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#### USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

## Lynne Graham

### Christakis's Rebellious Wife



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Nine months to save their marriage!

Nik Christakis had once been her Prince Charming, the indecently rich and devilishly handsome tycoon who took Betsy away from her life as a waitress and did the unimaginable—made her his wife! But married life wasn't the fantasy she'd envisioned.

Now, as her hand hovers over the divorce papers, Betsy sees something in her husband's eyes...a glimmer of the man she first fell in love with. But when this encounter ends in reckless passion, Betsy is left with two very unexpected consequences that will forever tie her to the man she was determined to forget!

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• Binding: Mass Market Paperback

• 192 pages

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Conflicted about this one

By Sandy Milan

I'm conflicted about this story for a few reasons, which I'll try to explain. I'd read the first in the series, Ravelli's Defiant Bride and given it 4 stars so I pre-ordered this one. We knew the characters a little from the first book but it isn't necessary to have read it. The H and h are separated and about to get divorced. The h had kicked the H out for deceiving her as she never knew he'd had a vasectomy. She spent months trying to fall pregnant and one of his brothers told her about the vasectomy and she was furious. They meet up for final division of assets and end up having sex together and she ends up pregnant.

The H was fairly cold the whole way through and really did treat the h quite poorly. He never communicates or explains anything. The h came across as a total doormat, who is hopelessly sexually attracted to the H. She turns to mush the minute he crooks his finger. It lasted until the final chapter and although the author does a great job of justifying everything, it still made for a frustrating read. I wanted to slap the h and kick the H. I will probably read the final book though as this author has created a really interesting series.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

Book Two of The Legacies of Powerful Men Trilogy

By bratcat22

This book focuses on Cristo's half brother Nik and his wife Betsy. After trying for a long time to get pregnant, Betsy finds out that Nik had a vasectomy long before marrying her & didn't tell her about it. They had lots of problems before this revelation but this was the final straw and their marriage crumbled. I won't give away any more of the plot. You will have to read it to find out what happens. Cristo and his wife Belle, from the previous book, playa large part in this one.

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#### About the Author

Lynne Graham lives in Northern Ireland and has been a keen romance reader since her teens. Happily married, Lynne has five children. Her eldest is her only natural child. Her other children, who are every bit as dear to her heart, are adopted. The family has a variety of pets, and Lynne loves gardening, cooking, collecting allsorts and is crazy about every aspect of Christmas.

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'A divorce can be civilised,' Cristo Ravelli pronounced in a tone of studious tact.

Nik Christakis almost vented a derisive laugh at such a statement from the brother barely two months his senior. In reality only genuine respect for his sibling kept his cutting tongue silent. After all, what could Cristo possibly know about the blood and mayhem of a bitter divorce? Cristo was a newly and very happily married man without that experience...or that of many other unpleasant life events, in Nik's considered opinion. As a result, Cristo was as solid and straight as a ruler; he had no corners, no twists, no hidden places. He had no more concept of Nik's infinitely more complex and darker life experience than a dinosaur catapulted into a fairy story full of fluffy wings and magic.

'I know you're probably wondering where I get the nerve to offer advice,' Cristo remarked shrewdly. 'But you and Betsy did once have a good relationship and ratcheting down the current tension and cooling the aggro would be healthier for both of you—'

'Then you should be delighted to hear that Betsy and I are having a face-to-face meeting tomorrow in the presence of our lawyers in an effort to iron out a settlement,' Nik growled, his lean, darkly handsome features grim and hard.

'It's only money, Nik, and... Dio mio...' Cristo sighed, thinking wryly of the vast business empire that his workaholic tycoon brother had built from the ground up '...you have plenty of it—'

Nik ground his perfect white teeth together, his unusually light green eyes flashing bright with barely restrained fury. 'That's not the point!' he cut in harshly. 'Betsy's trying to take me to the cleaners and steal

half of everything I have—'

'I can't explain why she's making such excessive demands. I would've sworn she didn't have a mercenary bone in her body,' Cristo fielded uncomfortably. 'Have you tried to talk to her, Nik?'

Nik frowned darkly. 'Why would I try to talk to her?' he asked in astonishment at a suggestion that clearly struck him as insane. 'She threw me out of our home, started a divorce and is currently trying to rip me off to the tune of billions!'

'She did have some excuse for throwing you out,' Cristo reminded his sibling in a rueful undertone.

In answer, Nik compressed his lips. He had his own very firm ideas about exactly why his marriage had imploded. He had married a woman who said she didn't want children and then she had changed her mind. It was true that he had chosen to withhold certain very private information from her in the aftermath of that revelation but he had understandably assumed that her change of heart was a whim or at best hormonal, an urge that might hopefully fade as quickly as it had first arrived.

'It was my house,' Nik responded flatly.

'So now you're planning to take Lavender Hall off her as well as the dog,' Cristo breathed heavily.

'Gizmo was also mine.' Nik glanced at the disputed dog, returned to his care two months earlier and still a study of deep doggy depression. Gizmo slumped by the window, an array of squeaky toys lying around him untouched, his short muzzle resting mournfully on shaggy paws. The animal had the best of everything that money could buy but, in spite of Nik's every effort to the contrary, the wretched mutt continued to pine for Betsy.

'Have you any idea how devastated she was when you took the dog off her?' Cristo enquired.

'The three pages of tear-stained care instructions that came with him did provide a hint,' Nik breathed sardonically. 'She was more worried about the dog than she ever was about me—'

'Less than a year ago, Betsy adored you!' Cristo shot back at his brother in condemnation of that unfeeling response.

And he had liked being adored, Nik acknowledged; he had liked it very much indeed. When adoration had turned to violent hatred and questions he couldn't answer he had had no appetite whatsoever for the new regime. Questions he could have answered had he been forced to do so, he qualified inwardly, but he could not have stood to see the look of pity or horror on her face should he have told her the truth. Some truths a man was entitled to keep private; some were simply too appalling to share.

'I mean...' Cristo hesitated. 'When you encouraged me to talk to Betsy, to become her friend after you split, I thought it was because you loved her and wanted her back and hoped to use me as an intermediary—'

Nik's devastatingly handsome face clenched hard. 'I didn't love her. I've never loved anyone,' he admitted coldly. 'I liked her, trusted her. She was a good homemaker—'

'A...homemaker?' Cristo was staggered by that description because it was such an old-fashioned term and there was nothing even remotely old-fashioned about Nik and his brand of contemporary cool.

'A good homemaker,' Nik repeated steadily, guessing that Cristo, who had always had a decent home, could not comprehend the draw of such a talent in a woman. 'But my trust in her was misplaced and obviously I don't want her back.'

'Are you absolutely certain of that?' Cristo pressed.

We...yes,' Nik confirmed in Greek, his response instantaneous. He might not be divorced as yet but he had already moved on. After all, Betsy had always been an eccentric choice of bride for a Greek billionaire but she had appeared during a troubled period in his life and she belonged to that phase, most assuredly not to the new start and more promising future he now envisaged. In the space of the six months that had passed since their marriage broke down, Nik had changed and he was very proud of that change. He had shed his dysfunctional past, travelled from being a male with more excess baggage than a jumbo jet to a fastermoving, far more efficient version of himself. The very last thing he intended to do now was repeat past mistakes. And Betsy had been a serious mistake.

No matter how hard Betsy tried to hide it, she was so much on edge in the company of her polished legal team while they waited in the elegant conference room that a sudden noise would have seen her plastered to the ceiling.

Her nervous tension was understandable. After all, it had been six months since she had last seen Nik, six months during which her already broken heart had been repeatedly stamped on and then what little remained torn to pieces. He had refused to see her or make any explanation for his extraordinary behaviour. In the space of a moment she had travelled from being a happily married woman trying for her first baby to a betrayed, bitterly hurt and confused wife.

She had thrown Nik out but he had essentially abandoned her. After his heartless deception, the force of his counter-attack had almost destroyed her and he had walked away without a backward glance. He had reacted as if three years of marriage, and what she had honestly assumed was happiness, meant absolutely nothing to him. Too late had it occurred to her that she had married a man who had never said he loved her, who had said in fact that he didn't believe in love and who at all times and on all occasions had made his business affairs, rather than her, the top priority in his life.

So, after that shattering betrayal of trust and his very final rejection, it was hardly a surprise that she was finally hitting back. And she knew this course of action would take his feelings towards her from apparent indifference to actively hating her. And she didn't care; no, she definitely didn't care what Niko-los Christakis thought of her any more. Love had died when she was finally forced to acknowledge the degradingly low value he had set on her and their marriage, and she supposed that what she was now engaged in was a rather pathetic attempt at hitting back to punish him for the heartbreak he had callously inflicted.

Revenge. It was not a pretty or feminine word but it was also the very last thing a manipulative and cunning business shark like Nik Christakis would expect from his once submissive and soon-to-be ex-wife. He hadn't cared about her but he did care about his precious money. There was no greater goal in Nik's life than the ruthless pursuit of profit and the clever conservation of that vast store of personal wealth. Betsy knew that if she could significantly dent Nik in the wallet department, if in no other way, she would finally draw blood. After all, it had taken her outrageous claim of half of everything he possessed to persuade Nik into an actual face-to-face meeting with her again. Self-evidently money mattered to Nik more than she or their marriage had ever mattered.

Footsteps sounded in the corridor outside and Betsy stiffened. The door handle made a slight noise but the door stayed shut and she froze, her heart leaping into her mouth.

'Let us do the talking,' her legal representative, Stewart Annersley, reminded her afresh.

He might as easily have said that Betsy was out of her league in such company but she already knew that, could barely credit that she had spent three entire years in Nik's world of rarefied wealth and yet contrived to remain easily shocked and gullible. What did that say about her? Was she stupid? A poor reader of people and their motivations? She had been distraught when Nik had taken Gizmo from her. The little dog had been her only comfort and even though Nik was by no means a doggyorientated male, he had still insisted on taking the animal back. Why?

Betsy believed it was because Nik was the ultimate control freak. Evidently, what was his stayed his, unless it was a discarded wife. His most recent attack had been to go after the house that he had never liked but that she loved. Why? Certainly he owned it and he had paid for the restoration, yet he had only bought the property to please her. Or had he? Had he simply seen Lavender Hall as a promising investment? More and more Betsy doubted the assumptions she had once made about what motivated Nik.

Without warning, the door sprang open and framed Nik's very tall, well-built body. Her heart hammered madly for a split second and then felt as though it had stopped beating altogether because for a long timeless moment she couldn't move, couldn't breathe, couldn't speak, couldn't even blink. He radiated raw sexual charisma.

His extraordinarily light eyes glittered like gleaming emeralds in his lean, darkly beautiful face, star-tlingly noticeable eyes and shockingly astute. A thousand memories threatened to consume her—from the recollection of their disastrous first date to their idyllic honeymoon and the lonely challenge of her life once reality had set in—and she fought them off fiercely. He wasn't going to do this to her again, she swore with inner vehemence. He wasn't going to break her nerve again.

She lifted her chin, squared her stiff shoulders and stared back at him while carefully blanking him out because she could not face direct eye contact. Yet in the back of her mind she was still plunged into sudden agony by his presence, wondering how this had happened to them, how the man she had once adored could have become her worst enemy. Where had she gone wrong? What had she done to make him treat her with such hostility and unkindness?

And even while paranoia and self-pity threatened to overwhelm Betsy for a dangerous instant, it was Nik's voice she heard inside her head. 'Stop with the persecution complex and the blame game,' he had once told her. 'Not everything's your fault. You're not being punished for some sin in this world or the next. The bad stuff is simply what life throws at you...'

Nik scanned Betsy with compulsive intensity. Had she shrunk? She had never been very big in either height or size—indeed she barely weighed a hundred pounds soaking wet. Surrounded by her legal posse she was utterly overshadowed. She had definitely lost weight. He wondered if she was eating properly, an old protective instinct kicking in, instantly stamped down on hard and consigned to the back of his mind as inappropriate. It was none of his business any more, equally none of his business that her lawyer, Annersley, was leaning far too close to her, appreciative eyes pinned to Betsy's delicate profile as if she were a prize up for grabs. And of course, endowed with even a tithe of what Nik was worth, Betsy would be very much a trophy for some scheming male to snatch up in the future.

That idea didn't bother Nik, no, it didn't bother him at all, he told himself fiercely, sliding with a degree of unnecessary force into the chair spun out for him by his own team. Naturally there would be other men in Betsy's future; she was a beauty. His attention skimmed over her pale profile. She had always reminded him of a spun-glass figurine, fragile in every proportion, the sort of woman a man wanted to protect and cherish. And where had that chivalrous attitude, shown only to her, taken him? he asked himself cynically. On the road to the divorce court and a poorer future like a thousand other foolish men. 'I want a baby,' she had said, all tearful blue eyes and trembling lips, breaking their premarital agreement, trying to selfishly, wilfully rewrite history... And she hadn't even noticed that the bottom had fallen out of his world the moment she spoke.

Obviously, Betsy would have that much-desired baby with another man now. Without warning, Nik's stomach lurched. He gulped down the cup of hot black coffee offered to him and burnt his mouth. Betsy was trying to rob him blind just as his gigolo father, Gaetano, had once tried to rob Nik's mother, Helena. Helena Christakis, however, had been too clever to be conned by Gaetano Ravelli, and Nik's IQ left his mother's at the starting stakes.

More to the point, he didn't give a damn about Betsy now. Like an alcoholic he was taking the cure and the cure was seeing her again and feeling nothing. And there she was: tiny, exquisitely provocative in every detail from her cloak of silky pale blonde hair and porcelain skin to the luscious pout of her naturally pink lips. Hard jawline squaring, he searched out her flaws and underlined them in his head: the bump in her nose, the faint scattering of freckles, the ridiculous lack of height and the very modest curves. On a physical level she was very far from being perfect. What the hell had he ever seen in her?

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