



## Playing the Greek's Game (What His Money Can't Buy Book 2)

By Sharon Kendrick

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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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Emma's heart thundered as she stepped into the minimalist penthouse office, but the man sitting at the desk didn't even bother to lift his dark head.

Light streamed in from the enormous windows which overlooked one of London's loveliest parks. It was a view for which the world-renowned Granchester was famous—and which helped make the prices of the landmark hotel so eye-wateringly high. But the magnificence of the view paled in comparison with the formidable man who sat working, his attention fixed on the pile of papers before him.

Zak Constantinides.

The watery November sunshine highlighted the coal-black tumble of his hair and emphasised the musculature of his body. His broad shoulders were hunched and tense. Raw masculinity seemed to pulsate from his powerful frame and the thunder of Emma's heart now became an unsteady beat as she stared at him.

She was nervous. More nervous than she'd been in a long while—and maybe that wasn't surprising. Her boss was making an unscheduled London appearance and she'd been summoned up to see him in his private lair, with no warning whatsoever. And someone as powerful as the Greek tycoon didn't normally bother with people like her.

She'd been halfway up a ladder when the summons had come—and it showed. Beneath her faded jeans and loose T-shirt she was hot and sticky—and strands of hair were falling out of her ponytail. It wasn't exactly the best way to present herself to the powerful billionaire—but there wasn't a lot she could do about it, given that her comb was sitting in her handbag, tucked away in a staff locker somewhere in the bowels of the building.

He must have known she was standing there but he just carried on working as if the room were empty, leaving her feeling as if she were somehow invisible. Unless that was a deliberate ploy on his part. A way of showing her just who was in the driving seat. As if he *needed* to—when the sense of influence and privilege in the air was so heavy you could almost reach out and touch it. But hadn't his brother told her that Zak was a total control freak who enjoyed the weight of his own power?

Feeling like a rookie politician about to make her maiden speech, she cleared her throat. 'Mr Constantinides?'

At this, he lifted his ebony head to reveal hard, rugged features and gleaming olive skin. So far, so Greek. But Zak Constantinides broke the mould with eyes which were grey, instead of the more predictable brown. They surprised her and everyone else who saw them because they were as unsettling as a stormy sky.

They flicked over her now and captured her in their strange, pewter light.

And something inside her tightened. Something she didn't recognise but which filled her with a certain feeling of foreboding. Probably just nerves. Because what else could it be? She didn't *do* men and she certainly didn't do control-freak billionaires who were rumoured to have harem amounts of women dotted around the globe.

His eyes narrowed. '*Ne? Ti thelis?*'

Emma tried an uncertain smile. Had he spoken in his native tongue to distance himself even further, when she knew that his English was as fluent as hers? If so, it had worked, because now the palms of her hands were growing clammy. 'I'm Emma Geary. I believe you wanted to see me?'

Zak leaned back in his chair, his slow scrutiny never faltering as he drifted his gaze over her. 'Indeed I do,' he said softly as he indicated the chair in front of him. 'Please sit down, Miss Geary.'

'Thank you,' she said, horribly aware of the safety pins which were attached to the front of her T-shirt and a strand of hair which was now clinging to her sticky cheek. Was that why his expression was so unsettling—because she looked scruffy, as anyone *would* look if they'd been standing on a ladder hanging curtains for most of the morning?

As the Granchester hotel's in-house interior designer, she'd been busy working on one of the smaller bedrooms on the seventh floor when she'd received the call from his assistant. 'Get up to the boss's penthouse office immediately,' she'd been told. There had barely been time to draw breath before taking the elevator up here in response to his imperious command—and suddenly she wished she'd had time to put on a little make-up. Or substitute a less casual top. Or something. Something which would mean he wouldn't look at her with those stormy eyes boring into her.

Rather self-consciously, she fixed him with an apologetic look. 'I'm sorry I didn't have time to change—'

'Don't be. This isn't a fashion show,' he drawled, his gaze automatically taking in the way the faded denim clung to her slim legs, and the baggy T-shirt, which couldn't disguise the provocative curve of her breasts. Only her hands looked groomed—and Zak liked his women to look groomed. Her nails were long and neatly painted in a bright coral, which made him think about the spectacular sunsets of his native Greece and the soft lap of the nearby sea. Had she known he was looking at them and was that why her hand suddenly fluttered to her chest, drawing attention to the lush jut of her breasts? Unexpectedly, he felt a kick of lust, followed by the slow simmer of fury, but he kept his face impassive. 'What you wear won't have any effect on what I'm about to say to you.'

'Gosh.' She attempted another smile. 'That sounds ominous.'

'Does it?' came his unhelpful response.

Emma's smile wavered as she slid onto the chair facing him and she could do nothing to prevent the whisper of awareness from creeping over her skin as she met that cool grey gaze. But she felt bewilderment, too—because she didn't do the instant-attraction thing. Not any more. She was like one of those women who hadn't eaten chocolate in so long that just the thought of it now made her feel sick. And so it was with her and men. Or rather, that was the way it usually was.

Just that right now her normal indifference seemed to have deserted her—leaving her feeling strangely vulnerable in front of the hard-faced man who was staring at her so intently. Maybe it was because she'd

never been alone with him before. Or maybe because it seemed strangely *intimate* to find the Greek tycoon working diligently at his desk, casually dressed in shirtsleeves. Especially here.

Because Zak Constantinides usually stayed away from the London side of his worldwide operations—leaving the day-to-day running of his Granchester hotel to others. Happier in New York City, he was known to the staff of the hotel more by reputation than association.

Apart from one brief conversation, Emma had only ever really seen him in passing—for he was not known for engaging with his staff at a personal level. He left that to Xenon, his aide, and, to a lesser extent, to his younger brother, Nat. The last time she'd crossed paths with him had been at an official function here, at the opening of the refurbished Moonlight Room—an operation which she had overseen and been proud of.

She remembered being introduced to him—when his manner towards her had been decidedly lukewarm. His smile had been perfunctory as he'd thanked her for her creative input and she'd got the distinct impression that he'd simply been going through the motions of being polite. But Emma hadn't cared. She hadn't taken it personally because she knew what people said about him. She knew about his meteoric rise in the world of business, his cold heart and the legions of women who lusted after him.

Zak Constantinides was something of a legend—both in and out of the boardroom. He was the kind of man that any sensible woman would steer clear of if she wanted to avoid trouble. Particularly someone like her—who seemed to attract troublesome men, like a moth to the flame.

A long time ago, Emma had realised that she was useless when it came to the opposite sex—a trait which, sadly, she seemed to have inherited. Just like her mother, she'd made bad choices in the past, and had lived to regret the consequences. These days she kept men at a distance and protected her heart and her body from anyone who seemed as if they might be interested in one or either. It was easier that way.

Trying to deep breathe her way to a feeling of calmness, she studied the man sitting in front of her. On the night of the Moonlight's opening, he'd been wearing a black tux—and the exquisite cut of the formal suit had made him look like the powerful tycoon he was.

But today he looked different.

His rough cream cambric shirt was unbuttoned at the neck and rolled up to his elbows to reveal a pair of hair-roughened forearms. His hands were large and strong and his shoulders broad and powerful. It occurred to her that she'd never seen anyone look so unashamedly *mas- culine* before. He didn't look remotely like a tycoon—but as if he'd be more at home toiling the land. Or at least doing something more *physical* than attending to the pile of papers which were placed in front of him.

He put his pen down and leaned farther back in the chair and Emma was suddenly made acutely aware of the heavy material of the shirt straining across the muscular expanse of his chest.

'Any idea why you're here?' he questioned idly.

She gave a little shrug, telling herself she had nothing to feel nervous about. 'Not really. I've been racking my brains about it on the way here, but no.' There was a pause as she met the pewter gleam of his eyes. 'I hope you're not dissatisfied with my work, Mr Constantinides?'

Zak noted the faint flush which had stained her cheeks and the pale blond lashes which framed her green eyes, interested to note that she wasn't wearing make-up. Wouldn't it be easier if he *was* dissatisfied? If he could just pay her off with the obligatory inflated fee and tell her to get t...

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