

The Love Killers

By Jackie Collins

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THE JACKIE COLLINS CLASSIC IS BACK FOR FALL 2012.

Mob boss Enzio Bassalino doesn’t like anyone cutting into his profits. So when beautiful crusader Margaret Brown persuades too many hookers to leave the ranks, she’s blown away.

Three extraordinary women vow to bring down Bassalino—by destroying his three sons. Innocent-seeming, fragile Beth will go after Frank in New York; kinky underground film star Rio will seduce Angelo in London; slick, gorgeous jet-setter Lara will ensnare Nick in Los Angeles.

But it’s a dangerous game, heating up to a spellbinding blend of dazzling intrigue and murderous suspense, of raw eroticism, and sudden, forbidden passion, as three sensational women use the only weapon Bassalino’s sons can’t resist...

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Editorial Review

About the Author
There have been many imitators, but only Jackie Collins can tell you what really goes on in the fastest lane of all. From Beverly Hills bedrooms to a raunchy prowl along the streets of Hollywood; from glittering rock parties and concerts to stretch limos and the mansions of the power brokers -- Jackie Collins chronicles the real truth from the inside looking out.

Jackie Collins has been called a "raunchy moralist" by the late director Louis Malle and "Hollywood's own Marcel Proust" by Vanity Fair magazine. With over 500 million copies of her books sold in more than 40 countries, and with some twenty-nine New York Times bestsellers to her credit, Jackie Collins is one of the world's top-selling novelists. She is known for giving her readers an unrivaled insiders knowledge of Hollywood and the glamorous lives and loves of the rich, famous, and infamous! "I write about real people in disguise," she says. "If anything, my characters are toned down -- the truth is much more bizarre."

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Chapter One:

"I don't care if you can't do anything else. I don't care if you lose your income, your home, your possessions. Fuck all of it, baby. Just gather up your self-respect and walk right out. To be a prostitute is to be nothing, a mere tool of man. Take no notice of your pimps, your bosses. *We* will help you. *We* will give you all the help we can. *We* will get you so together that your old life will seem like a bad dream."

Margaret Lawrence Brown had been speaking for fifteen minutes, and she paused to sip from a glass of water handed to her on the makeshift podium. The crowd gathered to hear her talk was gratifyingly large. They occupied a vast area of Central Park, mostly women, a few men scattered among them. It was a warm August day in 1974, and her followers had turned out in force.

Margaret's tone was strong and outright. Her voice didn't falter. Her message came across loud and clear.

She was a tall woman in her early thirties. No makeup decorated her strong, radiant face. Her hair was long and black, and she wore denims, boots, and love beads.

Margaret Lawrence Brown was a cult figure in America. A ceaseless campaigner for women's rights, she had won many a victory. She had written three books, appeared on television regularly, and made a great deal of money, all of which she used for her organization, F.W.N. -- Free Women Now.

Everyone had laughed when she'd first taken up the cause of the prostitutes. But they weren't laughing now, not after three months, not after thousands of women appeared to be giving up their chosen profession and following her.

"You've got to get it together *now!"* Margaret yelled, a determined thrust to her chin.

"Yeah!" the women yelled back.

"You're going to live again. You're going to come alive!"

"Yeah! Yeah!" The reaction from the crowd was gospel in its intensity.

"You're going to be *free!"* she promised them.

"Yeah!"

Margaret slumped to the ground while the crowd continued to stamp and shout its approval. Blood spurted from a small, neat hole in the middle of her forehead.

It was minutes before the crowd realized what had happened, before hysteria and panic set in.

Margaret Lawrence Brown had been shot.

The house in Miami could only be approached by passing through electric gates, and then undergoing the scrutiny of two uniformed guards with pistols stuck casually in their belts.

Alio Marcusi passed this scrutiny easily. He was a fat old man, with liquid booze-filled eyes and the walk of a pregnant cat.

As he approached the big house he began humming softly to himself, uncomfortable in his too-tight gray-check suit, sweating from the heat of a cloudless day.

A maid answered his ring at the door. A surly, big-limbed Italian girl, she spoke little English, but she nodded at Alio and told him that Padrone Bassalino was out by the pool.

He patted her on the ass, making his way through the house to the patio that led out to a kidney-shaped swimming pool.

Mary Ann August greeted him. Mary Ann was an exceptionally pretty young woman, with old-fashioned, teased blond hair, and a curvaceous body exhibited in a skimpy polka-dot bikini.

"Hi, there, Alio," she said with a giggle, rising from her lounge. "I was just gonna make myself a little drinkie. Want one?" Posing provocatively in front of him, she toyed with a gold chain hanging between her generous breasts.

Alio contemplated the young vision, licking his lips in anticipation of the day-not far off, surely-when Enzio would grow tired of Mary Ann and pass her on, like all the others.

"Yeah, I'll have a Bacardi, plenty of ice. And some potato chips, mixed nuts, an' a few black olives." He rubbed his extended stomach sorrowfully. "I had no time for lunch. Such a busy day. Where's Enzio?"

Mary Ann gestured out toward the never-ending gardens. "He's around somewhere -- pruning his roses, I think," she said sweetly.

"Ah, yes, his roses." Instinctively Alio glanced back at the house, and sure enough, there she was, Rose Bassalino herself, peering out through a narrow chink in her curtains.

Rose, Enzio's wife. She hadn't left her room for years, and the only people she would talk to were her three sons. Rose kept an endless vigil at her window just waiting and watching. It gave Alio the creeps. He didn't know how Enzio stood it.

Mary Ann swayed over to the bar and began preparing drinks. She was nineteen years old and had lived with

Enzio Bassalino for almost six months -- something of a record, for Enzio never kept them around long.

Settling into a chair, Alio slowly closed his eyes. Such a very busy day...

"Hey, ciao, Alio, my friend, my boy. How you feeling?"

Alio awoke with a start and guiltily jumped up.

Enzio loomed over him. Sixty-nine years old, but with the hard, bronzed body of a man half his age, all his own teeth, a craggy, lined face, topped by a mass of thick steel-gray hair.

"I feel good, Enzio, I feel fine," Allo said quickly. They clasped hands, patted each other on the back. They were cousins; Alio owed everything he had to Enzio.

"Can I fix you a drinkie, sweetie-pie?" Mary Ann asked, gazing at Enzio adoringly.

"No." He dismissed her with a look. "Go in the house. I'll ring if I need you."

Mary Ann didn't argue; she obeyed him at once. Perhaps that was why she had lasted longer than the others.

As soon as she was gone Enzio turned to his cousin. "Well?" he asked impatiently.

"It is done," Alio replied in a low voice. "I saw it myself. A masterful job. One of Tony's boys. He vanished before anyone knew what happened. I flew straight here."

Enzio nodded thoughtfully. "There is no greater satisfaction than a perfect hit. This Tony's boy, pay him an extra thousand an' watch him. A man like that could get himself promoted. A public execution is never easy."

"No, it's not," Alio agreed, sucking on a black olive.

"She must be thirty," the woman hissed spitefully.

"Or older," her friend agreed.

Lined, and overly made up, the two middle-aged women watched Lara Crichton climb out of the Mabbella Club pool.

Lara was a perfectly beautiful woman of twenty-six. Slim, suntanned, with rounded, sensual breasts, a mane of sun-streaked hair, and wide, crystal-clear green eyes.

She dropped down on the mat next to Prince Alfredo Masserini and sighed loudly. "I'm getting bored with this place," she said restlessly. "Can't we go somewhere else?"

Prince AIfredo sat up. "Why are you bored?" he demanded. "Am *I* boring you? Why should you be bored when you are with me?"

Lara sighed again. Yes, the truth of the matter was the prince could be very boring indeed.

But who else was there? She'd made it a rule never to let go of anyone until there was someone else firmly ensconced in his place. She had been through most of the available princes and counts, a few movie stars, and a lord or two. It really was tiresome she had set herself such high standards.

"I don't understand you," Prince Alfredo complained. "No woman has ever told me she was bored with me. I am not a boring man. I am vibrant, lively. I am -- how you say -- the life and brains of the party."

Lara noticed with an even heavier sigh that as he spoke he was getting an erection in his nifty Cerruti shorts.

"Oh, God, do shut up," she muttered under her breath. Sex was becoming the biggest bore of all. So predictable, worked out, and mechanical.

Prince Alfredo did not hear her. "Come, my darling." Aware of his erection, and proud, he pulled her to her feet. "First we take a rest." He winked slyly. "And then we drive the Ferrari into the mountains. What do you think, my lovely?"

"Whatever you say." Reluctantly she allowed herself to be led inside. All eyes followed them as they left. They certainly made a beautiful and exciting couple.

They had separate suites, but by unspoken agreement all sexual activity took place in Lara's. She stopped him from entering at the door.

"What's the matter?" he asked indignantly. "I have a good hard-on -- a *very* good one."

"Save it for later," she said firmly, closing the door on his protests. "I'll call you when I wake up."

Lara felt restless and hemmed in. A feeling she had often felt when married to Jamie P. Crichton. A divorce had solved the feeling then, but what now?

The phone rang and she picked it up, ready to tell Alfredo no -- definitely no. But it was not the prince. The operator informed her it was an urgent call from New York.

"Yes?" She cradled the receiver, wondering who knew she was in Spain.

"Lara? Lara, is that you? Oh, God! This is such a terrible connection." It was a woman's voice, her tone bordering on hysterical.

"Who is this?" Lara asked sharply. "God! Can't you hear me? Goddamn it -- this is Cass." A pause, then, "Lara, something terrible has happened. Margaret's been shot. They've shot Margaret."

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Users Review

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