



One Last Night (The Sabbatini Brothers Book 2)

By Melanie Milburne

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When Maya met Giorgio Sabbatini, he married the penniless waif and stray despite her inferior breeding. So her decision to divorce him now is made with a heavy heart. Giorgio belongs to a notorious blue-blooded family, and their duty to maintain its lineage is unquestioning. Unable to give him the heir he craves, Maya knows she has to walk away.

But the ink on their divorce papers isn't given the chance to dry; after one last reckless night of passion, there's a *very* shocking announcement....

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Melanie Milburne read her first Harlequin at age seventeen in between studying for her final exams. After completing a Masters Degree in Education she decided to write a novel in between settling down to do a PhD. She became so hooked on writing romance the PhD was shelved and soon after she was signed on to the London office of Harlequin Mills and Boon line, becoming the first not previously published Australian author to be contracted for the Presents line in over a decade.

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Maya looked at the dipstick in shock. Her throat closed over as if a hand had locked around her neck as the two blue lines appeared *Positive*.

She sat on the edge of the bathtub, her legs shaking so much she had to clamp her knees together. Hope flickered brightly and then just as quickly waned.

It couldn't be true.

She took a deep breath and looked at the stick again. She blinked once, twice, three times but the lines were the same as before.

The doorbell suddenly rang with an incessant peal and she sprang to her feet, her heart knocking against her chest wall like a pendulum pushed by a madman. She quickly stashed the test kit in the nearest drawer beneath the twin basins and took a long slow breath to steady herself.

Gonzo was already at the door, barking joyfully in greeting, but Maya didn't need the dog's behaviour to signal to her who was at the door. No one rang the doorbell quite the same way as her soon-to-be ex-husband Giorgio Sabbatini did. He always pressed it too hard and for too long. He was summoning her and he clearly would not be taking no for an answer.

Maya fixed a deliberately cool expression on her face as she opened the door. 'G... Giorgio,' she said, hoping the catch in her voice wouldn't betray her. 'I thought you were sending one of your staff to pick up Gonzo. Isn't that the arrangement we agreed on?'

'I decided to come in person this time.' He bent down to ruffle the ecstatic dog's ears before he rose back to his full height, his tall frame towering over her. His dark brown eyes glittered with a sardonic light as they met hers. 'I am quite surprised to find you at home,' he said. 'I thought you might be out with your new Englishman lover. What was his name again? Hugh? Herbert?'

Maya bit the inside of her mouth, wishing, not for the first time, she hadn't gone on that stupid blind date set up by a friend from her yoga class. 'Howard,' she said tightly. 'And it wasn't anything like the press reported it.'

One of Giorgio's brows lifted in a cynical arc. 'So he didn't rip your clothes off in the hallway of his apartment and have his wicked way with you?'

Maya threw him a venomous look as she closed the door behind him with a snap. 'No,' she said. 'That is more your style, is it not?'

He gave her an indolent smile which made every hair on the back of her neck lift up in reaction. 'You were with me all the way, *caral* he said in a tone that was gravelly and rough and so deep she felt a guilty shiver of remembered pleasure cascade down her spine and bury itself in that hot secret place between her thighs.

Maya turned on her heel rather than face him with her colour so high. She still cringed in shame at how she had behaved the night of his brother's wedding. She still wasn't exactly sure what had precipitated it. Had it been the champagne or the pain of finally letting go? Break up sex, that was what it was called. It didn't mean anything, certainly not to him. He had probably bedded several women since they had separated. According to the latest press report, he was currently seeing a lingerie model based in London. Reading that had been like a dart to Maya's heart but she would rather die than reveal that to him.

She felt him come up behind her, her skin prickling all over and her nostrils flaring as she breathed in his citrus-based aftershave overlaid with his particular male smell. All her senses—the ones she had sworn would always be switched to neutral when he was around—turned to full throttle. She felt her heart give a stutter when his hands came to rest on the top of her shoulders, her breathing stopping altogether when his tall body brushed against hers from behind.

'You smell nice,' he said, bending his head so his mouth almost touched the side of her neck. 'Is that a new perfume you are wearing?'

Somehow she got her voice to work. 'Get your hands off me, Giorgio,' she said. *Before I turn around and fall into your arms and make a complete and utter fool of myself all over again.*

His hands tightened for a fraction of a second, long enough for her heart rate to go up another notch. 'Our divorce isn't final until the last of the paperwork is sorted,' he said, his breath lifting the hairs that had come loose from her makeshift ponytail. 'Maybe we can make the most of the time before the ink dries, hmm?'

Maya knew what this was about and it hurt much more than the lingerie model. It wasn't their broken marriage he was fighting for, it was his fortune. The Sabbatini family was as good as Italian royalty. When she had married Giorgio five years ago there had been no prenuptial agreement prepared. It was an unwritten, unspoken law: their marriage was meant to last, as every other Sabbatini marriage had in the past. But Maya wondered if any other Sabbatini marriage had endured the heartache theirs had and survived.

She very much doubted it.

She turned to face him, her heart tightening all over again as she looked into his inscrutable dark-as-night eyes. 'What do you want?' she asked.

His thumbs started to knead her knotted shoulders until she was sure she was going to melt into a pool at his feet. She fought the response, clamping her teeth together as she put her hands against his chest to push him away. 'Will you stop touching me, for God's sake?' she railed at him.

He captured her hands effortlessly, holding them in one of his as if they were a child's. 'It was good that night, si?' he said. 'I can't remember a time when it was better, can you?'

Maya swallowed unevenly. She had tried so hard not to think of that night, how wonderful it had been to make love with such abandon. No temperature or ovulation charts, no hormone injections—just good old-fashioned bed-wrecking sex, except they hadn't quite made it to the bed. But this visit: was it about a rerun of that passionate night or a truce to secure his assets?

'Giorgio, that night was a crazy, stupid mistake,' she said, not trusting herself to hold his gaze.

She pulled her hands out of his and moved away, crossing her arms over her middle. It was too soon to tell him, of course it was. It would jinx things just like before. How many times had she held up the dipstick in joy, only to have her hopes and dreams smashed like priceless porcelain on a pavement a week or two later? There were no guarantees this time would be any different. If it wasn't meant to be, at least Giorgio would be free to move on with someone else who could give him what he wanted most. They would both be free to move on. She had wasted five years of his life, not to mention her own. He was thirty-six years old. Most of his friends and colleagues had two or three children by now.

She had given him none.

Giorgio followed her into the tiny *salone*. Maya felt his gaze on her, the heat of it, the slow burn of it peeling every layer of her skin until she felt raw and exposed. She had to hold herself together. She couldn't come unstuck and get all emotional and needy in front of him. She was supposed to be over all of that now. She had worked hard at it, working out new priorities, new directions, none of which included Giorgio. Cool and in control was the only way to go with him. She had to prove to him that he no longer had any emotional or sensual power over her. She was her own person now, determined to move on with her life.

She was stronger now, much stronger. The six-month separation had done that for her. She no longer lived in the shadow of Giorgio's money and prestige. She was making a way for herself, providing for her future by restarting her career, which she had naively cast aside in order to fit in with what Giorgio and his family had expected of her. She was quite proud of what she had achieved in the time they had been apart. She had been looking forward to starting afresh until this latest hiccup had thrown her off course. Could he see the secret she was trying to hide from him? Was there some clue on her face or in her body, even at this early stage? He seemed to be looking at her so intently, his dark gaze so piercing she felt exposed and raw, as if he could see into her soul.

'What is this I hear about you moving to London?' he asked.

She faced him with a set mouth, her shoulders pulled back in determination. 'I have an interview for a teaching position at a fee paying school. I am on the shortlist.'

A frown brought his brows together. 'Are you going to take it if it is offered to you?'

She let her arms drop by her sides in an effort to look composed. 'I don't see why not,' she said, sending him a pointed look. 'I have nothing to keep me in Italy.'

Users Review

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Angel Echols:

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