

LADY BOSS

A NOVEL

SIMON AND SCHUSTER

New York London Toronto Sydney Tokyo Singapore

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BY JACKIE COLLINS

LADY BOSS

ROCK STAR

HOLLYWOOD HUSBANDS

LUCKY

HOLLYWOOD WIVES

CHANCES

LOVERS AND GAMBLERS

THE WORLD IS FULL OF DIVORCED WOMEN

THE LOVE-KILLERS

SINNERS

THE BITCH

THE STUD

THE WORLD IS FULL OF MARRIED MEN

Jackie Collins



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FOR TRACY, TIFFANY
AND RORY.
GIRLS CAN DO ANYTHING!

LADY
BOSS

PROLOGUE

September 1985

"Kill her," the voice said.

"Who?"

"Lucky Santangelo, that's who."

"It's as good as done."

"I hope so."

"Don't worry—the lady is already dead."

1



From the very beginning they were destined to be a lethal combination—Lucky Santangelo and Lennie Golden. Two stubborn, crazy, smart people.

Lennie was tall and lanky, with dirty-blond hair and ocean-green eyes. He was good-looking in an edgy offhand way. Women loved his looks. At thirty-seven, he'd finally made it as a movie star. He was the new breed—a comedian of the Eddie Murphy/Chevy Chase school. Cynical and funny, his films made big bucks—the bottom line in Hollywood.

Lucky Santangelo Richmond Stanislopoulos Golden was the thrice married daughter of the notorious Gino Santangelo. In her early thirties, she was darkly, exotically beautiful, with a tangle of wild jet curls, dangerous black eyes, smooth olive skin, a full sensual mouth, and a slim body. She was a fiercely independent, strong-willed woman who never compromised and always took chances.

Together they generated blazing heat. They'd been married for nearly a year, and both looked forward to their wedding anniversary in September with a mixture of delight and amazement. Delight, because they loved each other very much. Amazement, because who'd ever thought it would last?

Currently Lennie was in Los Angeles shooting *Macho Man* for

LADY BOSS

Panther Studios. The film was a comedy takeoff on all the Hollywood superheroes—Eastwood, Stallone, and Schwarzenegger.

They'd rented a beach house in Malibu, but while Lennie was filming, Lucky chose to stay in New York where she headed a billion-dollar shipping company—left to her by her second husband, Dimitri Stanisloupoulos. She also had wanted Bobby, her six-and-a-half-year-old son by Dimitri, to be educated in England, and being in New York meant she was closer to his English school.

On most weekends she either visited Bobby in London or Lennie in Los Angeles. "My life is one long plane ride," she joked ruefully to friends. But everyone knew Lucky thrived on activity, and to sit by Lennie's side playing movie star's wife would have bored her. As it was, they had a volatile and passionate marriage.

Macho Man was causing Lennie nothing but problems. Every night he called Lucky with a litany of complaints. She listened patiently while he told her the producer was a jerk; the director was a has-been lush; his leading lady was sharing her bed with the producer; and Panther Studios was run by money-mad grafters. He wanted out.

Lucky listened, smiling to herself. She was working on a deal that—if all went according to plan—would free him from the restrictions of answering to a director he didn't respect, a producer he loathed, and a studio run by people he never planned to do business with again—even though he'd foolishly, against her advice, signed a three picture contract with Panther.

"I'm about ready to walk," he threatened for the hundredth time.

"Don't," she said, attempting to soothe him.

"I can't make it with these assholes," he groaned.

"Those *assholes* can sue you for a fortune. And stop you working elsewhere," she added, the perfect voice of reason.

"Fuck 'em!" he replied recklessly.

"Don't do anything until I get out there," she warned. "Promise me that."

"When, for crissakes? I'm beginning to feel like a virgin."

A throaty chuckle. "Hmm . . . I didn't know you had that good a memory!"

JACKIE COLLINS

"Hurry it up, Lucky. I really miss you."

"Maybe I'll be there sooner than you think," she said mysteriously.

"I'm sure you'll recognize me," he said dryly. "I'm the guy with the permanent hard-on."

"Very funny." Still smiling, she replaced the receiver.

Lennie Golden would be shocked and delighted when he found out her surprise. And when he did, she planned to be right there next to him, ready to enjoy the expression on his face.

Once he put the phone down, Lennie felt restless. His wife was the most exciting woman in the world, but damn it—she pissed him off. Why couldn't she say, "Lennie, if things are tough I'll be right there." Why couldn't she forget everything else and be with him?

Lucky Santangelo. Drop dead gorgeous. Strong. Determined. Enormously rich. And too independent.

Lucky Santangelo. His wife.

Sometimes it all seemed like a fantasy—their marriage, his career, everything. Six years ago he'd been just another comedian looking to score a gig, a few bucks, anything going.

Lennie Golden. Son of crusty old Jack Golden, a stand-up Vegas hack, and the unstoppable Alice. Or "Alice the Swizzle" as his mother was known in her heyday as a now-you-see-'em, now-you-don't Las Vegas stripper. He'd split for New York when he was seventeen and made it all the way without any help from his folks.

His father was long dead, but Alice was still around. Sixty-five years old and frisky as an overbleached starlet, Alice Golden was caught in a time warp. She'd never come to terms with getting older, and the only reason she acknowledged Lennie as her son was because of his fame. "I was a child bride," she'd simper to anyone who'd listen, batting her fake lashes and curling her overpainted lips in a lascivious leer. "I gave birth to Lennie when I was twelve!"

Lennie had bought her a small house in Sherman Oaks. She wasn't thrilled at being shunted out to the Valley, but what could she do? Alice Golden lived with the dream that one day she'd be a