

# Sinfully Wicked

By

Tina Donahue

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# Chapter One

Nikki Blaine smelled of magnolia and musk, the mingling of helpless female and seductive predator. A curious combination, but who said she couldn't be both?

Hell, she was a freaking mess. Her palms clammy from anxiety, her nipples tight with expectation. The kind a woman experiences when she's about to be spanked, then hopefully laid... long and hard.

*Yeah, right.*

She paced the spacious office like a caged animal, her high heels clicking on the shiny hardwood floor, the sounds keeping time with her pounding pulse. No matter how much she needed it—and by God, she did—soul-stirring sex, followed by aching tenderness, wasn't going to be on the menu this afternoon. Going to the men she'd betrayed years ago, brothers she'd truly loved, didn't count as the smartest thing to do, but she needed their help.

Stopped at the burgundy leather sofa, she clutched the arm for support. According to the secretary here, Mr. Wade would be with her in a few minutes.

Nikki hadn't bothered to ask which Mr. Wade the young woman had been talking about. She would have bet this room belonged to Mitch. Scented by leather and something woody, it was darkly masculine with rich mahogany walls, copper accent lamps topped by bronze-colored shades, and classic cherry furniture. Solid and imposing.

The desk was nearly as long as a bed and wide enough for two people, maybe three.

*Don't go there.* She had no right. It wasn't as though she could waltz in here after nearly fifteen years and expect Mitch to give her a hug or a welcome home fuck... if he showed up at all.

*Where is he?* Nearly a half hour had passed since his secretary had led Nikki inside. She hoped after Mitch's initial shock had worn off about her being here, he hadn't decided against seeing her. If so, she couldn't blame him. He probably figured she'd behave as cruelly now as when they'd been in high school.

She circled the sofa and paused at framed news articles of him and Connor published in well-respected business magazines. Those pieces were intimately familiar to her. She'd read them when she lived in New York prior to her ex-husband's arrest. Through the years, she'd followed Mitch and Connor's many successes, wanting only the best for them.

Smiling softly, she touched the first photo taken outside Wicked, their wildly popular gentlemen's club. The reason she was here today.

They had to say yes to her proposal. At the very least, they had to show up. If neither did, Nikki wasn't certain what she'd do.

The glass recorded Mitch's reflection behind her.

Her heart stalled.

He stood in the doorway to his office, bathed in gauzy light pouring in from the arched window. Beyond it, Atlanta moved at a far more sluggish pace than Manhattan ever had, today's oppressive humidity forcing everything to an exaggerated southern crawl.

In here, everything unfolded in slo-mo, except for her walloping heart.

She faced him for the first time in too long, needing to get her fill.

*Oh, Mitch.*

At six-three, he made the sprawling room seem small, his build lean yet muscular, no longer the lanky teen. Ruggedly handsome, he wore his thirty years well. Laugh lines graced the corners of his beautiful hazel eyes. They looked golden behind his sooty lashes, complementing his olive complexion. Combed away from his forehead, his chestnut colored hair was longish in the back and on the sides.

Nikki reined in her urge to run her fingers through his thick, wavy locks, to touch and smell him, her face buried in the hollow of his neck, her body pressed close, lost in his heat and strength. Protected at last. Home.

A preposterous notion that made it difficult for her to join him, impossible for her to speak, but still she hoped.

His gaze wasn't guarded or indifferent as she'd feared. Wonder flooded his features, no different from when they'd been in her parents' garage after their first kiss. She was fifteen then. He'd been a year older and seemed so worldly. Life hadn't been easy for him or Connor. She'd fallen in love with both brothers, but Mitch had made the initial move.

They'd been horsing around that afternoon, mercilessly teasing each other. Mitch finally settled the score by tickling her into submission. Before Nikki could catch her breath or slug him, he brushed his lips against hers. Their velvety warmth surprised. His bristly cheeks thrilled. She'd wanted him to hold her in his arms forever. Later the same week, Connor kissed her. Nikki never wanted to leave his side.

There was no guilt for what they'd done. Both brothers accepted the other's claim on her just as she had, treating it as needed and natural. For the most part, their relationship remained innocent. They were her dearest friends, like none she'd ever known.

Their bliss lasted three months, ending when school started in the fall.

Pained at the loss, wanting back what she couldn't have and sure as hell didn't deserve, she stepped closer.

Mitch's crisp white shirt rippled with his quiet breathing. He'd opened the collar, wore no tie and had folded the sleeves to mid forearm. Dark hairs dusted his skin. Pleasure thrummed through her. He resembled an executive in crisis mode, prepared to get his hands dirty to make things right.

Nikki wanted him to touch her, explore her breasts, nipples, and especially her cunt. It ached dully, congested with more than a decade of desire. How long had it been since a man craved her to the exclusion of everything or anyone else? Since Mitch and Connor, she couldn't recall. Even during the early years of her marriage, when she'd convinced herself she was in love, her ex had worshipped wealth, image, power—not her. She stared at Mitch's hands, his fingers wonderfully long, the tips blunt, and recalled his eager, yet loving touch. It took her entire will not to glance at the impressive bulge behind his fly and see if this moment excited him as much as it did her.

He didn't move or speak.

She risked another small step, her heels tapping the floor, the distance still yawning between them, no different from the past. "Hi. Thanks for agreeing to see me."

Her voice sounded odd—hurt and needy. The same way he and Connor had been after her cruel actions.

Longing flared in his eyes, making the years fall away. He smiled.

His reaction should have comforted Nikki, but didn't. He now wore the same look a man gives to a stranger he doesn't care about, his emotions buried beneath polite disinterest.

She'd earned his disdain and much more for what she'd done. Shame made her want to apologize. Yearning made her curious and hungry for conversation, anything she could get from him. "How are you, Mitch?"

He curled his fingers into loose fists and shoved them into the front pockets of his beautifully tailored pants. "What brings you here, Nikki?"

Despite his blunt question, warmth rolled through her. His baritone was deeper than she remembered, deliciously rough and male, hinting at his Midwestern accent, the same as Connor's and hers. As kids, they'd all been transplants to Georgia, making them as foreign to the locals as tofu at a Texas barbecue.

She wanted to smile at the memory and ask how much he knew about her problems these past months. Surely, he'd seen newspaper articles or caught the awful reports on the internet and TV. Even *60 Minutes* had done a piece on what had happened. During the report, Steve Kroft had looked grimmer than he normally did.

In part, that's what brought her here, though she didn't have the courage to bring it up yet. "How's Connor?"

Mitch inclined his head to the area behind her.

He was already in here? Watching? Listening?

Her cheeks burned.

Connor stood in the other doorway, his approach muffled by the Persian area rug. Amazement at seeing her sparked in his eyes and wasn't nearly as nice as Mitch's initial wonder. Their differing reactions were no surprise. Outside of their height and powerful builds, they were nothing alike in personality or looks.

As Mitch's fraternal twin, Connor was younger by twenty minutes, his complexion lighter, features more classically beautiful, his irises so dark they looked black. He wore his sable hair shaggy, like a rocker. A close-cropped beard, diamond stud in his lobe, black tee, jeans, and his bare feet completed his bad-boy image.

His attire was as laid back as his personality was intense. He'd crossed his arms, demonstrating his artist's temperament and long memory, his reaction to her transforming from stunned to wary.

That more than anything kept her rooted in place even though she missed him as badly as she had Mitch, hungering for his arms to be around her, his breath on her skin. "Connor, hi."

He opened his mouth and closed it without saying a word, choosing instead to stare at his brother. Mitch offered no explanation as to her visit.

Desperate to break the awkward silence, Nikki spoke without thinking. "How's your grandmother?"

They frowned, their reactions remarkably similar.

*Dummy*. She knew better than to ask about the woman. Their grandmother had caused their problems when they were kids. Not that Mitch or Connor would ever admit it. They'd defended her without pause because even then they'd owned honor and integrity when Nikki hadn't.

"She's fine." Mitch rounded his desk, sat, and gestured Nikki to a wing chair facing him.

Since her legs were too watery for her to move with any grace, she stood.

So did Connor.

Mitch pressed back in his chair. The springs squeaked. "What brings you here?"

Her belly cramped at what she had to ask and might not get, but she didn't have another choice. "I saw your ad. I need a job, badly."

Connor crossed to her. His lime fragrance, fresh and citrusy, wafted close.

Aroused at his proximity and scent, she suppressed a shiver.

He ignored her and spoke to Mitch. “We advertised for an attorney?”

She cut in. “No.” She was surprised and pleased he knew about her former career then worried as to how he’d found out. “I’m not doing that anymore.”

Neither brother asked why.

She figured they weren’t *that* disinterested in her. They probably knew the gory details concerning her fall from grace, which left her no option to deny what her ex had done and how he’d dragged her down with him. “Because of the scandal, I’m pretty much unemployable in New York or anywhere else in the nation, at least as an attorney.” Trying to make light of her situation, she shrugged. “You need waitstaff and performers at Wicked. I’d like to apply for one of those positions.”

Mitch arched his eyebrows.

Connor’s frown said she was nuts. “Wicked’s a gentlemen’s club.” He stared at her chest. “The waitstaff is topless.”

“Or bottomless.” Mitch took in her boobs, cunt, and legs then journeyed back to her mouth.

Connor cleared his throat. “Sometimes both, as in fully nude, depending upon the room.”

She had trouble breathing. They weren’t having an easy time either. “Yeah, I know. I read the magazine articles about it.” She gestured to the framed news stories gracing the office. “Wicked sounds like an amazing place. Does full nudity pay the most?”

Mitch stood. His chair rolled back and smacked the credenza. Gone were his arousal and earlier detachment, replaced by a pissed off glare. “Is this a joke?”

“I need the money.” Pride and dignity had no place here. Nothing mattered now except survival. “I’m certain you understand why. You did read or watch the news reports about what my ex-husband did, right?”

Mitch and Connor exchanged a glance.

Nikki wished she could read their minds or that their stoic masks would slip away, giving her a peek at their emotions.

Not that it mattered. Their silence spoke volumes. They knew Ty Jeffries was no longer the golden boy everyone had worshipped. He’d always been a thief and a fraud, no different from Bernie Madoff, another wealth manager who’d scammed his clients.

“My parents got caught up in Ty’s scheme. They’re going to lose their home, their only remaining asset, if I don’t get them money and fast. I know you pay well at Wicked.” Way better than an entry-level admin or customer service job, if she could get either. With her tainted background, it was doubtful. From what she’d heard, some girls made enough at the club to afford Ivy League degrees or homes in upscale neighborhoods.

She spoke to Connor. “I’ve seen the website you set up for Wicked. Totally amazing. It reminds me of the artwork you did when we were in school.” She faced Mitch. “I don’t have the luxury of looking for work anywhere else. Even that blue vest and dream job at Walmart aren’t going to happen with my past.”

Mitch didn’t return her smile. “You didn’t have anything to do with your husband’s scams.”

“Ex-husband.” Her divorce was final, the high point of the mess. Besides footing that bill, she’d also had to pay an enormous sum to a prominent criminal attorney to clear her name. His work kept her out of jail, ruined her financially, and didn’t change the public’s opinion of who they thought she was. “That photo showing me being hauled away in cuffs left a lasting impression in most people’s minds. Many don’t believe that Ty forged my signature to those checks and

documents. They're convinced I had something to do with his scam or that I knew about it. They're not prepared to forgive."

Connor's arms remained crossed, his stance distant and unsympathetic.

She tried to reason with Mitch. "Nudity doesn't bother me. Been there. Done that."

Connor grunted. "You've worked in a gentlemen's club before."

"No, but I have been to parties in the Hamptons thrown by the financial wizards on Wall Street. You know, kings of the universe?" She gave him a wry smile. "I doubt any gentlemen's club, even yours, could be as wild."

Neither he nor Mitch denied or agreed with her claim.

If she had to guess, she'd say they were disappointed. They'd expected better of her.

A long time ago, she had too. Then loneliness crept in, refusing to leave. Ty's frequent absences and his increasing disdain that she wasn't the prettiest, wealthiest, or most pure bred of their group began to wear on her. She'd ached for a man's embrace, someone to love and require her just as she was. Imperfect sure, but still worthy. During those lust-fueled parties, she'd felt desired by the other men and sometimes adored, if only for a few moments. "Give me a chance. Please."

Mitch sank to his chair and opened a drawer. "No."

Although she'd warned herself to expect his response, her throat still constricted. "I really need this, Mitch."

Connor tapped his foot. "Because of your parents."

Along with wanting to be able to eat and have a place to stay other than a homeless shelter. "Mom and Dad totally believed in Ty."

His glib, winning personality had mesmerized her parents, like so many others. Even after all he'd done, her folks still bought his lies and worried about his future, condemning her for not standing by her man.

A tearing sound interrupted the quiet. "Here." Mitch extended a narrow strip of paper to her. "Take it."

"What is it?"

He put it on his desk and slid it to where she stood. "A check to cover your living expenses until you get back on your feet and more than enough to pay off your parent's mortgage so they're not thrown out of—"

"No." She backed up, bumping into Connor. He didn't move. Nor did she. Her pulse beat harder. "I don't want your charity. I want a job."

"You're an attorney." He left his desk and didn't stop until he'd crowded her.

Nikki didn't back away from him either. If he thought his proximity intimidated her, he was dead wrong. She loved how he and Connor trapped her with their size and commanding presence. There wasn't anything more pleasant. Their heat chased away the chilly air conditioning and her ever-present sorrow. Their mingled scents were so damn intoxicating she had to fight dizziness.

Mitch leaned in.

Her lightheadedness grew worse. If she fainted, would he catch her? Caress her?

Something pleasant flared in his eyes. "A fucking good attorney."

*God, his voice.* How had she lived without it these past years, along with everything else about him? His coming beard shadowed his upper lip, cheeks, and chin. His eyes were so freaking gorgeous, her mind turned to mush. No man had a right to have lashes that long or to be so damned

virile. Imagining him on top of her, thrusting inside her moist and willing cunt made her breathless. “How would you know?”

Connor edged closer. “We read the articles about you.”

*We*, not *he*. He’d actually admitted he’d followed her career as she had his.

She loved how his hair dangled over his forehead. And his beard—wow. Those short, dark hairs would rasp her thighs as he licked her cleft, while Mitch concentrated on her breasts, suckling the erect tips, biting them playfully. She had trouble pulling in a breath and keeping on her feet. Not that she dared lean into them until she knew they’d accept her touch and desire. “You did?”

She sounded more hopeful than she’d intended.

Wariness crossed Connor’s face. He stepped back, letting her know he hadn’t forgotten what she’d done, nor would he forgive.

Mitch held his ground. “Give this time. People forget. You can go back into law and work at another bank like you did before.”

“I don’t want to. Please, let me finish.” She held up her hand to stop his next comment and had to keep from stroking his mouth. His lips looked unbearably silky, the perfect feast for her fingertips and tongue. “It’s a time of my life that didn’t make me happy. I don’t intend to return to it. And I won’t take your money. Give me a job.”

He backed away. “We don’t have anything available for your skill set.”

“How skilled do I have to be to serve drinks and food, or perform in one of your shows?”

He arched one eyebrow. “In varying stages of undress.”

“Wonderful.” She offered her most confident smile. “I’m not shy. Remember what I said about those parties in the Hamptons?”

“It’s burned into my brain forever.” Connor made a face, then gave her a negligent shrug. “Okay, you win.”

*No shit?* He wasn’t going to argue her down or dismiss her with a flat ‘no’?

Mitch stared as if Connor had lost his mind.

Nikki talked fast. “Wonderful. What do I do?”

Connor regarded her sapphire blue blouse, black capris, and high-heel sandals. “Take off your clothes.”

Nikki wasn’t certain she was following. “Yeah, I know. But I meant, when do I come in?”

“You don’t, unless we hire you.” He perused her form, not like the boy she’d hurt, but as an artist and businessman. His demeanor reminded her of bodice rippers she’d read in college where virginal heroines were stripped bare and offered for sale to arrogant heroes.

A pleasant thought when it came to him and Mitch. Even so, Connor had hedged about her employment. “Unless you hire me? You just said you would.”

“I said you win, meaning we’ll give you a chance. However, we still need to determine if you have what it takes for the position. You’ll have to strip here, right now, so we can have a look at you.”

Mitch growled. “No.”

Connor shot him a look. “All the others do the same when they audition for the job. If Nikki wants this, we need to see her body to make certain she’s what our patrons expect. It’s not like she’s going to pose for a club portrait where I could Photoshop flaws.” He turned his icy stare on her. “You do understand, right?”

Yeah, she did. He wanted her to strip in this office for his and Mitch’s pleasure, or displeasure, as the case may be. Far more troubling, he was worried she had flaws. How bad? Big or little? She wasn’t perfect. Who was? Still, she liked how she looked. She’d never had body

image problems, not even when married to Ty, and didn't want to start now. What if she didn't measure up to Connor's artistic vision of what a Wicked woman should look like?

Mitch watched her closely. "You don't want to do this."

Oh hell. He didn't think she'd measure up either?

Nikki slumped. She considered the faint scar on her knee from a spill on her bike when she was ten. Would that count against her? What about the mole near her navel? Did they expect flawless skin? Did anyone have that except an infant? There were always moles, marks, freckles. Oh shit, her freckles. She'd never been crazy about them, but thankfully they were only across the bridge of her nose hidden beneath makeup.

She wasn't certain if Connor and Mitch had remembered them or could see the freckles beneath her foundation. If those marks made them say no, she'd leave without a job and wouldn't be able to help her parents. Without the money she brought in, they'd be as destitute as she currently was. Maybe worse given their ages.

This couldn't be happening.

And wouldn't.

Dammit, she needed to work and by God she was going to do it at Mitch and Connor's club. She might not be movie star gorgeous, but she was damn attractive. Her effect on both brothers showed in the thickening ridges behind their flies. She sensed their thick, hard cocks were competing with each other, trying to prove which man could fuck her raw.

That would come later with both of them. She hoped.

She touched Mitch's arm.

His muscles bunched.

Their solid bulk, his heated skin, and the longing in his hooded eyes punched up her desire a thousand fold. "Yeah, I do want this." No way would she leave room for argument. "I'll be more than happy to strip for you."

Eager in fact. She'd waited fifteen years for this moment and she was going to give them a show they'd never forget.