

Jackie Collins

ROCK STAR

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By JACKIE COLLINS

THE WORLD IS FULL OF MARRIED MEN

THE STUD

THE BITCH

SINNERS

THE LOVE KILLERS

THE WORLD IS FULL OF DIVORCED WOMEN

LOVERS AND GAMBLERS

CHANCES

HOLLYWOOD WIVES

LUCKY

HOLLYWOOD HUSBANDS

ROCK STAR

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ROCK STAR

NEW YORK · LONDON · TORONTO · SYDNEY · TOKYO

FOR MY BROTHER,
BILL COLLINS,
WHO HAS ALWAYS
BEEN THERE FOR ME

LOS ANGELES 1987

SATURDAY, JULY 11TH



It was a perfect cloudless Los Angeles day. The Santa Ana winds had driven off the smog, and Saturday, July 11th, dawned crisp and clean, settling into a seductively lazy heat.

Kris Phoenix awoke early. Unusual for him, but he had flown in from London the previous afternoon and gone straight to bed. Fourteen hours later he surfaced in his oversize California King bed, in his oversize palatial Bel Air mansion, and rolled over to find that his Los Angeles girlfriend, Cybil Wilde, had joined him sometime during the night. Fortunately for her, she had not tried to wake him. Sex was great, but woe betide anyone who came between Kris and his jet lag.

Cybil slept on, her nineteen-year-old body smooth and naked, long, honey-blond hair fanning out around her wholesomely pretty face.

Cybil Wilde was a highly paid, extremely visible commercial model. Not quite Christie Brinkley, but on her way. Recently she had appeared on the cover of *Sports Illustrated* in a revealing one-piece swimsuit. Now the offers were pouring in, but Cybil never accepted anything without deferring to Kris's superior judgment. And he preferred having her at home—whether he was there or not.

He debated waking her; after all, it was several weeks since

ROCK STAR

they'd seen each other. Then he remembered the concert tonight, and decided he could wait. Astrid, his London live-in, had not exactly let his motor idle. In fact, Astrid was a maniac in the sack, she never left him alone.

Astrid, the clothes designer. They'd met four years ago in Paris, when his manager hired her to design some leather pants for him, and she'd ended up feeling a lot more than the material. At twenty-eight, Astrid was nine years older than Cybil, but she had the requisite long blond hair and knockout body, plus she was Danish, and everyone knew about Scandinavian women. He liked his women blond and long-legged, with a big bosom and an amiable disposition. What more could any man ask?

Silently Kris stepped from bed, making his way into his black, mirrored, high tech bathroom.

Fortunately he'd managed to stay sober on the flight from London. It was amazing the difference it made—he actually felt like a human being. And on close inspection in the mirror above his black marble sink, he actually looked like one.

Kris Phoenix was thirty-eight years old. He had intense ice-blue eyes, longish dirty-blond hair subtly streaked by the sun (and if the sun wasn't around, an English hairdresser called Spud took care of it), and rakish good looks. Neither tall nor short, he hit a comfortable five feet ten inches—and since taking up weight training he was all dynamic body power and rippling muscles. Hardly Arnold Schwarzenegger—more Bruce Springsteen fused with Mick Jagger.

Kris Phoenix was a rock star. A very famous rock star indeed.

In fact, some said, Kris Phoenix was a rock legend.

All that talk never bothered him. As far as he was concerned he made music, sang songs, and played a mean guitar. So did a lot of other guys. Kris reckoned he had a hold on reality. Just because he divided his life between two fantastic mansions, made millions of dollars a year, owned seven cars, and kept two beautiful live-in females, that didn't make him any different inside. He would always, deep down, be plain Chris Pierce from Maida Vale, London. There was no getting away from the fact

that his mother once scrubbed other people's floors, and his stepfather drove a bus.

"Ohh . . . my . . . God! You . . . are . . . sooo . . . sexy!" Cybil barefooted her way into the bathroom, and it wasn't only her feet that lacked coverage. "I've really missed you, Kris!" she sighed, throwing her arms around him.

Suddenly Astrid the maniac began to fade from his thoughts.

"You too, kiddo," he replied, kissing her warm, inviting lips.

She rubbed her full breasts against his bare chest, knowing full well what that would do to him.

One snag. Sex was out on the day of a performance. Only somebody should tell the massive hard-on growing in his pajama pants.

Regretfully he pushed her away. "Leave it out, Cyb. Y'know the rules, and tonight's that goddamn private gig for Marcus Citroen."

Snaking her arms around his waist, she rocked him back toward her. "How about a private gig just for me?" she whispered in her best sexy voice. "After all, I *am* asking nicely. And I promise I'll be good." A meaningful pause. "Very good."

There was no way Kris would break his rule. And nobody—not even the gorgeous Cybil Wilde—could make him. On the day of a performance he was like a fighter entering the ring, he needed every ounce of his precious sexual energy. Not one drop got spilled until it was all over.

"Later," he promised, disengaging himself and moving purposefully toward the shower.

Cybil pulled a disappointed face.

"I said later, luv," he repeated, flashing his famous crooked grin as he stepped under the icy needles of water and grabbed a bar of lemon soap.

Lathering his chest, he decided the shower felt good. Freezing water. Freezing out the old sexual urges. Making him feel alive and alert, ready for anything.

Anything except a private performance for Marcus sonofabitch Citroen.

Coldly Kris reflected on how much he loathed the powerful record magnate.

ROCK STAR

And with dull resignation he realized there was nothing he could do about it.

Not yet anyway.

Rafealla alighted from Marcus Citroen's private jet and entered Marcus Citroen's personal Mercedes stretch limousine waiting on the tarmac. She nodded curtly at the driver, and was relieved to see upon entering the limo there was no welcoming committee to greet her.

Great, she thought, no one to bother me until I reach the hotel.

She was wrong. As soon as she settled back, the driver requested that she pick up the car phone. "Mr. Citroen on the line," he said reverently.

"Thanks." Her voice was flat. Marcus Citroen followed her every move. She couldn't go to the bathroom without his knowing about it.

"Hi, Marcus," she said listlessly.

"Mr. Citroen will be with you in a moment," replied the velvet-toned voice of his ever-so-efficient secretary, Phoebe.

Rafealla waited. Marcus liked to keep people waiting; she had seen him do it countless times. "Builds character," he would say dryly, with just a hint of the European accent he had never quite managed to get rid of.

Nervously she leaned forward and asked the driver if he had a cigarette.

"I gave it up," the man said with an apologetic shrug. "Would you like me to stop and get you a pack?"

"No," she said, shaking her head vigorously. She too had given up the dreaded habit, although right now she was prepared to kill for the chance of one long deep drag on *anything*.

"Rafealla?" Marcus's voice. The slight accent. The oily thickness.

"Yes, Marcus."

"You're here."

Of course I am, you summoned me, didn't you? "Yes."

"Was your flight comfortable?"

"Very."

"Good, good." He cleared his throat. "I have booked you into a suite at L'Ermitage. I'll call you as soon as you get there."

Yes. *Probably the moment I walk through the door.* "Fine," she said coolly.

"Rafealla?"

"Yes."

"You won't regret your decision."

Ah, but I will, Marcus. I will.

He had given her no option, she thought, running a hand despairingly through her long, dark hair. With a deep sigh she slumped back against the plush leather seat.

Rafealla. She was known by just one name.

Rafealla.

When she sang, her voice evoked magic. Sultry nights and smoky nightclubs, for she did not sing of virgins and fresh young love, she ventured back to Billie Holiday territory and the blues. At twenty-seven years of age she knew plenty about the blues. More than she ever should have known.

Rafealla was an exotic beauty. Green-eyed, with sharply etched cheekbones, a wide, luscious mouth, and a deep olive complexion. Her dark hair, straight and shining, swept in a curtain to her waist. She was slight of build, not voluptuous—but her body was still quite something in the oversized man's suit and thin silk top she wore.

Rafealla had risen to the heights from nowhere, it seemed. Eighteen months ago she had been unheard of. Now she was a star. Burning bright. A meteor streaking her way to the top of every record chart in the world. And whereas she had imagined stardom would bring her freedom, exactly the opposite had happened. Stardom had brought her Marcus Citroen. And she hated him with a deep and burning passion.

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ROCK STAR

"Bobby Mondella, do you have any idea how much you are loved?" the pretty black woman crooned affectionately as she perched on the edge of a large circular desk. Her name was Sara.

Bobby, sitting in a comfortable leather chair next to the desk, reached out to touch. "Tell me, girl, tell me good."

Bobby Mondella gave new meaning to the word "handsome." In his thirties, he was tall, well over six feet, with dark-chocolate skin, curly jet-black hair, and a great body.

"I'll do better than tellin' you, honey," Sara said enthusiastically, grabbing a random pile of press clippings from the desk. "I'm gonna read you some of the reviews comin' in on *Mondella Alive*. We are talkin' *dy... na... mite!*"

Bobby reached for the dark glasses covering his unseeing eyes, took them off, put them on again. He made the same gesture about a hundred times a day. It was impossible for him to accept the fact he would never see again.

"Yeahhh. *Dy... na... mite!*" Sara repeated excitedly.

"I know 'bout the reviews," Bobby said patiently. "The album's been number one on the soul charts for five weeks now."

"Six," Sara corrected matter-of-factly. "Six straight weeks, an' *still* goin' strong." She paused for breath. "Oh, sure, Mister Mondella. I know you've heard all about the *Billboard* rave, an' *Rollin' Stone*, not to mention the *L.A. Times*, *Blues an' Soul*, an'—"

"What's happenin'?" Bobby interrupted. "Whyn't you just get to the train station an' save me the trip?"

"What's happening," Sara said importantly, "is that all across the country, in this great land we call America—"

"Cut it, babe."

Ignoring him, she continued her speech. "In every little hick town—they are lovin' you, honey, but I mean *lovin'* you." She paused triumphantly, shuffling the stack of press clippings. "Want me to read you some of this stuff?"

"Sure," he said casually, not wishing to appear too eager, although hiding anything from Sara was almost impossible; she knew him too well.