

The Greek Commands His Mistress (The Notorious Greeks)

By Lynne Graham

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"I always get what I want…and I want you."

Making billions and bedding beautiful women couldn't make Bastien Zikos forget the lustrous dark hair, haunting eyes and outrageous defiance of Delilah Moore.

So Bastien has gone to great lengths to ensure that the one—and only—woman to have ever turned him down returns to him. If Delilah wants to save her father's ailing business, she must agree to Bastien's commands: be his mistress, wear his diamonds and wait for him in his bed!

But what will this exacting tycoon do when he discovers that his sassy mistress is a virgin?

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Editorial Review

About the Author
Lynne Graham lives in Northern Ireland and has been a keen romance reader since her teens. Happily married, Lynne has five children. Her eldest is her only natural child. Her other children, who are every bit as dear to her heart, are adopted. The family has a variety of pets, and Lynne loves gardening, cooking, collecting allsorts and is crazy about every aspect of Christmas.

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'It's over, Reba,' Bastien Zikos pronounced with finality.

The stunning blonde he was addressing flashed him a pained look of reproach. 'But we've been great together.'

'I've never pretended that this is anything more than it is…sex,' Bastien traded impatiently. 'Now we're done.'

Reba blinked rapidly, as though she was fighting back tears, but Bastien wasn't fooled. The only thing that would reduce Reba to tears would be a stingy pay-off. She was as hard as nails…and he was no more yielding. Indeed, when it came to women he was tough and cold. His mother, an eighteen-carat-gold-digging promiscuous shrew, with a polished line in fake tears and emotion, had been the first to teach her son distrust and contempt for her sex.

'You got bored with me, didn't you?' Reba condemned. 'I was warned that you had a short attention span. I should've listened.'

Impatience shivered through Bastien's very tall, muscular frame. Reba had been his mistress, and terrific entertainment in the bedroom, but it ended now.

And he had given her a small fortune in jewellery. He took nothing for free from women—not sex, not anything.

Bastien turned on his heel. 'My accountant will be in touch,' he said drily.

'There's someone else, isn't there?' the blonde snapped.

'If there is, it's none of your business,' Bastien told her icily, his dark eyes chilling in their detachment as he glanced back at her, his lean, extravagantly handsome features hard as iron.

His driver was waiting outside the building to ferry him to the airport for his scheduled flight north.

A very faint shadow of a smile softened the tough line of Bastien's mouth as he boarded his private jet. *Someone else?* Maybe…maybe not.

His finance director, Richard James, was already seated in the opulent cabin. 'Am I allowed to ask what secret allure—evidently known only to you—exists in this dull northern town we're heading to, and about the even more dull failed business enterprise you have recently acquired?'

'You can ask. I don't promise to answer,' Bastien traded, flicking lazily through the latest stock figures on his laptop.

'Then there *is* something special at Moore Components that I haven't yet picked up on?' the stocky blond man prompted ruefully. 'A patent? A new invention?'

Bastien dealt the other man a wryly amused glance. 'The factory is built on land worth millions,' he pointed out drily. 'A prime site for development close to the town centre.'

'It's been years since you played asset-stripper,'

Richard remarked in surprise, while Bastien's personal staff and his security team boarded at the rear of the cabin.

Bastien had started out buying and selling businesses and breaking them up to attain the maximum possible profit. He had no conscience about such things. Profit and loss was a fact of life in the business world. Trends came and went, as did contracts. Fortunes rose and fell as companies expanded and then contracted again.

Bastien was exceptionally gifted when it came to spotting trends and making millions. He had a mind like a steel trap and the fierce, aggressive drive of a male who had not had a wealthy family to give him his breaks. He was a self-made billionaire, who had started out with nothing, and he took great pride in his independence.

But just at that moment Bastien wasn't thinking about business. No, indeed. Bastien was thinking about Delilah Moore—the only woman who had ever rejected him, leaving him tormented by lust and outraged by the frustrating new experience. His ego would have withstood the rebuff had she been genuinely uninterested in him, but Bastien knew that had not been the case. He had seen the longing in her eyes, the telling tension of her body when she was close to him, had recognised the breathy intimate note in her voice.

He could forgive much, but unquestionably *not* her deceitful insistence that she didn't want him. Fearlessly and foolishly judgemental, she had flung Bastien's womanising reputation in his face with as much disdain as a fine lady dismissing the clumsy approaches of a street thug. In reaction, Bastien's rage had burned, and now, almost two years on, it was still smouldering at the lack of respect she had demonstrated—not to mention her lies and her sheer nerve in daring to attack him.

And now fortune had turned the tables on Delilah Moore and her family. Bastien savoured the fact with dark satisfaction. He didn't believe she would be hurling defiance at him this time around.

'How is he?' Lilah asked her stepmother in an undertone when she spotted her father, Robert, standing outside in the backyard of her small terraced house.

'Much the same…' Vickie, a small curvaceous blonde in her early thirties, groaned at the sink, where she was doing the dishes with a whinging toddler clinging to one leg. 'Of course he's depressed. He worked all his life to build up the firm and now it's gone. He feels like a failure, and being unable to get a job hasn't helped.'

'Hopefully something will come up soon,' Lilah pronounced with determined cheer as she scooped up her two-year-old half-sister Clara and settled her down with a toy to occupy her.

When life was challenging, Lilah was convinced that it was best to look for even the smallest reason to be glad and celebrate it. Just then she was busy reminding herself that, while her father *had* lost his business and his home, their family was still intact and they all had their health.

At the same time Lilah was marvelling at the reality that she had grown so close to the stepmother she had once loathed on sight. She had assumed that Vickie was another one of the good-time girls her father had once specialised in, and only slowly had she come to recognise that, regardless of their twenty-year age gap, the couple were genuinely in love.

Her father and Vickie had married four years earlier and Lilah now had two half-siblings she adored: three-year-old Ben and little Clara.

Currently Lilah's family were sharing her own rented home. With only two small bedrooms, a cramped living room and an even tinier kitchen, it was a very tight squeeze. But until the council came up with alternative accommodation for her father and his family, or her father found a paying job, they didn't have much choice.

The impressive five-bedroom home that her father and his wife had once owned was gone now, along with the business. Everything had had to be sold to settle the loans her father had taken out in a desperate effort to keep Moore Components afloat.

'I'm still hoping that Bastien Zikos will throw your dad a lifeline,' Vickie confided in a sudden burst of optimism. 'I mean, nobody knows that business better than Robert, and surely there's a space somewhere in the office or the factory where your father could still make himself useful?'

Lilah resisted the urge to remark that Bastien was more likely to tie a concrete block to her father's leg and sink him. After all, the Greek billionaire had offered to buy Moore Components two years earlier and his offer had been refused. Her father should've sold up and got out then, she thought regretfully. But the business had been doing well and, although tempted by the offer, the older man had ultimately decided that he couldn't face stepping down.

It was no consolation to Lilah that Bastien himself had forecast disaster once he'd realised that the firm's prosperity depended on the retention of one very important contract. Within weeks of losing that contract Moore Components had been struggling to survive.

'I'd better get to work,' Lilah remarked in a brittle voice, bending down to pet the miniature dachshund pushing affectionately against her legs in the hope of getting some attention.

Since her family had moved in Skippy had been a little neglected, she conceded guiltily. When had she last taken him for anything other than the shortest of walks?

Thoroughly unsettled, however, by her stepmother's sanguine reference to Bastien Zikos as a possible saviour, Lilah abandoned Skippy to pull on her raincoat, knotting the belt at her narrow waist.

She was a small, slender woman, with long black hair and bright blue eyes. She was also one of the very few workers still actively employed at Moore Components now it had gone bust. The Official Receivers had come in, taken over and laid off most of the staff. Only the services of the human resources team had been retained, to deal with all the admin involved in closing down the business. Engaged to work just two more days there, Lilah knew that she too would soon be unemployed.

Vickie was already zipping Ben into his jacket, because Lilah left the little boy at nursery school on her way into work.

It was a brisk spring day, with a breeze, and constantly forced to claw her hair out of her eyes, Lilah regretted not having taken the time to put her hair up long before she dropped her little brother off at the school. Unfortunately she had been suffering sleepless nights and scrambling out of bed every morning heavy-eyed, running late.

Ever since she had learned that Bastien Zikos had bought her father's failed business she had been struggling to hide her apprehension. In that less-than-welcoming attitude to the new owner, however, Lilah stood very much alone. The Receivers had been ecstatic to find a buyer, while her father and various resident worthies had expressed the hope that the new owner would re-employ some of the people who had lost their jobs when Moore Components closed.

Only Lilah, who had once received a disturbing glimpse of the cold diamond-cutting strength of Bastien's ruthlessness, was full of pessimism and thought the prospect of Bastien arriving to break good news to the local community unlikely.

In fact, if ever a man could have been said to have *scared* Lilah, it was Bastien Zikos. Everything about the tall, amazingly handsome Greek had unnerved her. The way he looked, the way he talked, the domineering way he behaved. His whole attitude had been anathema to her and she had backed off fast—only to discover, to her dismay, that that kind of treatment only put Bastien into pursuit mode.

Although Lilah was only twenty-three she had distrusted self-assured, slick and handsome men all her life, fully convinced that most of them were lying, cheating players. After all, even her own father had once been like that—a serial adulterer whose affairs had caused her late mother great unhappiness.

Lilah didn't like to dwell on those traumatic years, when she had begun to hate her father, because it had seemed then that he could not be trusted with any woman—not her mother's friends, not even his office staff. Mercifully all that behaviour had stopped once her father met Vickie, and since then Lilah had contrived to forge a new and much closer relationship with her surviving parent. Only now Robert Moore had settled down was his daughter able to respect him again and forgive him for the past.

Bastien, on the other hand, was not the family-man type, and he had always enjoyed his bad reputation as a womaniser. He was an unashamed sexual predator, accustomed to reaching out and just taking any woman who took his fancy. He was rich, astute and incredibly good-looking. Women fell like ninepins around him, running to him the instant he crooked an inviting finger. But Lilah had run in the opposite direction, determined not to have her heart broken and her pride trampled by a man who only wanted her for her body.

She was worth more than that, she reminded herself staunchly, as she had done two years earlier—*much* more. She wanted a man who loved and cared about her and who would stick by her no matter what came their way.

Being powerfully attracted to a man like Bastien Zikos had been a living nightmare for Lilah, and she had refused to acknowledge her reaction to him or surrender to the temptation he provided. Yet even now, two years on, Lilah could still remember her first sight of him across a crowded auction room. Bastien…tall, dark and devastating, with his glorious black-lashed tawny eyes.

She had been there to view a pendant that had once belonged to her mother and which Vickie, unaware of

Lilah's attachment to the piece, had put up for sale. Lilah had planned to buy it back quietly at auction, preferring that option to the challenge of telling Vickie that she had actually been pretty upset when her father had so thoughtlessly given all her late mother's jewellery to his then live-in girlfriend.

And the first person Lilah had seen that day had been Bastien, black hair falling over his brow, his bold bronzed profile taut as he examined something in his hand while an auction assistant in overalls stood by an open display cabinet. When she had been directed to that same cabinet she had been hugely taken aback to see that Bastien had had her mother's very ordinary silver sea horse pendant clasped in his lean brown hand.

'What are you doing with that?' she'd asked possessively.

'What's it to you?' Bastien had asked bluntly, glancing up and transfixing her with breathtaking dark brown eyes enhanced by lush, curling black lashes.

In that split second he had travelled in her estimation from merely handsome to utterly gorgeous, and her breath had tripped in her throat and her heart had started hammering—as if she stood on the edge of a dangerous precipice.

'It belonged to my mother.'

'Where did *she* get it from?' Bastien had shot at her, thoroughly disconcerting her.

'I was with her when she bought it at a car boot sale almost twenty years ago,' Lilah had confided, although she'd been startled by his question, not to mention the intensity of his appraisal.

'My mother lost it in London some time around then,' Bastien had mused in a dark, deep accented drawl that had sent odd little quivers travelling down her spine. He had turned over the pendant to display the engraving on the back, composed of two letter As enclosed in a heart shape. 'My father Anatole gave it to my mother Athene. What an extraordinary coincidence that it should have belonged to *both* our mothers.'

'Extraordinary…' Lilah had agreed jerkily, as disturbed by his proximity as by his explanation. He'd been close enough that she'd been able to see the dark stubble shadowing his strong jawline and smell the citrus-sharp tenor of his cologne. Her nostrils had flared as she'd taken a hasty step backwards and cannoned into someone behind her.

Bastien had shot out a hand to steady her before she could stumble, long brown fingers closing round her narrow shoulder like a metal vice to keep her upright.

Lilah had jerked back again, breathless and flushed, heat flickering in places she had never felt warm before as her gaze had collided with the tall Greek's stunning eyes.

'May I see the pendant before it goes back in the cabinet?' she had asked curtly, putting out her hand.

'There's not much point in you looking at it. I'm planning to buy it,' Bastien had imparted drily.

Lilah's teeth had snapped together as though he had slapped her. 'So am I,' she had admitted grudgingly.

With reluctance Bastien had settled the pendant into her hand. Her eyes had prickled as she looked at it, because her mother had loved the fanciful piece and had often worn it in summer. The pendant reawakened a

few of the happier memories of Lilah's childhood.

'Join me for coffee,' Bastien had urged, flipping the pendant back out of her hand to return it to the hovering assistant.

Lilah had dealt him a bemused look of surprise. 'It would hardly be a-appropriate,' she'd stammered. 'Not when we're both going to bid on the same lot.'

'Maybe I'm sentimental. Maybe I would like to hear about where the necklace has been all these years.'

Bastien had dangled that unlikely assurance in front of her like a prize carrot and she had caved in to coffee, feeling that to do otherwise would be rude and unreasonable.

Users Review

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Maryanna Kuhns:

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Adriana Phillips:

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