



Carrying the Greek's Heir (One Night With Consequences)

By Sharon Kendrick

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It was only supposed to be one wild, passionate night. Yet when Ellie shows up demanding Alek legitimize their unborn child, he shocks himself...and agrees to her outrageous request!

Catapulted into a world she wasn't meant for, with a husband she shouldn't desire, Ellie's resolve wavers. Until a tiny kick from within reminds her why she made a deal with this handsome devil: her baby, his heir...

When one night...leads to pregnancy!

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Sharon Kendrick started story-telling at the age of eleven and has never stopped. She likes to write fast-paced, feel-good romances with heroes who are so sexy they'll make your toes curl! She lives in the beautiful city of Winchester – where she can see the cathedral from her window (when standing on tip-toe!). She has two children, Celia and Patrick and her passions include music, books, cooking and eating – and drifting into daydreams while working out new plots.

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He wanted her. He wanted her so badly he could almost taste it.

Alek Sarantos felt the heavy jerk of lust as he drummed his fingers against the linen tablecloth. Tall candles flickered in the breeze and the rich perfume of roses scented the air. He shifted his position slightly but still he couldn't get comfortable.

He was...restless. More than restless.

Maybe it was the thought of returning to the crazy pace of his London life which had heightened his sexual hunger, so that it pulsed through his veins like thick, sweet honey. His throat tightened. Or maybe it was just her.

He watched as the woman walked through the long grass towards him, brushing past meadow flowers which gleamed like pale discs in the dying light of the summer evening. The rising moon illuminated a body showcased by a plain white shirt, tucked into a dark skirt which looked at least a size too small. A tightly tied apron emphasised her hips. Everything about her was soft, he thought. Soft skin. Soft body. The thick hair which was plaited in a heavy rope and fell down to the middle of her back was silky soft.

His lust was insistent—his groin the opposite of soft—yet she wasn't his type. Definitely not. He didn't usually get turned on by curvy waitresses who greeted you with an uncomplicated, friendly smile. He liked his women lean and independent, not gently rounded and wholesome. Hard-eyed women who dropped their panties with ease and without question. Who took him on his terms—which had no room for manoeuvre. Terms which had helped carve out his position as a man of influence and given him a lifestyle free of domestic tie or encumbrance. Because he didn't want either. He avoided anyone he suspected might be soft, or needy or—heaven forbid—*sweet*. Sweet wasn't a quality he required in a bed partner.

So why was he lusting after someone who'd been drifting around the periphery of his vision all week, like a ripe plum waiting to fall from the tree? Something to do with her apron, perhaps—some late-onset uniform fetish, which was playing some very erotic fantasies in his head?

'Your coffee, sir.'

Even her voice was soft. He remembered hearing its low, musical cadence when she'd been comforting a child who had cut open his knee on one of the gravel paths. Alek had been returning from a game of tennis with the hotel pro when he'd seen her crouching down beside the boy, exuding a general air of unflappability. She'd stemmed the flow of blood with her handkerchief as an ashen-faced nanny had stood shaking nearby

and, turning her head, had seen Alek. She'd told him to 'Go inside and get a first-aid kit' in the calmest voice he'd ever heard. And he had. A man more used to issuing orders than taking them, he'd returned with the kit and felt a savage twist of pain in his gut to see the boy looking up at her with such trust shining from his teary eyes.

She was leaning forward now as she placed the cup of coffee in front of him, drawing his attention to her breasts, which were straining tightly against her shirt. Oh, God. Her breasts. He found himself wondering what her nipples might look like if they were peaking towards his lips. As she straightened up he saw pewter-grey eyes framed by a pale and heavy fringe. She wore no adornment other than a thin gold chain around her neck and a name badge which said *Ellie*.

Ellie.

As well as being cool and unflappable towards small boys, she'd spent the week anticipating his every need—and while that was nothing new to someone like him, her presence had been surprisingly unobtrusive. She hadn't tried to engage him in conversation, or wow him with wisecracks. She'd been pleasant and friendly but hadn't hinted about her evenings off, or offered to show him around. In short, she hadn't come onto him like any other woman would have done. She had treated him with the same quiet civility she'd exhibited towards every other guest in the discreet New Forest hotel—and maybe that's what was bugging him. His mouth hardened—for it was almost unheard of for Alek Sarantos to be treated like other people.

But it wasn't just that which had captured his interest. She had an air about her which he couldn't quite put his finger on. Ambition maybe, or just some quiet professional pride. Was it that which made his gaze linger for a heartbeat too long—or the fact that she reminded him of himself, more years ago than he cared to remember? He'd once had that same raw ambition—back in the days when he'd started out with nothing and waited tables, just like her. When money had been tight and the future uncertain. He had worked hard to escape his past and to forge a new future and had learnt plenty of lessons along the way. He'd thought that success was the answer to every problem in life, but he had been wrong. Success made the pill sweeter, but you still had to swallow the pill all the same.

Wasn't he realising that now—when he'd achieved every single thing he'd set out to achieve? When every hurdle had been leapt over and unimaginable riches were stuffed into his various bank accounts. Didn't seem to matter how much he gave away to charity, he still kept making more. And sometimes that left him with a question which made him feel uncomfortable—a question he couldn't seem to answer, but which he'd been asking himself more and more lately.

Was this all there was?

'Will there be anything else, Mr Sarantos?' she was asking him.

The waitress's voice washed over him like balm. 'I'm not sure,' he drawled and lifted his eyes to the sky. Above him, stars were spattering the darkening sky—as if some celestial artist had sprayed the canvas silver. He thought of returning to London the following day and a sudden, inexplicable yearning made him lower his head and meet her gaze. 'The night is still young,' he observed.

She gave him a quick smile. 'When you've been waiting tables all evening, eleven-thirty doesn't really feel *young*!

'I guess not.' He dropped a lump of sugar in his coffee. 'What time do you finish?'

Her smile wavered, as if the question wasn't one she'd been anticipating. 'In about ten minutes' time.'

Alek leant back in his chair and studied her some more. Her legs were faintly tanned and the smoothness of her skin made you almost forget how cheap her shoes were. 'Perfect,' he murmured. 'The gods must be smiling on us. So why don't you join me for a drink?'

'I can't.' She shrugged as if in answer to his raised eyebrows. 'I'm not really supposed to fraternise with customers.'

Alek gave a hard smile. Wasn't *fraternise* an old-fashioned word, which had its roots in *brotherly*? An irrelevant word as far as he was concerned, because he'd never had brothers. Never had anyone. Well, nobody that mattered, that was for sure. He'd always been alone in the world and that was the way he liked it. The way he intended to keep it. Except maybe for this starlit night, which was crying out for a little female company. 'I'm just asking you to join me for a drink, *poulaki mou*,' he said softly. 'Not to drag you off to some dark corner and have my wicked way with you.'

'Better not,' she said. 'It's against hotel policy. Sorry.'

Alek felt the stir of something unknown whispering down his spine. Was it the sensation of being refused something—no matter how small—which had started his heart racing? *How long since he had been refused anything and felt this corresponding frisson of excitement? A heady feeling that you might actually have to make an effort—instead of the outcome being entirely predictable.*

'But I'm leaving tomorrow evening,' he said.

Ellie nodded. She knew that. Everyone in the hotel did. They knew plenty about the Greek billionaire who had been creating a stir since he'd arrived at The Hog last week. As the most luxurious hotel in the south of England, they were used to rich and demanding guests—but Alek Sarantos was richer and more demanding than most. His personal assistant had actually sent a list of his likes and dislikes before he'd arrived and all the staff had been advised to study it. And even though she'd considered it slightly over the top, Ellie had got stuck right in, because if a job was worth doing—it was worth doing well.

She knew he liked his eggs 'over easy' because he'd lived in America for a while. That he drank red wine, or sometimes whisky. His clothes had arrived before he did—delivered by special courier and carefully wrapped in layers of filmy tissue paper. There had even been a special staff pep talk just before he'd arrived.

'*Mr Sarantos must be given space*,' they'd been told. '*Under no circumstances must he be disturbed unless he shows signs of wanting to be disturbed. It's a coup for someone like him to stay in this hotel, so we must make him feel as if it's his own home.*'

Ellie had taken the instructions literally because The Hog's training scheme had given her stability and hope for the future. For someone who'd never been any good at exams, it had offered a career ladder she was determined to climb, because she wanted to make something of herself. To be strong and independent.

Which meant that, unlike every other female in the place, she had tried to regard the Greek tycoon with a certain impartiality. She hadn't attempted to flirt with him, as everyone else had been doing. She was practical enough to know her limitations and Alek Sarantos would never be interested in someone like her. Too curvy and too ordinary—she was never going to be the preferred choice of an international playboy, so why pretend otherwise?

But of course she had looked at him. She suspected that even a nun might have given him a second glance because men like Alek Sarantos didn't stray onto the average person's radar more than a couple of times in a lifetime.

His rugged face was too hard to be described as handsome and his sensual lips were marred by a twist of ruthlessness. His hair was ebony, his skin like polished bronze, but it was his dark-fringed eyes which captured your attention and made it difficult to look away. Unexpectedly blue eyes, which made her think of those sunlit seas you always saw in travel brochures. Sardonic eyes which seemed to have the ability to make her feel...

What?

Ellie shook her head slightly. She wasn't sure. As if she sensed something lost in him? As if, on some incomprehensible level, they were kindred spirits? Stupid crazy stuff she shouldn't be feeling, that was for sure. Her fingers tightened around the tray. It was definitely time to excuse herself and go home.

But Alek Sarantos was still staring as if he was waiting for her to change her mind and as those blue eyes seared into her she felt a brief wobble of temptation. Because it wasn't every day a Greek billionaire asked you to have a drink with him.

'It's getting on for twelve,' she said doubtfully.

'I'm perfectly capable of telling the time,' he said with a touch of impatience. 'What happens if you stay out past midnight—does your car turn into a pumpkin?'

Ellie jerked back her head in surprise. She was amazed he knew the story of Cinderella—did that mean they had the same fairy tales in Greece?—though rather less surprised that he'd associated her with the famous skivvy.

'I don't have a car,' she said. 'Just a bicycle.' 'You live out in the middle of nowhere and you don't have a car?'

'No.' She rested the tray against her hip and smiled, as if she were explaining elementary subtraction to a five-year-old. 'A bike is much more practical round here.'

'So what happens when you go to London—or the coast?'

'I don't go to London very often. And we do have such things as trains and buses, you know. It's called public transport.'

He dropped another cube of sugar in his coffee. 'I didn't use any kind of public system until I was fifteen.'

'Seriously?'

'Absolutely.' He glanced up at her. 'Not a train or a bus—not even a scheduled airline.'

She stared at him. What kind of life had he led? For a moment she was tempted to offer him a glimpse of hers. Maybe she should suggest meeting tomorrow morning and taking the bus to nearby Milmouth-on-Sea. Or catching a train somewhere—anywhere. They could drink scalding tea from paper cups as the countryside sped by—she'd bet he'd never done *that*.

Until she realised that would be overstepping the mark, big time. He was a hotshot billionaire and she was a waitress and while guests sometimes pretended to staff that they were equals, everyone knew they weren't. Rich people liked to play at being ordinary, but for them it was nothing but a game. He'd asked her to stay for a drink but, really, what possible interest could a tycoon like him have in someone like her? His unusually expansive mood might evaporate the moment she sat down. She knew he could be impatient and demanding. Didn't the staff on Reception say he'd given them hell whenever he'd lost his internet connection—even though he was supposed to be on holiday and, in her opinion, people on holiday shouldn't be working.

But then Ellie remembered something the general manager had told her when she'd first joined the hotel's training scheme. That powerful guests sometimes wanted to talk—and if they did, you should let them.

So she looked into his blue eyes and tried to ignore the little shiver of awareness which had started whispering over her skin. 'How come,' she questioned, trying to make her voice sound cool and casual, 'it took until the age of fifteen before you went on public transport?'

Alek leant back in his chair and considered her question and wondered whether now might be the right time to change the subject, no matter how easy he found it to talk to her. Because the reality of his past was something he usually kept off-limits. He had grown up in a pampered palace of a home—with every luxury known to man.

And he had hated every minute of it.

The place had been a fortress, surrounded by high walls and snarling dogs. A place which had kept people out as well as in. The most lowly of staff were vetted before being offered employment, and paid obscenely well to turn a blind eye to his father's behaviour. Even family holidays were tainted by the old man's paranoia about security. He was haunted by the threat of stories about his lifestyle getting into the papers—terrified that anything would be allowed to tarnish his outward veneer of respectability.

Crack teams of guards were employed to keep rubber-neckers, journalists and ex-lovers at bay. Frogmen would swim silently in reconnaissance missions around foreign jetties, before their luxury yacht was given the all-clear to sail into harbour. When he was growing up, Alek didn't know what it was like not to be tailed by the shadowy presence of some burly bodyguard. And then one day he had escaped. At fifteen, he had walked away, leaving his home and his past behind and cutting his ties with them completely. He had gone from fabulous wealth to near penury but had embraced his new lifestyle with eagerness and hunger. No longer would he be tainted by his father's fortune. Everything he owned, he would earn for himself and that was exactly what he'd done. It was the one thing in life he could be proud of. His mouth hardened. Maybe the only thing.

He realised that the waitress was still waiting for an answer to his question and that she no longer seemed to be in any hurry to get off duty. He smiled, expectation making his heart beat a little faster. 'Because I grew up on a Greek island where there were no trains and few buses.'

'Sounds idyllic,' she said.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Elias Rosser:

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