as she watched him. Her face was wide-eyed, vulnerable, framed by cropped dark hair that gleamed like velvet in the soft light of the bar. Several silver rings and studs ornamented her earlobes, and her mouth was painted a vivid red. Her skinny white lace top clung to her small conical breasts, hinting at a glimpse of prominent dark nipple. She wore jeans and thick-soled boots. One leg was hooked over the other, and she swung her foot with rhythmic impatience as she dragged on her cigarette.

The man came over to her. He said, 'I've told you, Cass. You shouldn't be here. I'll handle this by myself.'

Ignoring his mild rebuke, she said impatiently, 'You should be in there by now, Liam. We're running out of time.'

Liam said softly, 'I've been watching the house since eight. It's only just starting to fill up properly.' He spoke with a distinctive south London drawl.

The girl's eyes were haunted. 'If you leave it too long, you won't stand a chance. How will you know where to find what you want?'

'I know where to find it. I had information, remember? And by the time I get inside, they'll all be suitably distracted by the various entertainments on offer.'

'Out of their minds, you mean,' she snapped.

'Well, yes.' He smiled faintly. 'This host's not running a kids' tea party, you know.'

She shivered, hunching up her thin shoulders. 'I hate him. I hate them, all of them, all the stupid, rich, rapacious people he surrounds himself with.'

Liam put his strong brown hand over her small white one. 'He won't be so damned arrogant by this time tomorrow, Cass,' he said. 'You go back now, will you? No point in you waiting, too. I could be hours yet.'

She nodded abruptly, setting her silver earrings jangling, and stabbed out her half-finished cigarette. Her huge kohlrimmed eyes seemed dark and burning. 'OK, Liam,' she said at last. 'You know what's best.'

He was surprised and relieved that she gave in so quickly. Then she hesitated and said, 'You'll walk me down the street? Just to the corner, so I can see the tube station? I don't like it around here. It's not my sort of place.'

'I don't believe you're scared. Not you.'

'I'm not scared,' she said stiffly. 'I just feel alienated amongst all the rich bastards who live round here. Please. Come with me, just a little way.'

He looked at his watch. 'OK, but I can't be long.'

He should have guessed. It was dark outside when they got away from the bright doorway of the pub; and almost immediately she started drawing him into the warm sepia shadows of the little yard at the side of the building, where some narrow stone steps led down to the cellar. Wrapping her thin arms hungrily round his neck, she pulled his head down so she could kiss him. 'Oh, God, Liam. I want you to fuck me, so much. Please fuck me.'

His eyes were hard, icy splinters of blue. His hands remained at his sides. He said, 'Cass, I've told you. It's over.'

'I'm not asking for an engagement ring, for Christ's sake,' she muttered. 'I just want - this.'

She'd pulled up her stretch lace top to reveal her small jutting breasts with their stiffly aroused nipples. Her hands moved swiftly to his loins, struggling with the buttons of his jeans in the darkness; and Liam's shadowed face tightened imperceptibly as his penis, already stirring with life, grew swiftly into full erection. Cass fondled it hungrily, stroking its long silky thickness as it jutted from his groin, crooning to

herself. Then she hitched herself quickly back on one of the wooden tables that had been dragged round there for the night. She pulled down her tight jeans to reveal naked loins; then she spread her slim legs wide and started to play with herself, letting her finger slide fervently up and down beneath the thick bush of her dark pubic hair.

‘Do it to me, Liam,’ she muttered. ‘You’re ready, aren’t you? You want me . . .’

The folds of her sex were wetly pink as she caressed herself, her eyes fastened desperately on his throbbing penis.

‘It’s fairly obvious,’ he said quietly, ‘that I want somebody.’ But still he didn’t move.

She leant forward with a little cry of longing and closed her mouth round his manhood, moistening its rigid length with her saliva. Then, sitting upright again, she gripped his narrow buttocks and guided him towards the apex of her thighs, taking his penis between her fingers and rubbing its velvety head longingly against her parted sex.

With a sigh of mingled resignation and surging desire, he drove himself deeply, strongly into her lush depths, and she clasped him to her, moaning and rubbing her nipples against his warm chest. ‘Oh, God, Liam. Your cock is so strong, so lovely. Drive it into me, harder. Please.’

Her pale face was stark with ecstasy, her body trembling with liquid pleasure as Liam slowly and powerfully took her, his lengthy penis driving slickly between her splayed legs. She lifted her hips to him, whimpering with delight as her fierce orgasm flooded through her; and he drove harder, faster, spending himself with grinding thrusts that made the girl cry his name aloud.

Afterwards, when she had covered herself again, he looked down into her passion-hazed green eyes and said gently, ‘I told you some time ago, Cass. It’s over between the two of us.’

‘Of course,’ she said, moistening her swollen mouth with the tip of her pointed tongue. ‘I’ll find my own way back now, Liam. And you’ll have to be making your move soon, won’t you? Good luck. I’ll see you later.’

She went quickly, heading for the tube station without a backward glance. Liam, frowning, went to sit once more outside the pub with a small scotch in his hand, taking care to place himself in the pool of darkness just beyond the light from the pub’s windows. He gazed down the street, in the opposite direction Cass had taken, looking towards the big floodlit house where the girl in the sports car had gone, where the party was. Every window was lit up now, even at the very top of the house. Music thumped heavily down the street. Cars and taxis were pulling up in a steady stream outside the gate, blocking the road; laughing people were piling out, clambering up the steps from the pavement, clutching bottles of champagne and balancing against inebriated partners. He saw that the gate was, for the time being, wide open.

Time for him to move.

Rebecca had never felt less partyish in her life. She was with Max in a tiny bedroom at the very top of the house. Music drifted up faintly from downstairs, along with shrieks of merriment; but the atmosphere up here was at least ten degrees frostier. Max was lying on the big bed, naked except for a white linen sheet drawn across his loins. Rebecca was curled up at the other end of the bed watching him, her amber eyes lambent in the dark. She was dressed, but rumpled and tense.

‘Sorry, Rebecca. For the last time, I just can’t do it,’ said Max matter-of-factly.

Rebecca felt a bitter stab of disappointment; resentment, too. ‘Christ, Max. It’s a business proposition, not a payout I’m asking for,’ she said lightly. ‘Buy the lease of our house off our grasping landlord, and Annie and I will pay you the

rent. At least,' she added hastily, 'we will as soon as things settle down.'

'As soon as things settle down?' he queried with some acerbity, propping himself up on one elbow against the crisp white pillows. 'Rebecca. In case you've forgotten, your rich daddy's disappeared into the wide blue yonder, leaving a colossal amount of debts. How on earth are things going to settle down? Your family money's gone; your nice little monthly allowances to pay for the flat and the Porsche and the Harvey Nichols account have vanished into thin air. Your parents' house in Gloucestershire is on the market and, to make matters worse, the whole sordid affair has been scattered by gleeful journalists all over the tabloids. Sorry, darling. I can't fill a bottomless hole.'

'Look, Max,' said Rebecca desperately, 'I'm not expecting you to take on the whole family disaster. OK, so my father's done a runner with his secretary - sorry, PA - and left his business and personal finances in a hell of a mess. I acknowledge that. I just thought, seeing as we've been together for quite a while now, that you might be able to help out a little by purchasing the house.'

Max said, 'Perhaps you should try getting a job. Shouldn't be too difficult, with all your connections.'

'I've no qualifications, Max. And my connections, as you put it, tend to have melted away with the trouble my father's got himself into. Look, surely buying a lease in Kensington Place would be a good investment? You said last month that mews cottages like ours were all the rage. You're hardly going to lose money, are you?'

He looked thoughtful. 'It would certainly be interesting, acting as landlord to you and the raunchy Annie. I could claim my rent in unusual ways. I've always fancied you and Annie in bed together, playing with each other and a huge rubber vibrator. Shall I tell you what else I'd like? I might even win your fantasy competition.'

‘Bastard,’ said Rebecca shortly, nibbling at one long red-painted nail. She was tense with disappointment, because he wasn’t going to help her, and now she wished she hadn’t asked him. Also, she was desperate for sex.

They’d scurried, laughing, up to this little bedroom soon after she arrived. Max had been watching for her just inside the front door, and he’d greeted her eagerly as she fought her way through the mass of guests towards him, drawing her into his arms and murmuring, ‘Darling. I thought you weren’t going to make it.’ She’d felt all the usual tuggings of desire as she gazed up at him, loving the way his thick dark hair fell enticingly over his chiselled public-school features. They’d chatted lightly, having to shout above the din, and had a glass of iced champagne each, and kissed and danced a little as the music thumped out. But then Max had held her closely against his hard narrow body, running his well-manicured hands up and down her black silk sheath, muttering, ‘God, you turn me on,’ and Rebecca had felt the firmness of his erection pressing against her loins.

‘I thought you wanted to network?’ she’d murmured.

‘I’ve networked.’ He’d grinned. ‘The host, Hugh Raoni, is a client of our bank – one of our most successful clients, in fact. I introduced him about half an hour ago to two beautiful but brainless nymphos from our accounts department. He’s disappeared with them, for the time being anyway, and I imagine he’s doing just the kind of things I want to do with you . . .’ His tongue had stroked her sensitive earlobe, and Rebecca had been all but overwhelmed by the painful throb of physical need.

‘Max. Please, let’s go upstairs,’ she’d whispered.

He’d elbowed his way through the crowds to the stairs, with Rebecca following closely, her lips swollen from his kiss, her nipples hard and aching. Once, Max had been stopped by a woman who began to talk to him in a low voice, an immaculately-groomed blonde woman whom Rebecca had recognised as Janey Franklin, one of Max’s

high-flying banker colleagues. She'd heard that Janey Franklin was a man-eater. Rebecca had pushed her way closer to Max and caught his arm possessively, noticing how Janey was giving her a strange, almost mocking look. 'Come on, Max,' Rebecca had said flatly. 'Let's move on.'

He'd bent to kiss her, with Janey looking on, and Rebecca had felt her unease disappear. Max was a randy bastard, she knew, and she didn't think for one moment that he'd been entirely faithful to her all these months; but all the same, she was gloriously, hopelessly addicted to being seen around with him, to being in bed with him.

Giggling together, they'd found this dark, deserted little room at the top of the house, and bolted the door. Rebecca had slithered out of her dress, and had been just about to pull off her tiny panties. They had been wickedly tight against the pouting flesh of her heated sex, and her juices had been running in anticipation when Max, who'd already draped his expensive clothes with typical precision over the back of a chair, had stopped her.

'Stay like that,' he'd muttered hoarsely. 'And kiss me. Please.'

So he'd lain back on the bed, and Rebecca had climbed astride him, kneeling with her bottom to his face, so he could finger her panties as they rode high in her silky cleft, and caress the creamy flesh of her thighs just above her black stocking tops. Rebecca, shuddering with her own desire, had flicked out her tongue to lick at his taut belly, travelling along the line of soft black hairs that arched down to his groin until she reached his waving cock. She had taken the dusky shaft eagerly in her mouth and pleased him until she'd felt him jerk and tighten beneath her.

'Oh, God, I'm nearly there,' he had called. 'Keep going, angel. I'm nearly there.'

Rebecca wished she was. Her panties were soaking with lust, and the silky fabric chafed painfully at her swollen

clitoris. Max was certainly beautiful; he had a lovely long silky cock, and she adored playing with it, but he was basically lazy. It was always her making all the effort, while he just lay back and took what he arrogantly assumed was his due.

She tried desperately to clamp her yearning vulva against Max's caressing hand, so she could rub herself against him, like an animal on heat; but he ignored the hint, and instead he used both his hands to clutch fiercely at her bottom, and scratch with his finger at the outline of her anus through the silk of her panties, until she was aching with frustration. Then he went very still before starting to thrust his rigid penis hard into Rebecca's mouth. Then at last he was finished, and Rebecca lay back, hot, tense, unsatisfied.

She should have asked him before. Should have asked the bastard earlier about the house, with his cock hovering between her lips, and his balls tightening in readiness.

Too late now. She wasn't going to get any money, and she wasn't even going to get an orgasm, by the looks of it.

Well, she wasn't going to plead, for either item. 'I don't think Annie or myself would be into the idea of fucking our landlord for the rent,' she said rather slowly, pulling her unbuttoned dress closer across her breasts and crossing her arms in the darkness. 'Forget it, Max. I'm sorry I ever asked.' She could hear people on the stairs outside, stifling giggles, trying their locked door, desperate to find somewhere private. Max was watching her narrowly.

'Perhaps it's as well you did ask,' he said eventually. 'You see, I've been meaning to say this for a while. In fact, ever since you told me that business about your father. Look, Rebecca, perhaps we should call it a day, you and I. Your father, all this mess he's left behind - I mean, it's not going to do my standing any good, is it? I have my reputation, my position in the firm to think of.'

She gazed at him in disbelief as the clichés poured from his beautiful sensually curved mouth. 'Max. Are you there,

Max? It's me, Rebecca. I'm not my father. I hardly ever used to see my father, for heaven's sake - he was never at home! How can being seen with me affect you so badly? Who do you work with who's so damned holy they can turn and point the finger at my father? What about the man who owns this house, this Hugh Raoni, the one you're so anxious to impress, who's already got himself fixed up with two blonde tarts for the night? Surely you can't be worried about *his* opinion, Max?'

Max leant back against the pillows. He'd raised one knee, so the sheet had fallen back from his hips and his long muscular legs. His sleek greyhound body was still tanned from the holiday they'd spent earlier that year at a friend's house in the Caribbean. Oh, God, thought Rebecca with a pang, she could still remember rubbing the suntan oil along his flat belly as they lay together on the silvery wave-lapped beach; could remember, so vividly, slipping her fingers under his swimming briefs and rubbing gently at his sizzling erection . . .

They'd had sex then, lying facing one another on the beach mat, a towel draped across their hips their only privacy. Rebecca had been so wet, so ready for him, that she'd come almost as soon as his penis had penetrated her.

She dragged herself back to the rather less palatable present. To make matters worse, his cock was stirring again now, thickening with blatant life as Max, the bastard, continued to stare with lazy interest at her naked breasts. Rebecca felt her vagina clench hungrily. How she longed to crouch over him, to pin him down with her body, to spread her thighs and guide his stiffening cock into her slippery silken sex. But she didn't move.

Max was running his hand through his exquisitely cut locks of dark hair. 'Look, Rebecca,' he was drawling, 'let's be mature about this, shall we? Hugh Raoni's a law unto himself; he works hard and plays hard. Ten minutes after shagging, he'll be out there driving another business deal.