
THE TROUBLE WITH
MOLLIE

RAFAELLA ROWELL



Published by Blushing Books
An Imprint of
ABCD Graphics and Design, Inc.
A Virginia Corporation
977 Seminole Trail #233
Charlottesville, VA 22901

©2020
All rights reserved.

No part of the book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. The trademark Blushing Books is pending in the US Patent and Trademark Office.

Rafaella Rowell
The Trouble with Mollie

EBook ISBN: 978-1-64563-372-3

Print ISBN: 978-1-64563-373-0

Audio ISBN: 978-1-64563-374-7

v2

Cover Art by ABCD Graphics & Design

This book contains fantasy themes appropriate for mature readers only.
Nothing in this book should be interpreted as Blushing Books' or the author's
advocating any non-consensual sexual activity.

Chapter 1

Zac was furious. He'd started a hazardous drive in blizzard conditions. Due to meet with his friends in town, he was cold and bothered. Still, not the only reason for his temper.

England was in the grip of a bitter winter. A powdery snow had fallen since the early hours of that morning, burying Oxford under a deep white blanket, causing havoc with the traffic as it settled on the roads.

His perilous journey had been slow, but he'd made it in one piece.

Zac's friends came from modest backgrounds, but they made full use of their Oxford University scholarships where they first met. They worked hard to get where they were, successful and achievers in their own fields.

Even though they led different lives and came from contrasting backgrounds, his friendship with the "boys" as he called them, was based on trust and understanding. They had a strong bond, still formidable twelve years later. They tried to meet as often as their hectic lives permitted.

That night, they had dinner plans, but the snow curtailed the option of going out. So, they were dining in instead.

Zac was now sitting back in a comfy armchair by the fireplace with his friends. At long last, the blazing fire restored life into his frozen limbs. He rubbed his hands together.

The wooden logs, blistering heat from the large open hearth, crackled every so often with a pleasing sound as the mild scent of the wood burning wafted through the room.

He felt more comfortable, human again!

Finley Harman, kneeling by the fireplace, tried to shove a drifting log back into the roaring flames. While Alex West, perched on the matching couch opposite him, was stomping his feet, attempting to get warm blood flowing black into his numb toes.

They glanced at Peter Blake in the kitchenette. He was preparing the much-desired drinks after a biting wintry day.

They were in Peter's chambers at the university, but Zac was sulking, and it was not just the icy weather bothering him.

The gloom of the season had led him to a rude awakening. He found himself at something of a crossroads, and the 'road' called for a change.

The light from the fireplace cast a shadow on his glum face. "The Board is not keen on me becoming the next CEO when my father retires," he stated.

"Oh?" said Alex.

"The Board of Directors voiced their displeasure in no uncertain terms. Dad warned me last night after the meeting," Zac said.

"What's the trouble now?"

"Damn fools! The directors worry that my attitude does not become a head of industry." He paused. "It seems, I have a lot of growing up to do! My personal life is getting them into a huff," he went on, "and these are just some lame and repeatable observations. They are really annoying me!"

They were concerned about his women. The Board thought it would impact the company's reputation, and they didn't mince their words venting their disapproval at the last meeting.

"Hey, I suppose your playboy days are catching up with you, huh?" Alex grinned.

"I am serious, guys. I assume they want me married and settled before they will even consider me as a likely candidate to replace my father when the time comes," Zac snapped.

"Thirty, and still single! What do you expect?"

"I don't see your law firm ordering you to marry," he blurted out to his friend, "or the university asking Peter."

"True. But I am only a simple professor," Peter teased. "For one, I am not wealthy. And two, I don't have your chiselled good looks. So, there are no voluptuous women flocking around me all the time." He chuckled. They all echoed.

"You are all single but not a sodding problem for you, eh?" Zac growled, exasperated with an emotion close to envy.

"No. But we are not taking over your family empire, nor are we heirs to a fortune. Get my point?" Peter replied, distributing crystal tumblers filled with a large measure of whiskey and a dash of soda. His friends looked at the glasses with delight.

"Well, inherit, yes. But not run it, by the sounds of it. Not while the damn Board is against me," Zac huffed, and he took a gulp of the amber liquid. He glanced wistfully at the glass in his hand, and he relished the liquor's blaze going down inside him. It warmed him, took the strain off his shoulders.

Zac Sorensen was used to commanding his way in life. As an only child, his destiny was to inherit the family empire—a multi-billion-pound conglomerate with several corporations, with multi-industry subsidiaries across real estate, and first-class hotels with thousands of employees around the world.

In addition, the fact he had created his own personal and prosperous business on the side had surprised everyone, but it had catapulted him even more into the limelight.

Successful, powerful and wealthy, he was the golden bachelor par excellence, as the press labelled him. His personal organisation was doing well, and eight years down the line worth several millions. His security firm protected the rich and famous, sporting personalities, actors and politicians, including managing security at top music and sporting events. It had over one hundred and fifty employees.

Finley was his number two in the company, his right-hand man.

Zac had built his own organisation from scratch, with hefty bank loans, with no help or money from his family, and proud of it. Loving every minute, it was a great success.

Though his destiny was to inherit his family's business, whether or not he became its CEO. So, he still had this to look forward to in the coming years.

But Zac had ambition! He had always envisioned running the family business too, with him in the driving seat.

As a child, his father Victor used to take him to his office, overlooking the City of London. "See this? From here, you can rule. You can run and control every piece of this business. It is all yours. But you will have to earn it and work hard for it," his father used to say, staring out of the window and pointing at some of his hotels' landmarks across town.

Zac's passion for his family business was unequalled. And so, the care he felt for the thousands of employees working within it. Like his father and his grandfather before him, he felt responsible for them. His grandfather had inculcated that responsibility since he was a child of eight. Thousands of lives depended upon him. So, no one else could have it. No one would care for it like he would. No one would work as hard as he would.

So, he grew up loving it, wanting that coveted spot with a hunger that had no limits, expecting it with a passionate desire!

From a young age through to his early twenties, Zac spent

most of his summer holidays working in the periphery of his father's companies, learning the ropes.

He spent every holiday working in a hotel of the company, from the bottom up. And he learned the job fast, getting to know the people by name and about their families. And they all liked him.

With his own business to run in Oxford, he dedicated time to his family business too, with frequent visits to London and other parts of the world to grow the company. He devoted most of his time diligently between his own business and that of his family. A workaholic! No one could deny it, with a great talent for the job.

It is my birth right; he thought. And he wanted the CEO position. He was ready.

On occasions, he even joined his father in Board meetings as an observer, and he craved that top spot. The CEO spot of his family's powerful business! It had to be his when his father retired...

So, he was not about to give it up easily, regardless of the Board's opinions of him. Thousands of people depended upon him, and he would not let them down. He would not relinquish that top position for any reason!

But the Board's objections were strong and worrying him. They were against him. He had to do something about it. The problem was, with his background, he couldn't escape fame. He was a golden bachelor, often in the papers, but for all the wrong reasons. His bachelor's lifestyle was energetic and even outlandish. No doubt he worked hard, but he played hard too.

In the last two years, his choice of less than desirable companions worried his mother and his grandmother, let alone his father and the Board. His father was furious with him for letting it get to this stage.

Victor had tried to warn him several times. Alas, Zac was stubborn, and he didn't enjoy committing to one woman when he had hundreds to choose from.

"I am too young to marry," was his response, but Victor had just rolled his eyes.

"You've got to stop these playboy games of yours. It won't do!" It was his father's usual warning.

So, that evening, Zac took stock of his situation.

He was at a crossroad. He must make up his mind, find a solution that would enable him to turn his image around for the benefit of the Board, thus reaping the reward.

"It seems, you are in a tight spot," Alex said.

"Bloody hell, you don't say!" he cursed. He swiped a hand across his face with a sigh.

"You are a desirable bachelor. Your security firm is making tons of money—I should know; I am your lawyer—with an even bigger family fortune coming your way at some point. But you are a soft target for women," Alex pointed out, ignoring his sarcasm.

"Women flock to you like flies to a candle, but if you're not careful, they will be your downfall," Peter emphasised while refilling Alex's glass.

"Please—" Zac's voice had a hint of warning. He didn't want to hear it.

"Hey, man, don't let what's in your pants rule your head." Finley chuckled, raising his eyebrows. True enough, and to his detriment, Zac had never resisted women. But he must face the problem now.

"Here, have another drink!" Peter tried to cheer him up, refilling his glass. The whiff of alcohol filled his nostrils, and Zac took another gulp of whiskey. He liked the burning sensation in his throat! *Christ, it will be a long night!* he cursed.

"For a start, stop the luscious starlets and models. Why don't you find a woman with a good head on her shoulders?" Finley suggested.

"You have plenty of time before your father retires. So, show a new image, a different Zac," Alex proposed.

"Hell, present a mature, grounded man, with a good lady. That's what you need to do," Finley added.

Zac realised where this was heading, but true, he needed to do that. "It is fundamental until I have what I want!"

"And you always get what you want!" his friend observed, curling his lips.

"I wouldn't be so sure. Not this time! This one may hang in the balance," he retorted.

"Take a bride, man, a clever and a pretty wife, a dependable one! None of those crazy starlets you go for, they don't give the Board any confidence!" Finley urged.

"Did you see the papers last week?" Alex asked with a devilish grin, crossing his left ankle over his right knee, and sprawling back on the sofa.

"Oh, yes! Your latest starlet... drunk as a skunk trying to get into your car." Peter chuckled.

"How could I forget?" His eyes narrowed into a slit, looking into his glass.

"Wham, the photographer snaps her up in all her glory! You could see up to her..." Peter whistled. "...eh, well, you saw a hell of a lot." His friend was clearly amused.

"Up to her ass! Christ!" Zac cursed, rolling his eyes.

"Bloody hell, man, you seem to date an awful lot of women who are too... Well, the Board does not approve!" Finley remarked, raising his eyebrows.

"They are great fun, though!" he said with a wink, taking another sip of his drink.

"If it's fun you want, then carry on. But if you want to succeed your father as the next CEO, then—" Peter chided.

"You should take your personal life as seriously as you take your professional life!" Alex stated, uncrossing his legs, leaning forward with his hands outstretched towards the open fire.

"Yes, yes, I know!" he snapped, massaging the back of his neck.

"Maybe you should treat this like a business proposition. That'll take the pressure from you, while you turn the Board around," Finley ventured with a laugh.

Zac looked at him seriously and stood up. He paced up and down the room, then he stopped. "A business arrangement, rather than one of the heart; a hired wife; this is the answer." He smiled triumphantly.

"Hey, Fin was kidding. A joke! He didn't say you should hire a wife. That's dangerous, in your position. As your lawyer, I would not advise it," Alex warned him.

"No, but I should consider it." Zac cocked his head, thinking.