

“Who Are You?” She Asked.

He was a dominating presence. Tall, lithe, dangerously intent as his amber eyes stared back at her. He wasn't American.

His gaze dropped to the hand she had cupped protectively over her abdomen. “Our baby is fine,” he said. “I am Chrysander Anetakis. Your fiancé.”

She searched his face for the truth, but he looked back at her, calm, no hint of emotion.

He was someone she had been intimate with. Obviously in love with. They were engaged and she was pregnant with his child. Shouldn't that stir something in her?

“I don't remember,” she said, her voice cracking.

“You will,” he said, those amber eyes boring into hers.

Dear Reader,

I cannot express how thrilled I am to have my first Silhouette Desire book released for the occasion of Harlequin's 60th anniversary. I've read and enjoyed the Desire line for over two decades, and it has always been one of my fondest dreams to publish stories with them.

The Tycoon's Pregnant Mistress launches a trilogy about the Anetakis brothers, Chrysander, Theron and Piers. In this story we meet Marley Jameson, who is struggling to remember a past she had with the handsome and enigmatic CEO of Anetakis International, while Chrysander comes to terms with her supposed betrayal.

As much as Chrysander would like to distance himself from the mother of his unborn child, he finds himself inexorably drawn to Marley. How can he love a woman who tried to destroy him? And what happens when she remembers all that she has forgotten?

These questions form the cornerstone of this emotional story about betrayal, love and ultimate forgiveness. I hope you'll enjoy Marley and Chrysander's road to happily ever after!

Maya Banks

THE TYCOON'S PREGNANT MISTRESS

MAYA BANKS



Books by Maya Banks

Silhouette Desire

[*The Tycoon's Pregnant Mistress #1920](#)

MAYA BANKS

has loved romance novels from a very (very) early age, and almost from the start, she dreamed of writing them as well. In her teens, she filled countless notebooks with overdramatic stories of love and passion. Today her stories are only slightly less dramatic, but no less romantic.

She lives in Texas with her husband and three children and wouldn't contemplate living anywhere other than the South. When she's not writing, she's usually hunting, fishing or playing poker. She loves to hear from readers, and she can be found online at either www.mayabanks.com or www.writemindedblog.com, or you can e-mail her at maya@mayabanks.com.

To Marty Matthews and Shara Cooper. That bar conversation at RT 2007 was the first kick in the behind to do something about my long-standing dream of writing for Desire. I still remember that gush-fest fondly.

To Roberta, for saying “Let’s do it” when I outlined my career goals in the summer of 2007. Hey, we did it!

To Amy: You of all people know how much I love category and just how excited I was to be given a chance to write it. Thanks for being just as thrilled as I was.

To Dee, who I think wanted this for me as much as I did and was with me every step of the way. Thank you!

And finally to Steph, who started it all for me. Without you, I wouldn’t have written *The Tycoon’s Pregnant Mistress* and I wouldn’t have submitted. It was that phone call that started everything in motion. I’ll always love you for that.

Contents

[Chapter One](#)

[Chapter Two](#)

[Chapter Three](#)

[Chapter Four](#)

[Chapter Five](#)

[Chapter Six](#)

[Chapter Seven](#)

[Chapter Eight](#)

[Chapter Nine](#)

[Chapter Ten](#)

[Chapter Eleven](#)

[Chapter Twelve](#)

[Chapter Thirteen](#)

[Chapter Fourteen](#)

[Chapter Fifteen](#)

[Chapter Sixteen](#)

[Epilogue](#)

Pregnant.

Despite the warmth of the summer day, an uncomfortable chill settled over Marley Jameson's skin as she settled on the bench in the small garden just a few blocks from the apartment she shared with Chrysander Anetakis.

She shivered even as the sun's rays found her tightly clenched fingers, the heat not yet chasing away the goose bumps. Stavros wouldn't be happy over her brief disappearance. Neither would Chrysander when Stavros reported that she hadn't taken proper security measures. But dragging along the imposing guard to her doctor's appointment hadn't been an option. Chrysander would have known of her pregnancy before she could even return home to tell him herself.

How would he react to the news? Despite the fact they'd taken precautions, she was eight weeks pregnant. The best she could surmise, it had happened when he'd returned from an extended business trip overseas. Chrysander had been insatiable. But then so had she.

A bright blush chased the chill from her cheeks as she remembered the night in question. He had made love to her countless times, murmuring to her in Greek—warm, soft words that had made her heart twist.

She checked her watch and grimaced. He was due home in a few short hours, and yet here she sat like a coward, avoiding the confrontation. She still had to change out of the faded jeans and T-shirt, clothes she wore only when he was away.

With reluctance born of uncertainty, she forced herself to her feet and began the short walk to the luxurious building that housed Chrysander's apartment.

"You're being silly," she muttered under her breath as she neared the entry. If the doorman was surprised to see her on foot, he didn't show it, though he did hasten to usher her inside.

She stepped onto the lift and smoothed a hand over her still-flat stomach. Nervousness scuttled through her chest as she rode higher. When it halted smoothly and the doors opened into the spacious foyer of the penthouse, Marley nibbled on her lip and left the elevator.

She walked into the living room, shedding her shoes as she made her way to the couch, where she tossed her bag down. Fatigue niggled at her muscles, and all she really wanted to do was lie down. But she had to determine how to broach the subject of their relationship with Chrysander.

A few days ago, she would have said she was perfectly content, but the results of today's blood tests had her shaken. Had her reflecting on the last six months with Chrysander.

She loved him wholeheartedly, but she wasn't entirely sure where she stood with him. He seemed devoted when he was with her. The sex was fantastic. But now she had a baby to think about. She

needed more from the man she loved than hot sex every few weeks as his schedule permitted.

She trudged into the large master suite and started when Chrysander walked from the bathroom, just a towel wrapped around his waist.

A slow smile carved his handsome face. Every time she laid eyes on him, it was like the first time all over again. Goose bumps raced across her skin, lighting fire to her every nerve-ending.

“Y-you’re early,” she managed to get out.

“I’ve been waiting for you, *pedhaki mou*,” he said huskily.

He let the towel drop, and she swallowed as her eyes tracked downward to his straining erection. He paced forward predatorily, closing rapidly in on her. His hands curved over her shoulders, and he bent to ravage her mouth.

A soft moan escaped her as her knees buckled. He was an addiction. One she could never get enough of. He had only to touch her, and she went up in flames.

His mouth traveled down her jawline to her neck, his fingers tugging impatiently at her shirt. On their own accord, her fingers twisted in his dark hair, pulling him closer.

Hard, lean, muscled. A gleaming predator. He moved gracefully, masterfully playing her body like a finely tuned instrument.

She clutched at his neck as he lowered her to the bed.

“You have entirely too many clothes on,” he murmured as he shoved her shirt up and over her head.

She knew they should stop. They needed to talk, but she’d missed him. Ached for him. And maybe a part of her wanted this moment before things changed irrevocably.

He released her bra, and she gasped when his fingers found her highly sensitized nipples. They were darker now, and she wondered if he’d notice.

“Did you miss me?”

“You know I did,” she said breathlessly.

“I like to hear you say it.”

“I missed you,” she said, a smile curving her lips.

It shouldn’t have surprised her that he made quick work of her clothing. He tossed her jeans across the room. Her bra went one way, her underwear the other. Then he was over her, on her, deep inside her.

She arched into him as he possessed her. clinging to him as he made love to her. their passion h

and aching. It was always like this. One step from desperation, their need for each other all consuming.

As he gathered her in his arms, he whispered to her in Greek. The words fell against her skin like a caress as they both reached their peaks. She snuggled into his body, content and sated.

She must have slept then, because when she opened her eyes, Chrysander was lying beside her, his arm thrown possessively over her hip. He regarded her lazily, his golden eyes burning with sated contentment.

Now was the time. She needed to broach the subject. There would never be a better occasion. Why did the thought of asking him about their relationship strike terror in her heart?

“Chrysander,” she began softly.

“What is it?” he asked, his eyes narrowing. Had he heard the worry in her voice?

“I wanted to talk to you.”

He stretched his big body and pulled slightly away so he could see her better. The sheet slid down to his hip and gathered there. She felt vulnerable and exposed and trembled when he slid his hand over the peak of one breast.

“What is it you want to talk about?”

“Us,” she said simply.

His eyes grew wary and then became shuttered. His face locked into a mask of indifference, one that frightened her. She could feel him pulling away, mentally withdrawing from her.

A buzz sounded, startling her. Chrysander cursed under his breath and reached over to push the intercom.

“What,” he demanded tersely.

“It’s Roslyn. Can I come up?”

Marley stiffened at the sound of his personal assistant’s voice. It was late in the evening and yet here she was, popping into the apartment she knew he shared with Marley.

“I’m very busy at the moment, Roslyn. Surely it can wait until I come into the office tomorrow.”

“I’m sorry, sir, but it can’t. I need your signature on a contract that’s due by 7:00 a.m.”

Again Chrysander swore. “Come then.”

He swung his legs over the side of the bed and stood. He strode toward the polished mahogany wardrobe and pulled out slacks and a shirt.

“Why does she show up here so often?” Marley asked quietly.

Chrysander shot her a look of surprise. “She’s my assistant. It’s her job to keep up with me.”

“At your personal residence?”

He shook his head as he buttoned up his shirt. “I’ll return in a moment, and we can have our talk.”

Marley watched him go, her chest aching all the more. She was tempted to save the discussion for another night, but she had to tell him of her pregnancy, and she couldn’t tell him of the baby before she knew how he felt about her. What he thought of their future. So it had to be done tonight.

As the moments grew longer, her anxiety heightened. Not wanting the disadvantage of being nude, she rose from the bed and dragged on her jeans and shirt. So much for looking composed and beautiful. She shook her head ruefully.

Finally she heard his footsteps outside the bedroom suite. He walked in with a distracted frown on his face. His gaze flickered over her, and his lips twitched.

“I much prefer you naked, *pedhaki mou*.”

She gave a shaky smile and moved back to the bed. “Is everything all right with work?”

He waved his hand dismissively. “Nothing that shouldn’t have already been taken care of. A missing signature.” He stalked toward the bed, a lean, hungry glint in his eyes. As he came to a stop a foot away from where she sat, he reached for the buttons on his shirt.

“Chrysander...we must talk.”

Annoyance flickered across his face, but then he gave a resigned sigh. He sank down on the bed next to her. “Then speak, Marley. What is it that’s bothering you?”

His closeness nearly unhinged her. She scooted down the bed in an effort to put distance between them. “I want to know how you feel about me, how you feel about us,” she began nervously. “And if we have a future.”

She glanced up to check his reaction. His lips came together in a firm line as he stared back at her. “So it’s come to this,” he said grimly.

He stood and turned his back to her before finally rotating around to face her.

“Come to w-what? I just need to know how you feel about me. If we have a future. You never speak of us in anything but the present,” she finished lamely.

He leaned in close to her and cupped her chin. “We don’t have a relationship. I don’t do relationships, and you know this. You’re my mistress.”

Why did she feel as though he’d just slapped her? Her mouth fell open against his hand, and she stared up at him with wide, shocked eyes.

“Mistress?” she croaked. Live-in lover. Girlfriend. Woman he was seeing. These were all terms she might have used. But mistress? A woman he bought? A woman he paid to have sex with?

Nausea welled in her stomach.

She pushed his hand away and stumbled up, backpedaling away from him. Confusion shone on Chrysander’s face.

“Is that truly all I am to you?” she choked out, still unable to comprehend his declaration. “A mistress?”

He sighed impatiently. “You’re distraught. Sit down and let me get you something to drink. I’ve had a trying week, and you are obviously unwell. It benefits neither of us to have this discussion right now.”

Chrysander urged her back to the bed then strode out of the suite toward the kitchen. After a long week of laying traps for the person attempting to sell his company out from under him, the last thing he wanted was a hysterical confrontation with his mistress.

He poured a glass of Marley’s favorite juice then prepared himself a liberal dose of brandy. The beginnings of a headache were already plaguing him.

He smiled when he saw Marley’s shoes in the middle of the floor where she’d left them as soon as she’d come off the elevator. He followed the trail of her things to the couch where her bag was thrown haphazardly.

She was a creature of comfort. Never fussy. So this emotional outburst had caught him off guard. It was completely out of character for her. She wasn’t clingy, which is why their relationship had lasted so long. Relationship? He’d just denied to her that they had one. She was his mistress.

He should have softened his response. She probably wasn’t feeling well and needed tenderness from him. He winced at the idea, but she’d always been there ready to soothe him after weeks of business trips or tedious meetings. It was only fair that he offer something more than sex. Though sex with her was high on his list of priorities.

He turned to go back into the bedroom and try to make amends when the piece of paper sticking out of Marley’s bag caught his eye. He stopped and frowned then set the drinks down on the coffee table.

Dread tightened his chest. It couldn’t be.

He reached out to snag the papers, yanked them open as anger, hot and volatile, surged in his veins. Marley, *his* Marley, was the traitor within his company?

He wanted to deny it. Wanted to crumple the evidence and throw it away. But it was there, staring him in the face. The false information he’d planted just this morning in hopes of finding the person selling his secrets to his competitor had been taken by Marley. She hadn’t wasted any time.

Suddenly everything became clear. His building plans had started disappearing about the time that Marley had moved in to the penthouse. She'd worked for his company, and even after he'd convinced her to quit so that her time would be his alone, she still had unimpeded access to his offices. What a fool he'd been.

Stavros's call to him hours earlier stuck in his mind like a dagger. At the time, it had only registered a mild annoyance with him, a matter he'd planned to take up with Marley when he saw her. He'd lecture her about being careless, about being safe, when in fact, it was him who wasn't safe with her. She'd gone to his office then disappeared for several hours. And now documents from his office had appeared in her purse.

The papers fisted in his hand, he stalked back to the bedroom to see Marley still sitting on the bed. She turned her tear-stained face up to him, and all he could see was how deftly she'd manipulated him.

"I want you out in thirty minutes," he said flatly.

Marley stared at him in shock. Had she heard him correctly? "I don't understand," she choked out.

"You have thirty minutes in which to collect your things before I call security to escort you out."

She shot to her feet. How could things have gone so wrong? She hadn't even told him about her pregnancy yet. "Chrysender, what's wrong? Why are you so angry with me? Is it because I reacted so badly to you calling me your mistress? It came as a great shock to me. I thought somehow I meant more to you than that."

"You now have twenty-eight minutes," he said coldly. He held up a hand with several crumpled sheets of paper in them. "How did you think you'd get away with it, Marley? Do you honestly think I would tolerate you betraying me? I have no tolerance for cheats or liars, and you, my dear, are both."

All the blood left her face. She wavered precariously, but he made no move to aid her. "I don't know what you're talking about. What are those papers?"

His lips curled into a contemptuous sneer. "You stole from me. You're lucky that I'm not phoning the authorities. As it is, if I ever see you again, I'll do just that. Your attempts could have crippled my company. But the joke is on you. These are fakes planted by me in an attempt to ferret out the culprit."

"Stole?" Her voice rose in agitation. She reached out and yanked the papers from his hand. The words, schematics, blurred before her eyes. An internal e-mail, printed out, obviously from his company ISP address, stared back at her. Sensitive information. Detailed building plans for an upcoming bid in a major international city. Photocopies of the drawings. None of it made sense.

She raised her head and stared him in the eye as her world crumbled and shattered around her. "You think I stole these?"

"They were in your bag. Don't insult us both by denying it now. I want you out of here." He made

They were in, but she couldn't move as quickly, carrying the heavy bag out of her room. She made a show of checking his watch. "You now have twenty-five minutes remaining."

The knot in her throat swelled and stuck, rendering her incapable of drawing a breath. She couldn't think, couldn't react. Numbly, she headed for the door with no thought of collecting her things. She only wanted to be away. She paused and put her hand on the frame to steady herself before turning around to look back at Chrysander. His face remained implacable. The lines around his mouth and eyes were hard and unforgiving.

"How could you think I'd do something like that?" she whispered before she turned and walked away.

She stumbled blindly into the elevator, quiet sobs ripping from her throat as she rode it down to the lobby level. The doorman looked at her in concern and offered to get her into a cab. She waved him off and walked unsteadily down the sidewalk and into the night.

The warm evening air blew over her face. The tears on her cheeks chilled her skin, but she paid them no heed. He would listen to her. She would make him. She'd give him the night to calm down, but she would be heard. It was all such a dreadful mistake. There had to be some way to make him see reason.

In her distress, she took no notice of the man following her. When she reached the curb, a hand shot out and grasped her arm. Her cry of alarm was muffled as a cloth sack was yanked over her head.

She struggled wildly, but just as quickly, she found herself stuffed into the backseat of a vehicle. She heard the door slam and the rumble of low voices, and then the vehicle drove away.

Three months later

Chrysender sat in his apartment brooding in silence. He should have some peace of mind now that there was no longer any danger to his company, but the knowledge of why was hardly comforting. He stared at the pile of documents in front of him as the evening news droned in the background.

His stopover in New York was going to be short. Tomorrow he'd fly to London to meet with his brother Theron and have the groundbreaking ceremony for their luxury hotel—a hotel that wouldn't have happened if Marley had gotten her way. A derisive snort nearly rolled from his throat. He, the CEO of Anetakis International, had been manipulated and stolen from by a woman. Because of her, he and his brothers had lost two of their designs to their closest competitor before he'd discovered her betrayal. He should have turned her over to the authorities, but he'd been too stunned, too *weak* to do such a thing.

He hadn't even ridded his apartment of her belongings. He'd assumed she'd return to collect them, and maybe a small part of him had hoped she would so he could confront her again and ask her why. On his next trip back, he'd see to the task. It was time to have her out of his mind completely.

When he heard her name amidst the jumble of his thoughts, he thought he'd merely conjured it from his dark musings, but when he heard Marley Jameson's name yet again, he focused his angry attention on the television.

A news reporter stood outside a local hospital, and it took a few moments for the buzzing in Chrysender's ears to stop long enough for him to comprehend what was being said. The scene changed as they rolled footage taken earlier of a woman being taken out of a rundown apartment building on a stretcher. He leaned forward, his face twisted in disbelief. It was Marley.

He bolted from his desk and fumbled for the remote to turn the volume up. So stunned was he that he only comprehended every fourth word or so, but he heard enough.

Marley had been abducted and now rescued. The details on the who and why were still sketchy, but she'd endured a long period of captivity. He tensed in expectation that somehow his name would be linked to hers, but then why should it? Their relationship had been a highly guarded secret, a necessary one in his world. His wish for privacy was one born of desire and necessity. Only after her betrayal had he been even more relieved by the circumspection he utilized in all his relationships. She'd made a fool of him, and only the knowledge that the rest of the world didn't know soothed him.

As the camera zoomed in on her pale, frightened face, he felt something inside him twist painfully. She looked the same as she had the night he'd confronted her with her deception. Pale, shocked and vulnerable.

But what the reporter said next stopped him cold. even as an uneasy sensation rippled up his

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