



Bad Girls,
GRUMPY BOSSES

LIBBY CAMPBELL

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BAD GIRLS, GRUMPY
BOSSES

LIBBY CAMPBELL



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Libby Campbell
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Simon Says
SIMON IN CHARGE, BOOK ONE



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Simon Says

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Ground Rules

"**T**ry this." My date handed me his fork with a lump of Brussels sprouts speared on the end.

"Uh, no thanks," I said. "I don't do green."

Simon looked at me for a second, I guess to see if I was joking. I answered by shoveling another piece of steak into my mouth and shaking my head. He set down his knife and fork. "Young woman, you should be put over someone's knee and spanked."

A burning blush crawled up my neck and I was certain he could see it even in the darkened corner of the restaurant.

"That's not going to happen," I said and studied my plate. I could barely swallow. Electricity buzzed up and down my spine. Catching my breath again, I met his eyes. Dark brown and fierce, they drilled into me with the intensity of a laser. One lock of light brown hair curled down his forehead.

"We'll see about that," he said with a dazzling smile. A slight note of censure in his voice made me feel as guilty as if he'd caught me trying to slip the silverware into my purse.

"Now I'm going to ask you again and I want you to keep an open mind. Try this. It's delicious." He held out his fork once

more. His tone was insistent, implacable. A refusal could sour the rest of the evening and we'd been having such a good time.

I picked off the floret and nibbled it. "My idea of a green vegetable is a celery stalk in a Bloody Mary." I made a face and dropped the almost-untouched Brussels sprout on the edge of my plate. Wiping my hands with my napkin, I said, "That's it for green vegetables for me for 2016."

"You're incorrigible." When he laughed, his eyes sparkled with mischief. "Obviously someone needs to take you in hand."

"As long as it's a slow hand in all the right places, I have no objection to that idea." I winked at him and picked up my glass of Merlot. The flowery smell of the wine filled my head and made me feel slightly dizzy. Simon's eyes hadn't left mine and I sensed I'd failed an important test somehow. The Brussels sprout was actually quite good, roasted in parmesan, butter, and garlic. Still, I couldn't eat it now, not after I'd set it down to prove that no one could force me to do anything I didn't want to. A person has to draw a line somewhere.

We'd been at the same New Year's Eve party the night before and everyone there promised to meet at the Polar Bear Swim that morning. He'd danced with me most of the night, but left without asking for my phone number. I arrived at the beach with the hope of seeing him again. It was a freezing, cloudless day and fewer than half the revelers had turned up. I was the only female in the group and my heart leapt when Simon walked past everyone else to where I stood huddled in my bathing suit. I wanted to prove to myself, if not to him, that an icy dip wouldn't kill me. He hugged me briefly and said, "I only came because you said you'd be here."

Afterwards as we stood around the brazier fires, dressed in sweats and wrapped in thermal blankets, Simon said he admired a woman who'd do a wild thing like that after dancing until 3:00 AM. I didn't say it but I'd liked the way the muscles in his arms rippled as he swam half-way across the bay and back in a

powerful front crawl. I also appreciated the way he took over as group leader and made sure everyone was warm enough and had hot chocolate before he got his. A handsome, athletic man with good manners. When he invited me out for dinner, I accepted without a second thought. The year was full of promise and it was only January 1st.

After dinner, Simon paid the bill and helped me with my coat. We held hands as we walked through the village, stopping to look in some of the windows of the closed shops. I had suggested walking to the restaurant because it was only twenty minutes from my apartment and I didn't want him to have to drive if we drank too much. That turned out to be unnecessary because he had limited himself to a glass and a half of wine. When I insisted on finishing off the bottle myself, rather than leaving it for the wait staff, he had shaken his head and watched as I refilled my glass. Quaffing that wine so fast left me a little giddy. So I stopped to try to sober up a bit and stared in the shoe store window where a pair of silver Christian Louboutin stilettos were prominently displayed. I said, "I've been resisting those shoes all December. Now that they are on sale, I may have to buy them."

"How much are they on sale?"

"Three hundred? Four hundred? I don't know. I've never owned any. But there is something sexy about red-bottomed shoes, don't you think?"

"Not as sexy as a red-bottomed woman." Simon lifted my chin. Even though I am tall, five feet nine inches, he towered over me. When his lips met mine I forgot about everything but the sweet taste of his mouth. We stood there for an hour, a day, a week. I had no idea. He held me close and kissed my ears, my neck, my cheeks, until my knees felt so weak I thought I might collapse.

"Let's walk a little quicker," he said. "And get the unpleasant part of the evening over with."

I giggled like a schoolgirl. Did he mean the part where we take off our clothes? I was all for that. Yeah, let's get that behind us. I loped to keep up with his fast-paced walk but when he asked if he was moving too quickly, I said, "No. Not at all. I run four times a week with a group from my gym. This is nothing."

Okay maybe I ran four times one week in the past two years but who was keeping score? I did go to a spinning class four times a week once and that was almost as good. Mostly I went to a spinning class once or twice a month. Work had me travelling a lot and it's hard to keep up a regular regime when I was on the job from 6:00 AM to midnight day after day. I would run four times a week if I could find the time. Sure I would.

"You're awfully winded for someone who runs so much," he said as we waited for the elevator to deliver us to the tenth floor.

"Yeah, well," I paused to catch my breath, "I got out of my routine in December."

"When was the last time you ran four times a week?"

Was he reading my mind? Normally people couldn't tell when I was lying so when conversations drifted to annoying subjects like fitness regimes, I'd fudge mine to make it more acceptable.

"Can't remember really."

He nodded and held the door back as I exited the elevator before him. He stood with his hands in his pockets as I fumbled with my keys. For some reason the way he watched me turned my hands all thumbs. I jerked my bag hard and spilled the contents all over the floor. My Visa statement landed right at his feet, face up, balance showing. Most people with a normal amount of curiosity will glance at a thing like that and then hand it back to you like they hadn't actually noticed that you had a \$5,000 balance and were only paying the interest every month.

Simon didn't pretend to be polite. He picked it up and took his time reading it.

"You're thinking of buying \$300 shoes and you're making only minimum payments on your Visa bill?"

I snatched it away from him. "That's between me and Mr. Visa. I could pay it off any time I wanted to." I unlocked the door. "Would you like coffee?" I said, hoping to distract him.

"I think you and I had better have a little talk first." He handed me his coat and scarf and watched me put them away in the hall closet. I hung up my coat and toed off my boots and waited for his next move. It had been so long since a man had held me I was tempted to lead him straight to the bedroom. There was something about Simon, with his long brown hair pushed straight back from his face, that burned with an animal intensity. I wanted him like I hadn't wanted anyone for years.

He walked to the living room window and I followed like a shadow. A light snow had started to fall and I smiled at the thought that we might be snowed in together. We stood in silence for a few minutes, looking down on the village. He took my hand, turned it palm upwards, and kissed my fingertips before leading me to the wide brown sofa. He sat down beside me, so close I could smell the caramel scent of his skin.

"You were disrespectful tonight, weren't you?"

I laughed nervously, but he didn't elaborate. "I'm not sure what you mean," I said.

"I think you know."

I shook my head. I hated guessing games.

"First you refused to even try the Brussels sprouts. You left me sitting there with my fork in the air like an idiot."

"But I don't like—"

He put his finger over my lips. "Please don't get yourself into more trouble by interrupting."

"More trouble?"

"There you go, interrupting again." He closed his eyes for a

minute. "I'm going to let that one go while we establish some ground rules."

So that's what this was all about, getting to know each other? Fine. I had a few rules of my own I'd like to introduce. Number one: no reading my bank or credit card statements.

"You don't remember me at the hockey game last month, do you?"

I searched my memory banks. That was my third and final date with David, the only guy I'd been out with for over a year. I'd been all excited about an invitation to the swanky hospitality suite and David had showed up half cut. We'd fought all night about his binge drinking. All I'd been aware of for the entire evening was putting on a brave face so people couldn't see how mortified I was to be there with a drunken lout. I didn't remember Simon or anyone else. My attention was devoted to getting David into a cab before the two of us were banned for life from the arena. So Simon was there too? I shook my head. I couldn't remember seeing him which just shows how preoccupied I was.

"You were grace under fire that night. I decided if I ever met you again, I would make you mine. I asked around and found out that you were Angie's best friend. Since then I've made it my business to find out everything I can about you. I was the one who suggested Angie throw that party last night. I told her to make sure you were there."

"Wait a minute. Simon? Simon Jacobson? SJ. You're SJ? Angie's SJ?" I stared at him wide-eyed. He was Angie's boss, President of Fenshaw International, one of the biggest investment firms in the country. I racked my brain for details. Widowed a couple of years back. No children. A workaholic ever since.

He smiled, almost sheepishly. "Maybe that will help you understand why I have to get straight to the point. There isn't room in my life for a long courtship or getting to know you. If

you want to see more of me you have to decide now, tonight—before we go any further."

"That's a no brainer. Yes, I'd like to see more of you. You're fun. And you're a strong dance lead." I sat up straight and waited for him to make his next move. Was that the difficult part he wanted to get over with?

"I know I'd like to see more of you, because I've had you investigated."

Investigated! What the hell? I frowned, but he ignored me.

"You're a single child of a single parent. Your mother lives in Montreal and the two of you spend two weeks together every spring in Hawaii where you shop and get beauty treatments and run up your credit cards. You owe ten thousand dollars on your five-year-old Subaru, almost that much again on your MasterCard and there is four thousand dollars owing on a bank loan that you used to repay your student loan."

My mouth opened and shut again, but no sound escaped. I should have been offended, but he recited the details of my life with such impartial ease, it was like listening to someone else's life. He told me about two ex-boyfriends, not that David should have counted. He named my last three promotions and said that I hadn't been to my gym since October. Really? It had been that long? He even knew that Christmas Day every year I worked a double shift at the Mission Hall, dishing up dinners for homeless people.

"In short I found that you have a good heart, a strong work ethic, and you're well regarded in the IT field. You're lazy about exercise and totally irresponsible about money, but those last two are habits that are easily fixed if you're willing."

I tried to look away and he lifted my face to his and kissed me again.

"You need to listen to me because I am too busy to make this offer twice. If I am to see you again, I will expect you to have

better manners, to tell fewer lies, and to go to your gym at least three times a week."

"That's a little hard when I travel all the time for work." I folded my arms.

"I only want the best for you. I think you need some guidance in your life. If you agree to be my girlfriend, you will accept that guidance from me on whatever subject I care to address. If you refuse my guidance or disobey me, you will be spanked."

I looked around my apartment expecting to find hidden cameras. I couldn't agree with anything so crazy. What if someone found out?

Simon twisted in his seat, crossing his right foot onto his left knee. He unfolded my arms and held each of my hands in one of his. "I like you a lot, Sadie. More than I've liked a woman for a long, long time. But I am inflexible and don't have time for insubordination. So. Do you agree to these terms or not?"

"When you talked about the unpleasant part of the evening, did you mean you're going to spank me tonight?"

"If you agree, yes. By the way you kissed me earlier, I think I may already have your answer."

"I've never been spanked." I found it hard to say the word. This conversation was insane.

"Then it's about time, isn't it? You are clearly lacking self-discipline and I can help you develop better habits."

I hung my head. "Just because I wouldn't eat the crappy Brussels sprout?"

"Partly. Partly because you embarrassed me. Then you embarrassed me again when you knocked back two overfull glasses of wine in a row, rather than just leave it. After that you lied to me about how often you run, didn't you?"

"Yes." My long brown hair had started to fall out of the updo when he'd kissed me. I pulled my hands away from his and started tugging the pins out of it.

"Lying is an insidious habit. It's unacceptable. So you will be spanked for it."

I swallowed. "All right but...one condition, you can't tell anyone else."

"I won't tell anyone what we do when it's just us together. You have my word on that. Now, you are to stand up and lift your skirt to your waist. Pull your panties down to your knees, no further, and then present yourself across my lap. By doing that, you will be consenting to my leadership and my correction."

I bit my lip as I pulled my skirt around my waist.

"How long will this take?"

"Until I am satisfied that you regret being so badly behaved."

I wasn't the slightest bit sorry for quaffing the wine and I didn't like having to prepare myself the way he wanted. "I regret it already."

"Perhaps. But not enough for my satisfaction and definitely not as much as you are going to. By the way, the longer you take, the longer your spanking will be. Don't think you're saving yourself anything by all this chatter."

I scrambled to slide my panties around my knees and climbed over his lap with a total lack of grace. He moved his legs and adjusted my panties so it felt like they hobbled me. Now I knew why he didn't want me to take them off. They were part of the trap. I braced myself against the sofa with my arms and waited.

"Hands behind your back." His deep voice was patient.

"I'm pinned here!"

"That's the point."

He locked my two hands with his left and lightly swatted my upturned bottom. Well what was all the fuss about? I could take that for hours.

"If I offer you something in public, you will eat it." Swat swat. Big deal. I suppressed a laugh.

"If I say we are going to leave the rest of the bottle of wine,

you will not touch it." A rapid series of light slaps. My bottom started to tingle. "Do you understand?"

"Yes."

"Good. Then I can get down to business."

Smack! I leapt like a fish. The smacks came harder and faster. I writhed. "Stop! Please stop!"

"You do not get to say when this is over. In fact, I only want to hear two words from you: I'm sorry."

So I said, "I'm sorry." I said it again and again, but he ignored me. When I kicked my legs he stopped and trapped them between his.

"Please don't do that!" Tears welled in my eyes.

"Then you stay still like a good girl and accept your punishment." He didn't free my legs as he continued to spank non-stop. I howled and pleaded and struggled. Finally, exhausted, I lay across his knees and let my tears pour as he kept on. To my surprise, the moment I started crying, he stopped spanking almost immediately.

"Now I believe you are sorry. Now I feel your submission," he said, but he didn't let go of my hands. Instead he rubbed my throbbing bottom for a few minutes.

At some signal, known only to him, he helped me right myself and draw into a sitting position on his lap. I could have felt ridiculous in that half-dressed state but I didn't. I felt cared for, protected in some strange way. Protected from myself I guess. He rocked me and kissed me and when my sobbing subsided, he led me into the bedroom and undressed me with a gentleness I'd never known. I stood by, feeling small and even helpless which if you know me at all couldn't be further from the truth, as he folded my clothes and stacked them neatly on my dressing chair.

"Pull back the blankets," he said as I watched him start to undress. Proudly I pulled back the duvet and ran my hands over the new Egyptian cotton sheets I'd put on the bed that afternoon.

"And now we sleep," Simon said as he climbed into bed

beside me. I could see he was aroused. Didn't he intend to do anything tonight? He wrapped his arms around me and I could feel him pressing into me.

"Can you feel that?" he said and moved my hand to touch him. "I want you so much right now, it's painful. But I don't want to give you a mixed message. This evening you were punished. In the morning I will show you pleasure. Remember that because when you suffer, I suffer too. When I suffer it might sometimes cause me to spank you harder."

I woke to Simon's voice drifting in from the living room. He was talking to someone, giving orders in what sounded like Mandarin, maybe Cantonese. I blinked at the clock. 6:00 AM.

I slipped into the black lace negligee I'd bought the day before and put on the new high-heeled mules. I paraded around in front of him while he continued his conversation. When it ended he slid his arm around my waist and pulled me close.

He smelled kind of grassy and his skin was rough with a five o'clock shadow. He kissed me full and deep. Then he pulled the blue tooth out of his ear, and dragged me back to the bedroom. He made love like it mattered to him, like I mattered. He watched and touched and listened for my responses. When he had me on the brink, just before the dam broke, he plunged into me and we came together in a wild, panting climax.

"God it's been forever," he said.

"Ditto." Even as I echoed his sentiments, I realized he probably knew that. If his investigator interviewed any of my neighbors, they would have told him that my only visitors were girlfriends and mixed groups. Rarely did I have a one-on-one date.

Now I'd stepped out of the desert into the Garden of Eden. I wanted to hold him and never let him go. The few minutes when

we lay and listened to each other breathe were the most delicious moments of my life.

"Well I hate to break up the party but it's seven o'clock. You've made me late for work, Ms. Donohue." He leapt out of bed. "And I still need time to give you one small thing to remember me by."

My eyes lit up. Had he brought me jewelry, knowing this might be how things would work out? I glanced down shyly and told myself not to make a fuss when he gave me some small gift.

He sat on the end of the bed. "Come here," he said. "And present yourself for a spanking."

Ice cold fear washed away my warm little fantasy. "But I haven't done anything!"

"This is a reminder, a pre-emptive spanking, for what you might do once I walk out that door. It won't be as serious as last night but it will reinforce your lessons."

Before I stretched across his lap for the second time in less than twelve hours, he kissed the back of my hands and reminded me that he only wanted to help me improve myself. Then he pinned my hands behind my back and rubbed my tender buttocks for a few minutes. Without further warm up or warning he smacked me nine times. Each spank was followed by a single word. "Be. A. Good. Girl. Until. I. See. You Again."

Already feeling vulnerable, I burst into tears and let my body go limp. The spanking would have been nothing without the session the night before, but each slap stung. When he was finished, Simon kissed me in a distracted way. He wiped away my tears with his fingers and said softly, "I've been thinking about you for weeks now, wondering how our first night together would go, whether you would accept me or reject me. Thank you, Sadie, for being even better in person than you are on paper."

I'd only just met him and already I craved him like a drug. Even as he sat there, I thirsted for my next fix.

He looked into my troubled eyes and stroked my cheek. "I

have to go to New York for a few days but I'll call you every night. Now if you'll give me one of your beautiful smiles, it will bring me back that much faster."

That afternoon, as I rambled about my apartment in my sweats and a baggy t-shirt, a courier buzzed from the lobby. Maybe it was Mom's present at last, but January 2nd was early by her schedule.

"Happy New Year," the deliveryman said and pocketed the two-dollar tip.

I tore the brown paper off and found a shoebox with a pair of silver Christian Louboutin stilettos. The card inside read, "Please save these for our next date, my red-bottomed princess."