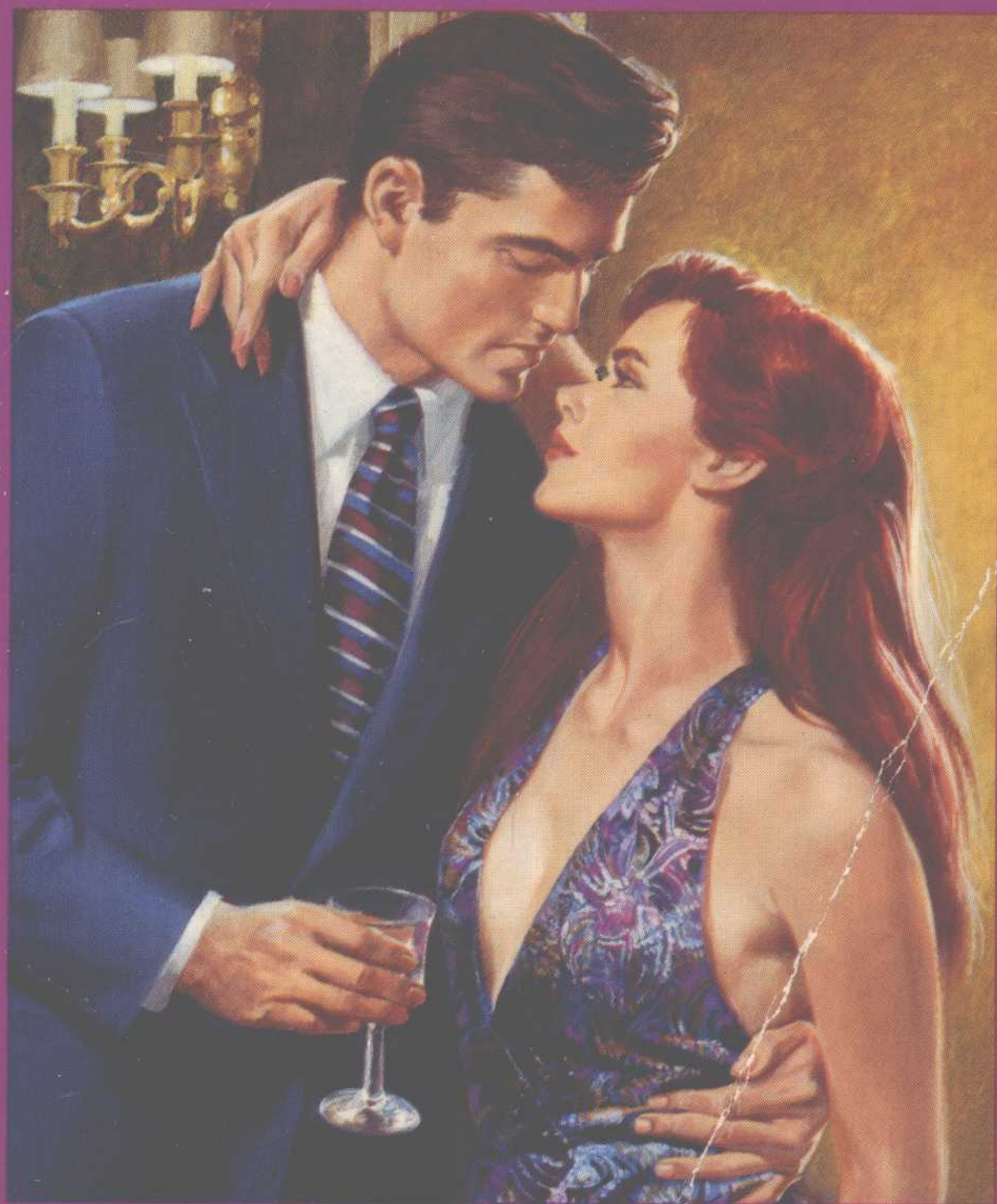


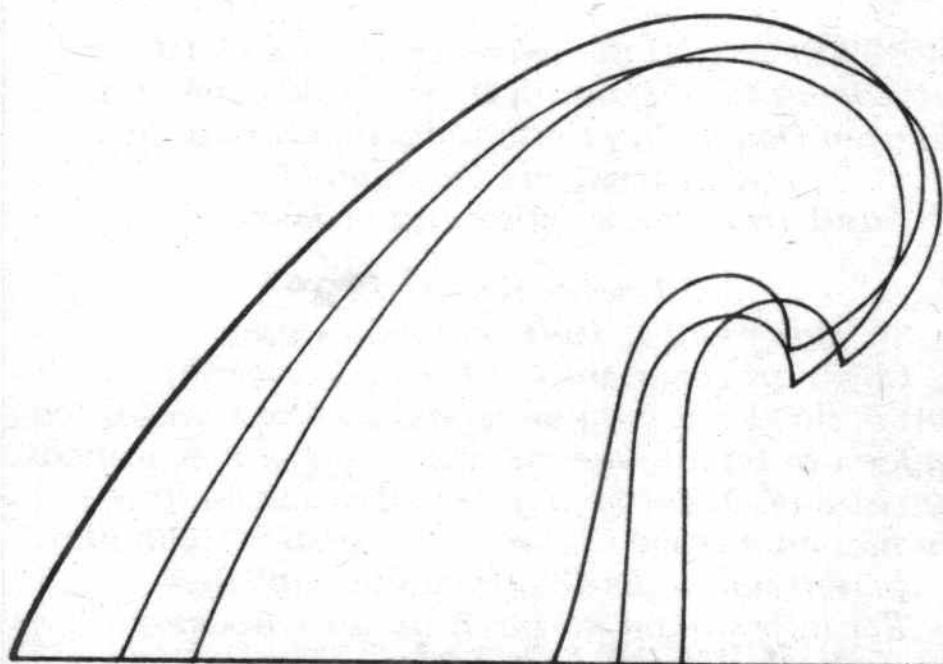
Loveswept 47

LINDA CAJIO *Earth Angel*



Miles Kitteridge. He was Catherine's
charismatic banker—who walked on the wild side....

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LOVESWEPT® • 471

Linda Cajio

Earth Angel



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EARTH ANGEL
A Bantam Book / May 1991

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P.O. Box 985
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ISBN 0-553-44117-5

Published simultaneously in the United States and Canada

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10103.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

OPM 0 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

"Dance with me, Catherine," Miles commanded her softly.

She went on leaden feet, knowing that to refuse would be childish, like backing down from a dare. Then the music changed from the frenetic beat of the lambada to a soft ballad. Catherine smiled and stopped, a few steps from the dance floor. "Music's changed. Well, that's that—"

"No, it's not." He spun her into his arms and walked her onto the floor. "We'll just have to dance slow."

She was helpless to do anything else. Her body was pressed against his, hip to hip and chest to chest. His hand was at the small of her back, pulling her closer still.

Every inch of her body was aware of every inch of his, every sense aware of his breath against her hair . . . his scent intoxicating her, his mouth there for the tasting. . . .

She had been terrified to dance the blatant lambada with him, but this was much worse. The lambada was all sex and no tenderness. But in Miles's arms, she felt as if they were making love in front of everyone—slowly prolonging their passion in a test of control, before a wild burst of ecstasy erupted.

"You feel so right," he murmured. "I knew you would. . . ."

WHAT ARE LOVESWEPT ROMANCES?

They are stories of true romance and touching emotion. We believe those two very important ingredients are constants in our highly sensual and very believable stories in the *LOVESWEPT* line. Our goal is to give you, the reader, stories of consistently high quality that may sometimes make you laugh, sometimes make you cry, but are always fresh and creative and contain many delightful surprises within their pages.

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**LOVE STORIES YOU'LL NEVER FORGET
BY AUTHORS YOU'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER**

The Editors

Many thanks to LINC for all its collective brains, and to Dot Brown for "Earth Angel." I love the song too. Let's keep the earth green and growing. It's all we've got.

THE EDITOR'S CORNER

*And what is so rare as a day in June?
Then, if ever, come perfect days . . .*

With apologies to James Russell Lowell I believe we can add *and perfect reading, too, from LOVESWEPT and FANFARE . . .*

As fresh and beautiful as the rose in its title **SAN ANTONIO ROSE, LOVESWEPT #474**, by Fran Baker is a thrilling way to start your romance reading next month. Rafe Martinez betrayed Jeannie Crane, but her desire still burned for the only man she'd ever loved, the only man who'd ever made love to her. Rafe was back and admitting to her that her own father had driven him away. When he learned her secret, Rafe had a sure-fire way to get revenge . . . but would he? And could Jeannie ever find a way to tame the maverick who still drove her wild with ecstasy? This unforgettable love story will leave you breathless. . . .

Perfect in its powerful emotion is **TOUGH GUY, SAVVY LADY, LOVESWEPT #475**, by Charlotte Hughes. Charlotte tells a marvelous story of overwhelming love and stunning self-discovery in this tale of beautiful Honey Buchanan and Lucas McKay. Lucas smothered her with his love, sweetly dominating her life—and when she leaves he is distraught, but determined to win her back. Lucas has always hidden his own fears—he's a man who has pulled himself up by his boot straps to gain fortune and position—but to recapture the woman who is his life, he is going to have to change. **TOUGH GUY, SAVVY LADY** will touch you deeply . . . and joyfully.

Little could be so rare as being trapped **IN A GOLDEN WEB**, Courtney Henke's **LOVESWEPT #476**. Heroine Elizabeth Hammer is desperate! Framed for a crime she didn't commit, she's driven to actions she never dreamed she was capable of taking. And kidnapping gorgeous hunk Dexter Wolffe and forcing him to take her to Phoenix is just the start. Dex plays along—finding the beautiful bank manager the most delectable adversary he's ever encountered. He wants to kiss her defiant mouth and make her

his prisoner . . . of love. You'll thrill to the romance of these two loners on the lam in one of LOVESWEPT's most delightful offerings ever!

And a dozen American beauties to Glenna McReynolds for her fabulously inventive OUTLAW CARSON, LOVESWEPT #478. We'll wager you've never run into a hero like Kit Carson before. Heroine Kristine Richards certainly hasn't. When the elusive, legendary Kit shows up at her university, Kristine can only wonder if he's a smuggler, a scholar—or a blessing from heaven, sent to shatter her senses. Kit is shocked by Kristine . . . for he had never believed before meeting her that there was any woman on earth who could arouse in him such fierce hunger . . . or such desperate jealousy. Both are burdened with secrets and wary of each other and have a long and difficult labyrinth to struggle through. But there are glimpses ahead of a Shangri-la just for them! As dramatic and surprising as a budding rose in winter, OUTLAW CARSON will enchant you!

Welcome to Tonya Wood who makes her debut with us with a real charmer in LOVESWEPT #477, GORGEOUS. Sam Christie was just too good-looking to be real. And too talented. And women were always throwing themselves at him. Well, until Mercy Rose Sullivan appeared in his life. When Mercy rescues Sam from the elevator in their apartment building, he can't believe what an endearing gypsy she is—or that she doesn't recognize him! Mercy is as feisty as she is guileless and puts up a terrific fight against Sam's long, slow, deep kisses. His fame is driving them apart just as love is bursting into full bloom . . . and it seems that only a miracle can bring these two dreamers together, where they belong. Sheer magical romance!

What is more perfect to read about on a perfect day than a long, lean, mean deputy sheriff and a lady locksmith who's been called to free him from the bed he is handcuffed to? Nothing! So run to pick-up your copy of SILVER BRACELETS, LOVE-SWEPT #479, by Sandra Chastain. You'll laugh and cry and root for these two unlikely lovers to get together. Sarah Wilson is as tenderhearted as they come. Asa Canyon is one rough, tough hombre who has always been determined to stay free of emotional entanglements. They taste ecstasy together . . . but is Sarah brave enough to risk loving such a man? And can Asa

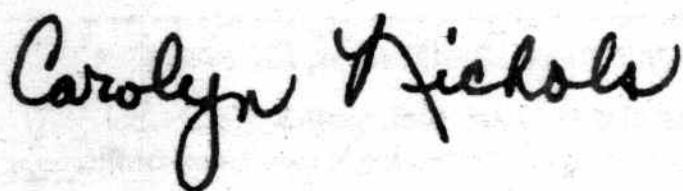
dare to believe that a woman will always be there for him? A romance as vivid and fresh and thrilling as a crimson rose!

And don't forget FANFARE next month with its irresistible longer fiction.

First, STORM WINDS by Iris Johansen. This thrilling, sweeping novel set against the turbulent times of the French Revolution continues with stories of those whose lives are touched by the fabled Wind Dancer. Two unforgettable pairs of lovers will have you singing the praises of Iris Johansen all summer long! DREAMS TO KEEP by Nomi Berger is a powerfully moving novel of a memorable and courageous woman, a survivor of the Warsaw ghetto, who defies all odds and builds a life and a fortune in America. But she is a woman who will risk everything for revenge on the man who condemned her family . . . until a love that is larger than life itself gives her a vision of a future of which she'd never dreamed. And all you LOVESWEPT readers will know you have to be sure to get a copy of MAGIC by Tami Hoag in which the fourth of the "fearsome foursome" gets a love for all time. This utterly enchanting love story shows off the best of Tami Hoag! Remember, FANFARE signals that something great is coming. . . .

Enjoy your perfect days to come with perfect reading from LOVESWEPT and FANFARE!

With every good wish,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carolyn Nichols". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large, stylized 'C' and 'N'.

Carolyn Nichols
Editor
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One

"Are you going to throw that away?"

Miles Kitteridge stopped in mid-toss, the paper still crumpled in his hand. His office door had been flung open with a bang, and standing on the threshold was a woman he had wanted in his bed for years. Catherine Wagner. Hellcat Catherine Wagner.

"It's two points if it goes in," he said.

"It's four if you recycle it."

He tossed the paper into the wastebasket. It missed. Catherine made a face.

His secretary was hopping up and down behind her. "I'm terribly sorry, sir—"

"That's okay, Mary." He gazed into Catherine's stormy eyes, then finally rose from his chair. "What can I do for you, Catherine?"

She walked into the room, her strides confident. Tall and slim, she moved with a grace that took a man's breath . . . and left him wondering if she would move the same way beneath him. Her beige silk skirt and high heels emphasized already very

sexy legs, while her pale orange blouse was open to the breastbone. The lace edge of her modest chemise teased his senses with what was hidden, rather than what was exposed. Her shoulder-length hair was almost auburn in color and thick, enticing a man to touch the strands and see if they would wrap around his fingers like silken threads. Her features were fragile looking at first glance. At the second, one saw the set of her jaw. And at the third, the usually unfathomable expression of her eyes. The combination was always intriguing. But circumstances had always denied him a closer look. . . .

"Why is my grandfather's office locked?" she asked.

Miles gritted his teeth at the accusation underlying her tone. "Because it isn't in use," he answered. "You know that."

She bent down and picked up the wad of paper, but she didn't throw it in the basket. Instead she smoothed it out and refolded it, then tucked it into a skirt pocket.

He grinned. "What else do you recycle in there?"

Her expression was stony—as usual. Once, he had made a mistake with her. Only once. He'd been paying for it ever since.

"Ah, there you are, young man."

His grandmother swept into the room with a swirl of soft skirts and Chanel perfume. Lettice Kitteridge was silver haired and nearly eighty—and nowhere near ready for the rocker on the porch.

"I cannot believe," she exclaimed, "that you train your security people to deny your own grandmother the right to see you. They made me show

identification before they would let me come upstairs!"

Miles grinned and walked around his desk to kiss his grandmother's cheek. "It's a bank, Grandmother. Not Disney World."

"And I'm a major stockholder!" she snapped.

"Then come more often, so they know you." He turned back to Catherine. Now that he was closer, the awareness already stirring his blood began to heat. He forced it away. "What did you need in your grandfather's office?"

"I need it opened. Please."

His eyes narrowed. Allan Wagner might have been her grandfather, but that didn't mean he would open a trustee's office for her. He had a responsibility as Philadelphia National Bank's executive director.

"Better show him some ID, Catherine," Lettice said. "This place is worse than Heathrow Airport! You're such a prig, Miles."

Miles snorted. Still, Lettice had a point. As a relative, Catherine did have some right to personal items. He was behaving like an overprotective jerk. Allan had been his friend, and he owed him more than this. There was still a slight problem with her request, however.

He began to explain. "There isn't anything—"

Catherine interrupted. "Are you refusing to open the office?"

"Well, no." He began again. "There's a—"

"Just open it, please."

He gave up. "If it makes you happy."

"It does."

"Fine." He went back around his desk and opened the middle drawer, taking out a set of keys.

He slipped his suit jacket from the valet and put it on, not bothering to button it. Catherine turned and walked out of the office. Miles followed more slowly with his grandmother. He grinned as he studied the tantalizing stretch of fabric across her thighs and derriere. If ever there was something to go to war over, it was Catherine's tush.

He'd follow like a lamb to the slaughter.

Catherine slowly let out her breath as she walked down the hall ahead of Miles and Lettice. She'd gone in like a lion, and she had gotten what she wanted. Maybe there was something to a "power" attitude. Her stomach was still flipping after facing down Miles Kitteridge, though. Few did it successfully, she knew. The man could have given Michael Douglas a run for the Gordon Gecko part in *Wall Street*.

She refused to admit that her blood was pumping hot through her veins for any reason other than a confrontation with the enemy. Miles Kitteridge might have a lean, hard body under his conservative three-piece suit, and he might have a face that was as lean and hard and attractive as the rest of him, but they weren't a consideration here. Neither were his blue-green eyes that seemed to probe beyond the surface, seeking all of her secrets.

She forced herself to take another deep breath as they reached her late grandfather's old office. Okay, so Miles was sexy as hell, but she knew what he was really like. A man with no integrity. She'd witnessed that one firsthand. She needed to remember, too, that he was "The Banker" for Wagner

Oil, and in thick as thieves with her greedy relatives.

She had to concentrate on why she was there at Philadelphia National—to find that codicil to her grandfather's will. Without it, the will would stand as read. With it, she could stop the madness. She had seen what an oil spill could do, and the sight had been sickening. Her grandfather had seen as well, and it had forever changed him. Changed them both. He had wanted the Utah land that Wagner Oil owned turned into a nature preserve. If he had put the land in a trust fund, it would have been protected. Now, unless she found that damn codicil, her family intended to ruin it in the name of Wagner Oil. She knew the codicil existed; Lettice had actually seen it. And the family members knew her grandfather had wanted to preserve the land. That didn't quite fit in with their strip-mining plans, however. Even her own parents . . .

Her grandfather's lawyers didn't have the codicil. She had also searched her grandfather's house and his office at Wagner with no success. He had been on the board of trustees for Philadelphia National, and this office was her last hope. Lettice would know it at a glance; that was why she was with her. Catherine smiled. Wouldn't Miles be surprised to know whose side his grandmother was really on?

Miles walked up beside her to unlock the door. She forgot everything at his closeness. Watching his hands in fascination as they smoothly turned the door handle, she wondered if they would be so expert on her body. The clean scent of cologne and male filled her nostrils. His profile was sharply defined, and she was intrigued by the faint lines

around his eyes, those incredible aquamarine eyes. She knew he was five years older than her twenty-nine. He had been away to college when she was a teenager, then she had gone to college herself by the time he came home. When she returned after graduation, he had been married, and she had been engaged when he got divorced. They'd never had a chance for more than a kiss. . . .

Abruptly she felt the urge to reach out and touch his face, to feel his mouth on hers, to—

Catherine caught herself at the thought. Lord help her if she was really that desperate for a man that she would consider Miles Kitteridge. It aggravated her to know that he could bring out this kind of reaction in her, after what he had done to her three years ago. Why was it that men like him always appealed to women who should know better? It must be the reformer in the female sex, she decided wryly. Women were loaded with it.

He swung the door open and motioned for her to go in first. He had a funny kind of smile on his face that she couldn't read.

As she edged past him, he gazed down at her. Every muscle in her body tensed. She had the overwhelming urge to run her hand down the lapel of his gray suit and absorb the feel of soft wool and hard muscle. Ringing through her head was the litany, *I'm not engaged any longer . . . any longer . . .*

This wasn't good.

Catherine scooted into the office. She strangled on her sigh of relief when she caught sight of the room.

The bookshelves, the credenzas, the walls, and

the tables were empty. Not a single personal item, book, binder, or picture was visible. Even the top of the cherrywood desk was devoid of a telephone. Her grandfather had been wiped clean.

She strode over to the desk and yanked open one drawer. It was empty, except for a pack of Red Hots. No papers, no files, no nothing. That only confirmed her fears.

Fury shot through her, and she whirled around to face Miles. "What the hell have you done?"

"I haven't done a damn thing anyone else wouldn't have done," he snapped.

"Miles, honestly," Lettice said. "Can't you see this was a rude shock for Catherine?" She waved her arm around the empty room.

He frowned at his grandmother. "I tried to tell her, and you, that Allan's office was empty. Next time I'll be Avis and try harder, okay?"

Catherine sat down heavily in the leather swivel chair, its tall padded back and winged sides cushioning her in a dark cocoon. So much for a power attitude, she thought, when one didn't even bother to listen. He was laughing at her now. All the papers, everything, were already back in one of her relatives' hands. Now she'd never be able to ensure her grandfather's last wishes were carried out. Why couldn't he have given the codicil to her in the first place for safekeeping?

"Who did you send everything to?" she asked dully.

"Nobody," Miles said.

She bolted upright, completely astonished. "Nobody?"

He shook his head. "I asked your uncle Byrne what he wanted me to do with Allan's personal