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TWEET

To all my readers across the world.

Love...

Passion...

Friendship...

And

Power! Live it!

PROLOGUE

The couple on the bed had sex as is it was their final act.

And for one of them it was.

Neither of them heard the door slowly open.

Neither of them observed the shadowy figure enter the room. They were too caught up in the throes of passionate lovemaking.

Until... one single gunshot.

And the blood flowed.

And for one of them death and orgasm happened at the exact same moment.

Life has a strange way of taking you on an unexpected trip...

This was one of those times.

BOOK ONE

THE INVITATION

CHAPTER ONE

DATELINE: MOSCOW

The Russian billionaire, Aleksandr Kasianenko, admired his supermodel girlfriend as she stepped, unabashedly naked, out of the indoor swimming pool in his luxurious Moscow mansion. Her name was Bianca, and she was known across the world.

God, she is a beautiful creature, Aleksandr thought. Beautiful and sleekly feline – she moves like a panther. And in bed she is a wild tiger. I am a very fortunate man.

Bianca was of mixed race – her mother was Cuban, her father black. There was no doubt that Bianca had inherited the best of both her parent's looks.

She'd been raised in New York, discovered at seventeen, and now at age twenty-nine, she was the most sought after supermodel on the planet. Tall, lean and agile, with coffee-colored skin, fine features, full natural lips, piercing green eyes and waist-length glossy black hair, Bianca captivated both men and women. Men found her irresistibly

sexy, while women admired her sense of style and raunchy humor – which she exhibited every time she appeared on the late night talk shows.

Bianca knew how to handle herself in front of the cameras, and she certainly knew how to plug her brand. Over the years she'd created a mini empire that included a fine jewelry line, exotic sunglasses, a stunning makeup collection for women of color, and several best selling scents.

Bianca had mastered the art of the sell, making a fortune doing so. Then at the age of twenty-nine she'd finally decided that rather than be a one-man-band who worked hard for her money, she was looking for more. She was looking for a powerful man who would take care of her and parlay the money she'd earned into super-rich status.

Aleksandr Kasianenko was just such a man, for Aleksandr was not only a powerful super-rich businessman, he was also tough and rugged with a steely reserve.

Bianca was sick of the long list of pretty boys she'd dated over the years. Movie stars, a clutch of rock stars, a half dozen sports hero's, and a politician or two. None of them had really satisfied her – in bed or out. She'd always been the dominant force in whatever relationship she'd been trapped in. The movie stars were all insecure

and fixated on their public image. Rock stars were mostly into drugs and getting fucked-up, not to mention totally vain. The sports stars were publicity crazy and never faithful. And as for the politicians – sexually incorrect. All horn and no blow.

Then, at exactly the right time she'd met Aleksandr. And she'd fallen for his silent strength.

Only one problem.

He was married.

They'd met on Aleksandr's home turf. She was in Moscow doing a cover shoot for *Italian Vogue*, and since it happened to be her twenty-ninth birthday, the flamboyant photographer, Antonio – an Italian gay man who knew absolutely everyone who was anyone in Moscow – had decided to throw her a massive party.

The party was a blast. Until she was introduced to Aleksandr.

The moment she saw him he took her breath away with his brooding dark looks and aura of control and power. He was big and strong, and there was something magnetic about him, something incredibly masculine. One look and she was hooked.

He didn't tell her he was married.

She didn't ask.

An hour after their first encounter they were making fast, ferocious love on the floor in her hotel suite. Their lovemaking was

animalistic in its intensity, so overpowering that they'd never made it as far as the bedroom. It was all clothes off and straight at it.

After their one night of unbridled passion they were both swept up and addicted to each other. And so began their steamy affair, an affair that had them meeting all over the world.

Now, after one year, and in spite of Aleksandr's marital status, they were still very much together.

Aleksandr had assured Bianca that he was in the throes of divorcing his wife, but due to several massive business deals that could effect his wife's settlement, it still had not happened. He also had children to consider. Three daughters. "The timing has to be right," he'd informed her. "However, it *will* happen, and it will happen soon. You have my word."

Bianca believed him. He was separated from his wife, so that was a promising beginning. Still, she couldn't help wanting more. She wanted to be Mrs. Aleksandr Kasianenko, and the less time wasted the better.

In the meantime Aleksandr wished to celebrate his love's upcoming thirtieth birthday in a big way. He'd recently taken delivery of a new luxurious 400-foot super-yacht, and to christen their maiden voyage he planned on throwing Bianca a once-in-a-lifetime special event she would never forget. The celebrations would include inviting

several of their friends on a weeklong cruise to enjoy the best of everything. What could be better?

When he informed Bianca of his plan she was excited, and immediately started thinking about who they would invite on this very exclusive trip.

“How many can your new yacht accommodate?” she inquired.

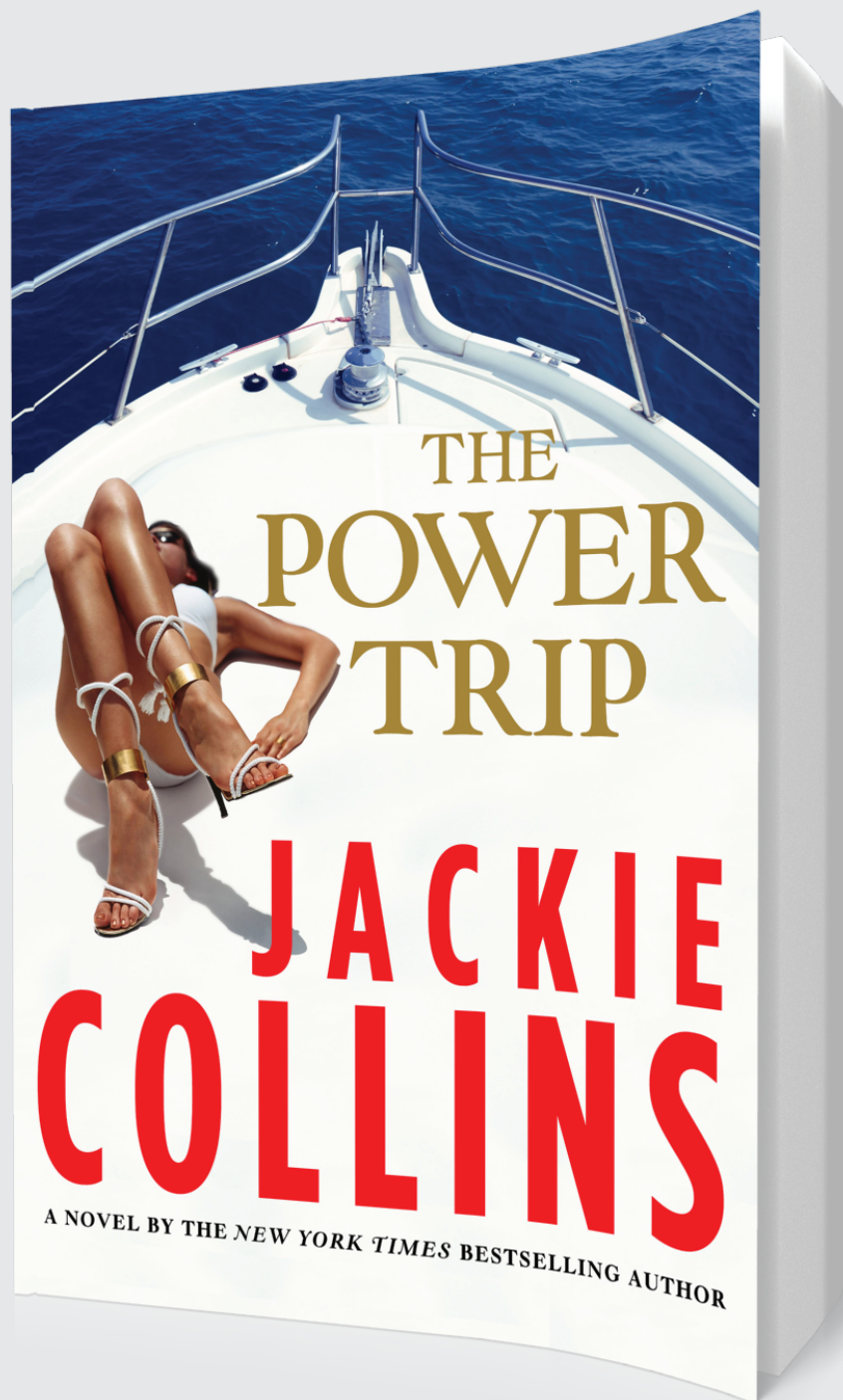
“Many,” Aleksandr replied with a dry laugh. “But I feel we should invite only five couples.”

“Why only five?” Bianca asked, slightly disappointed.

“It’s enough.” Aleksandr replied. “You make your list, I make mine. Then we will compare and decide who gets invited.”

Bianca grinned. “This is gonna be fun,” she said, already planning her list.

“Indeed it will,” Aleksandr agreed.



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