

## **Bad Girls**

by  
**Rebecca Chance**

### **Prologue**

*Amber was swimming in a sea of vodka with Vicodin islands floating in it, big white oval pills like inflatable boats. The pills looked lovely from a distance, but when she got close they were hard and slippery; her hands kept sliding off them when she tried to clamber aboard. Her mouth tasted metallic and dry, as if she'd been drinking lead. She was wearing a silk nightdress, which was plastered to her body by the vodka. Maybe she was doing an underwater photoshoot? Amber loved underwater shoots; the feeling of weightlessness, her hair streaming behind her, the serenity of being completely submerged. She never wanted to come up.*

*But right now, she didn't feel serene at all.*

*She started to thrash around in panic, trying to swim up to the surface, to be able to breathe. The vodka was thick and viscous, weighing her down. Amber was pushing it away with her hands, a clumsy, ugly breast-stroke that would have had her sacked from an underwater shoot immediately. Desperately she tried to open her eyes; her lids were as heavy as if she was wearing ten pairs of fake eyelashes. She turned her head, shaking off the vodka, managing to lift it a little, to peel open her eyelids, even though her lashes felt glued together.*

*Light. Daylight. No water. Soft around her. Silk on her body: her peach La Perla nightdress. Silk pillowcase; she always slept on silk pillowcases to avoid wrinkles. And a quilt on top of her. More than just one. Quilts, blankets, enough layers for an Alaskan winter. Or not blankets – books, maybe. Solid things with corners, heavy.*

*Books? What were a lot of books doing strewn all over her legs?*

*She heaved herself back on her pillows, eyelids fluttering, her hair matted around her face. Her skin was clammy with sweat. The quilt on top of her smelt of vodka; she managed to get one hand out from under the layers and push back the quilt, shocked by how damp it was. A bottle rolled across the bed and dropped onto the floor beside her with a crash.*

*And someone laughed. A woman, standing close to her, laughed.*

*Amber's head was stuffed full of cotton wool. Cotton wool soaked in vodka. She flailed around with her hand, grabbing anything she could reach, frantically searching for clues to what was happening to her. The glossy pages of a magazine crumpled into her palm and she dragged it towards her, craning to see what it was.*

*Herself. Herself in Interview wearing a Herve Leger bandage dress and Galliano ankle-wrap shoes.*

*She closed her hand on the corner of a book and pulled it into view. A Helmut Newton retrospective, open to a double-page spread of her at sixteen, standing with her legs apart, shot from below so she looked ten feet tall, a beautiful Amazon in a one-piece black belted swimsuit, her expression sulky to conceal the terror she'd felt all the way through the shoot.*

*The next thing her fingers touched was a vial of Vicodin, transparent yellow with a white plastic lid. That was when Amber really started to panic – when she realised the vial was empty. And what was Vicodin doing anywhere near her? She'd cleaned up! She hadn't had any pills for over a month now!*

*Twisting, flailing like a fish in a net, weighed down by piles of fabric and paper, she writhed up enough to get an overview of her bed. It was covered in photographs of herself. Tearsheets from magazines. Her model cards. Polaroids from shoots. Victoria's Secret catalogues – lots and lots of VS catalogues. Huge hard-backed coffee table books; no wonder she was weighed down. Magazines from her glory days, some almost as heavy as the books: Vogues and Harpers and Vanity Fairs from all over the world, advertising and editorials. Amber's beautiful face, Amber's statuesque body, selling watches and diamonds and shoes and perfume and handbags and lingerie.*

*And then something across the room caught her attention, something incongruous, something that shouldn't be there: she had to look up. Though her head felt as if it weighed fifty pounds and her vision was so blurry white spots danced across her retinas, she managed to tip her skull back and stare, horrified, at the white wall opposite, on which was scrawled in what looked like dark brown lipstick:*

**I'M NOT BEAUTIFUL ANY MORE**

*The woman standing next to her reached out one hand and pushed Amber's head back down to a prone position.*

*'Go back to sleep,' she said, holding Amber down with the press of her fingers on Amber's forehead. 'Don't try to move. Just go back to sleep.'*

*Amber's lips moved, but nothing came out.*

*'Help me,' she mouthed desperately. 'Please, help me...'*

*Because if she did as the woman said, and passed out, she knew she would never wake up again.*

### **Amber**

Amber Peters was used to being the most beautiful woman in the room. Even if there were other stunning models present – if she were sunbathing on the deck of a yacht moored off Capri, for instance, or at a cocktail party for the Paris collections - Amber would still be the one everyone's stare returned to, full of envy or desire. Her beauty wasn't currently fashionable: she'd never be booked for French *Vogue*, which preferred editorial models with pale skinny limbs, big bug-eyes and jutting collar-bones, girls who hunched their backs awkwardly to look like broken-down dolls. Though she was half-English, half-Slavic by birth, Amber's beauty was the American dream; in her photos, she was either laughing, showing her perfect teeth, or pouting, sultry-eyed, at the camera over a glossy, suntanned shoulder. With her slanted green eyes, endless legs, and mane of tawny hair, Amber was the girl that every woman wanted to be, and every man wanted to be with.

Since she was fourteen, Amber had made her living from being the incarnation of sexiness. Grooming had been drummed into her till it was as automatic to her as breathing. As usual, she was currently flawless; her teeth were perfect and pearly, her skin smooth, glowing and lightly tanned, her slanting green eyes framed by thick tinted lashes, and her hair cascaded down her back in layers of gently-styled curls.

And this was just at breakfast time.

"No-one here can take their eyes off you, honey," gloated Tony, smiling at her proudly. "You look stunning."

Amber looked around her. Sure enough, every head in the lavish breakfast room of Bovey Castle Hotel snapped away as soon as she glanced in their direction, the unmistakable indication that they'd been staring at her; she was so used to it by now that she took it for granted. The waitress, setting down Amber's cappuccino, blushed and averted her gaze as she did so, overwhelmed.

"I don't fit in here," Amber said, embarrassed, looking around her at the clientele, who were dressed in cords and sweaters, suitable wear for the English countryside; not a jetsetter among them.

"I know! But hey, I don't fit in here either!" Tony said cheerfully. "This is old-school English, baby. Isn't it cool?" His brow furrowed. "Don't you like it?" He leaned across the table and took her hand. "I know it's not the usual kind of place I take you to, but you've got the spa, don't you? And the swimming pool?"

"Yes! I'm fine!" Amber said, smiling back at him. "I just feel too glitzy."

She glanced down at her skinny cream jeans, tucked into knee-length suede boots, the silk t-shirt, and the aquamarine silk and cashmere cardigan knotted at her waist. Form-fitting, showing off her long, slim body, her high round breasts. Perfect for LA or Monaco, but not for a sporting estate in the heart of Devonshire.

"We *are* glitzy, babe," Tony pointed out. "I'm from Houston, Texas. We like things big and shiny there. And you're an international supermodel - that's the definition of glitz!" He grinned widely, his teeth a superb example of American dentistry.

Amber was about to respond, but instead she squealed in shock as an enormous bird landed on the sill of the leaded window next to her chair. It was the size of a small dog, its eyes huge and yellow, staring directly at her through the glass.

*Oh my God!* Amber panicked.

"It's the giant owl! Cool!" Tony said happily. "Remember, from the hallway?"

Amber stared at him blankly.

"Honey, you need more coffee," he said, beckoning the waitress. "Remember, in the hallway just now we walked past the guy with the giant owl on a stand? With the black Lab lying at his feet? He's taking me out this morning to do some hawking?"

*I walked past a giant owl just now?* Amber thought, baffled. *And I don't remember? My God.*

The owl was still staring at her. She was more thankful than she could say that the leaded glass panes were between them. It hopped from one huge clawed foot to another, making a squeaky, urgent sound. Tony reached out and tapped on the glass, and, surprised, it opened its wings, the span at least four feet, and flapped away.

"You scared it," Amber said sadly, but Tony was already jumping up, throwing his linen napkin on the table.

“Oh boy, that means the falconry’s started. I’m gonna go outside to watch, and then I’ll head off to go hawking!” he chuckled happily. “And then I’ve got fly-fishing on the lake. Jeez, I can’t wait to catch us some dinner!” He bent down to kiss her. “You have a great time in the spa, babe. Be back in the room by four, willya? I’ll be raring to go by then.”

Amber nodded as he dashed out of the breakfast room, almost a head higher than most of the Englishmen there, and much healthier-looking. Square-jawed, with a nice thick head of hair, Tony had the typical, neutral good looks of the American man. He wasn’t handsome, but he could pass for it in England because he was so big and healthy from the high-protein diet of milk, beef and eggs that all good ol’ Texan boys were raised on.

Reaching into her bag, the Vuitton to which she was almost surgically attached because of its precious contents, she extracted her pill dispenser.

“Goodness, that’s a lot of pills!” the waitress blurted out, setting down Amber’s single poached egg on rye bread, and her second cappuccino.

“Vitamins,” Amber said, smiling at her, as she hooked a French-manicured nail under a big white oval and popped it out.

*This should help*, she thought.

And whether it was the ‘vitamin’, or the Fruit Active Glow facial in the Elemis spa, followed by the really superb Aroma Stone massage and mani-pedi, Amber felt wonderful as she lay in the sunken whirlpool bath of her treatment room a few hours later, staring dreamily at the sky. For her, this meant that she was actually feeling very little, utterly suspended in a hazy cloud of bliss that wrapped around her and insulated her from the outside world, just like the bubbles of the whirlpool bath.

Underwater lights illuminated the water, casting an eerie, otherworldly glow around her; they had been red when the bath was turned on, but Amber had asked for blue instead, and they had been only too happy to oblige. Red was much too stimulating. Red was the colour of passion and fire; it stirred you up. While blue was cold and clear, the colour of the sky and the sea. Blue cleansed you and purified you.

The swimming pool turned out to be blue as well, cobalt mosaic tiles with gleaming pewter accents. And it had a Jacuzzi at the far end, where she sat in another cloud of bubbles and gazed at the Devon moors beyond, the gentle rise of the hills, pale green and grey. Clouds moved slowly across the gunmetal sky. It was hypnotic. She pulled herself out of the water eventually, catching sight of her reflection in the mirrors, her white crochet Shoshanna bikini pale against her

lightly-tanned skin. The room was lined with large diamonds of Art Deco glass, and at the far end was a sunburst of mirrors, faceted silver; if she tilted in the right direction, she could make herself disappear completely between the diamonds of cut-glass.

She wrapped herself in a big, soft white towel, sinking down onto one of the loungers arranged in a semicircle in the glassed-in pool area, staring out over the grounds of Bovey Castle, the stone terraces that led down to the lawns and golf course beyond; it was the perfect English country home. By now she was floating on her own invisible bubbles, and the covert glances everyone else cast her, their whispered speculation about who she was – actress? model? socialite? all three? – were lost in the pale blue haze that surrounded her.

Outside the curving glass walls was a gravel path on which people strolled past, pausing by the little pond with its pale-grey stone fountain of a nymph and fairy, water trickling gently from the nymph's hands. But then they looked through the glass and saw Amber, sun-glazed, her long, perfect limbs the colour of pale biscuit, the white towel turban wrapped around her head emphasising her slanted green eyes and impossibly high cheekbones, and they double-took in shock, gazing at her avidly before they remembered their manners and reluctantly turned away so they wouldn't stare any more. Amber was much too exotic a creature to be anything but a rarity and a wonder in the English countryside.

Eventually, Amber got dressed and left the main castle building, making her way back through the grounds to the stone lodge that she and Tony were occupying for the weekend. Made of local granite and oak, it had three ensuite bedrooms, a kitchen and a living room with a central fireplace and a vaulted oak ceiling, three stories high. It was much bigger than they needed, and stunningly luxurious. Amber lit the fire, opened the glass living room doors, popped some more vitamins, and curled up on the wooden lounger on the deck, smoking a cigarette and gazing down the slope of the hill through the trees to the lake below. Daffodils and crocuses bloomed in the woodland, pale yellow and white and purple.

Eventually, she roused herself and went upstairs, to the lush, red-carpeted master bedroom. It was three o'clock, and she had completely forgotten to eat any lunch; but then, that was one of the useful side-effects of her 'vitamins'. She plugged in her hairdryer and styling tongs, sat down at the mirrored Deco dressing table, and spent forty minutes sculpting her hair into lush, cascading waves, and twenty more making up her face, curling her eyelashes, glossing her lips, dusting glossy highlighter along her cheekbones, turning up the wattage on her beauty. She stroked Lancome's Star Bronzer all over her body, working it in till her skin glowed pale gold, and slipped on a delicate pale blue silk bra and panty set, drawing matching hold-up stockings up her thighs and smoothing out the ribbed velvet-covered elastic.

She wandered into the bathroom, which, when they checked in last night, had made Tony sigh in ecstasy, with its gigantic bath, big enough even for a Texan to stretch out in, and its equally huge power shower. Set under the eaves, the walls were papered in zebra print, the far one hung with a full-length mirror in which Amber surveyed herself.

This was one of the moments that gave her the most pleasure of all. Dressed up in exquisite underwear, made up to perfection; she threw some poses in front of the mirror, flicking back her hair, smiling to herself. It was something men wouldn't understand, the satisfaction that a woman received when all her hard work paid off, the dieting, the exercise, the grooming, the money spent on beauty treatments, the painstaking, detailed construction of the absolutely best image of herself that she could present to the world.

"Babe! I'm back!" Tony yodelled, slamming into the lodge with a burst of energy that made her jump. She walked out of the bathroom to meet him; he was running up the staircase, colour in his cheeks from the sunshine, eyes shining with excitement.

"We bagged a rabbit, plus two trout!" he said triumphantly. "I've booked a private chef from the hotel to come in tonight and cook dinner for us here, in the lodge! Romantic, huh? And eating what I caught for us, how cool is that! *Wow.*" He reached the top of the stairs, taking in her appearance. "You look *unbelievable.* I'm getting a massive hard-on just looking at you!"

Amber smiled happily, sitting down on the big, luxurious bed with its red coverlet and matching suede pillows.

"I need to wash before I can even touch you!" Tony apologised, "I must stink of fish – lemme go shower and I'll be right with you - "

He bounded into the huge bathroom, cursing as his head cracked against the beamed ceiling, and turned on the power shower. Amber listened to the water pounding down, the happy noise of Tony humming to himself as he soaped thoroughly, and his bare feet padding across the floor as he emerged again, naked, his cock rising at the sight of her, a large, shit-eating grin spreading over his face.

"Boy oh boy," he said happily, "what a weekend I'm having... Where's the DVD player?"

"Oh God, I completely forgot," Amber said guiltily, looking around her.

"No worries, babe - "

He pulled it out of his travel case and set it up on the mirrored dressing table, clicking open the screen, inserting the DVD, lining everything up so he had a good view. Then he pressed Play, and the DVD whirred on, sultry music issuing from the speakers.

“Here you are!” Tony said proudly.

Amber turned her head to see the screen. It was a DVD that *Sports Illustrated* had filmed while they were shooting her for their famous yearly swimsuit issue, the one that could make the career of unknown models and give the ultimate seal of approval to established ones. You had to be healthy, curvy and sexy to appear in *Sports Illustrated*; no skinny high-fashion types allowed. And as Amber appeared on the screen, her hourglass figure emphasised by a cutaway pale pink swimsuit, lifting both hands to flip her hair, walking across a sandy beach, a setting sun glowing behind her, Tony moaned aloud in excitement.

“Come here,” he said, pulling her onto his lap, kissing her thoroughly, his hands running through her curls, his cock stiffening even more against her thigh. “God, you’re so hot...”

He eased the silk bra strap off her shoulders, kissing down the gilded skin, his mouth hot and wet, his hands all over her, caressing her breasts, kissing her nipples, easing her back till she lay on the bed, raising her hips so he could slide off her silk knickers. His mouth dived between her legs, making her moan back at him, and he slid his tongue into her, licking her, getting her wetter and wetter until she was gasping for breath, grinding into him, his big hands on her hips pulling her against his mouth.

“You’re so *fucking beautiful!*” Tony gasped back, climbing on top of her, reaching for a condom, positioning his dick, guiding it into her, her legs wrapping around him. “Oh Jesus – this is *so fucking hot* - ”

Amber’s head fell back as he drove into her, her hair streaming down the end of the bed. If she tilted her head back even further she could just see what he was watching so avidly: herself. Lying on a sand dune, back arching, sand rippling beneath her. Walking into the sea, twisting back to look at the camera, smiling seductively over her shoulder, arching to make her waist look even slimmer, her bottom thrust out even more sexily. It was a turn-on for her as well, though she’d never have realised it before Tony proposed the idea. Her entire life revolved around her looking perfect, sexy, desirable, and here was the ultimate proof of that; a man who loved her beauty so much that he wanted multiple versions of it simultaneously. If he could have surrounded them with TV screens all showing Amber on the beach in her swimsuit, he would have done.

*I shouldn’t suggest that to him, she thought, smiling despite herself. He’s crazy enough to do it...*

She looked up at Tony as he fucked her, his hands running up and down her stocking-clad legs, but his eyes staring greedily at the image of her on the screen. She knew that he was imagining all the other men who'd watched the video and reached down to pull on their stiffening dicks, pretending that they were just behind the camera, about to step forward, see Amber smile at them and pull the swimsuit straps off her shoulders and lay down in the sand so they could have sex with her. Pretending they were the man she wanted, the man she was tossing her hair back and blowing kisses to.

She knew that the thought of how many other men wanted her was the single most powerful reason that Tony got so turned on by her, and she understood why. That was what she was selling, after all. Desire. The DVD wasn't just a way of Tony seeing multiple images of Amber. It was to reinforce the hot rush of knowing that Tony was where every other man, and not a few women, wanted to be. It was his ultimate fantasy.

"I'm fucking you..." he moaned. "I'm making you come..."

Actually, he wasn't; but Amber slid her hand between her legs to take care of herself, bucking as her fingers stroked her clit, turned on enough by Tony rearing inside her, ramming her hard, for her to reach climax almost immediately; a scream escaped her lips as she came, rubbing herself against him.

"Oh yeah – look at you coming, you're so goddamn beautiful -" Tony groaned.

There were three Ambers in the room. The Amber on the screen, walking out of the sea now, salt water dripping from her perfect skin, her smooth stomach, smiling at him seductively. The Amber reflected in the mirrored dressing table, her hair spilling down the red coverlet, her legs in their pale blue translucent stockings wrapped around his waist. And the Amber below him, her body jerking as she came, her pink-glossed lips open, panting, her eyes closed, lost in her own orgasm. He wound his fingers in her hair, pulling her head up so he saw her face as clearly as he saw her on the screen, unable to hold out any longer.

"This is the best fuck ever!" Tony yelled as he spasmed hard inside her.

Amber felt him come, and tensed immediately, but Tony was always careful, and he barely got his breath back before he was easing out of her, holding the condom as he slipped it off. No-one wanted her to get pregnant. He dumped it on the bedside table and collapsed on top of her, mumbling into her hair:

"Babe, you are one hot fuck."

"I try," she said sleepily, already in a doze.

“Ever since I saw that DVD - ” Tony raised his head for a moment, just to take a final gloating look at the image on screen of the woman he’d just had sex with – “I knew I had to get with you. Remember when I asked you if you’d mind me putting it on? I was a bundle of nerves. I couldn’t believe it when you said it was okay.”

Amber shrugged beneath him, drifting away on a cool blue sea.

“It’s still me,” she mumbled.

“It sure is!”

He rested his head between her breasts.

“Nap time,” he said contentedly. “And then we’ll head up to the bar – I gotta show you off all dressed up - and you can have another one of those crazy purple cocktails you liked last night - ”

“Parma Violet,” she said drowsily.

“And then we’ll come back and have dinner in front of the fire. Jeez, this is the best weekend *ever!*”