

Delaney's Desert Sheikh and A Little Dare (Bestseller)

By Brenda Jackson

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Two classic Westmoreland novels from *New York Times bestselling author Brenda Jackson*

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Editorial Review

About the Author
Brenda Jackson is a *New York Times* bestselling author of more than one hundred romance titles. Brenda lives in Jacksonville, Florida, and divides her time between family, writing and traveling. Email Brenda at authorbrendajackson@gmail.com or visit her on her website at brendajackson.net.

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This was the first time he had been between a pair of legs and not gotten the satisfaction he wanted.

Jamal Ari Yasir drew in a deep, calming breath as he slid his body from underneath the table. Standing, he wiped the sweat from his brow. After an entire hour he still hadn't been able to stop the table from wobbling.

"I'm a sheikh and not a repairman, after all," he said with a degree of frustration, tossing the handyman tools back in the box where they belonged. He had come to the cabin to get some rest, but the only thing he was getting was bored.

And it was only the second day. He had twenty-eight to go.

He wasn't used to doing nothing. In his country a man's worth was measured by what he accomplished each day. Most of his people worked from sunup to sundown, not because they had to, but because they were accustomed to doing so for the good of Tahran. And although he was the son of one of the most influential sheikhs in the world, he had been required from birth to work just as hard as the people he served.

Over the past three months he had represented his country as a negotiator in a crucial business deal that also involved other nations surrounding Tahran. When the proceedings ended with all parties satisfied, he had felt the need to escape and find solitude to rest his world-weary mind and body.

The sound of a slamming car door caught Jamal's attention, and he immediately wondered who it could be. He knew it wasn't Philip, his former college roommate from Harvard, who had graciously offered him the use of the cabin. Philip had recently married and was somewhere in the Caribbean enjoying a two-week honeymoon.

Jamal headed toward the living room, his curiosity piqued. No one would make the turnoff from the major highway unless they knew a cabin was there—five miles back, deep in the woods. Walking over to the window, he looked out, drawing in a deep breath. Mesmerized. Hypnotized. Suddenly consumed with lust of the worst kind.

An African-American woman had gotten out of a late-model car and was bending over, taking something out of the trunk. All he could see was her backside but that was enough. He doubted he could handle anything else right now.

The pair of shorts she wore stretched tightly across the sexiest bottom he had ever seen—and during his thirty-four years he had seen plenty. But never like this and never this generous. And definitely never this well-defined and proportioned. What he was looking at was a great piece of art with all the right curves and angles.

Without very much effort, he could imagine her backside pressed against his front as they slept in a spoon position. A smile curved his lips. But who would be able to sleep cuddled next to a body like hers? His gaze moved to her thighs. They were shapely, firm and perfectly contoured.

For an unconscious moment he stood rooted in place, gazing at her through the window. Reason jolted his lust-filled mind when she pulled out one large piece of luggage and a smaller piece. He frowned, then decided he would worry about the implications of the luggage later. He wanted to see the rest of her for now.

No sooner had that thought crossed his mind than she closed the trunk and turned around. It took only a split second for heat to course through his body, and he registered that she was simply gorgeous. Strikingly beautiful.

As she continued to toy with her luggage, his gaze began toying with her, starting at the top. She had curly, dark brown hair that tumbled around her honey-brown face and shoulders, giving her a brazenly sexy look. She had a nicely rounded chin and a beautifully shaped mouth.

He reluctantly moved his gaze away from her mouth and forged a path downward past the smooth column of her throat to her high round breasts, then lower, settling on her great-looking legs.

The woman was one alluring package.

Jamal shook his head, feeling a deep surge of regret that she had obviously come to the wrong cabin. Deciding he had seen enough for one day—not sure his hormones could handle seeing much more—he moved away from the window.

Opening the door, he stepped outside onto the porch. He was tempted to ask if he could have his way with her—once, maybe twice—before she left. Instead he leaned in the doorway and inquired in a friendly yet hot-and-bothered voice, "May I help you?"

Delaney Westmoreland jerked up her head, startled. Her heart began racing as she stared at the man standing on the porch, casually leaning in the doorway. And what a man he was. If any man could be described as beautiful, it would be him. The late-afternoon sun brought out the rich caramel coloring of his skin, giving true meaning to the description of tall, dark and handsome. Her experience was limited when it came to men, but it didn't take a rocket scientist to know this man was sexy as sin. This man would cause a girl to drool even with a dry mouth.

Amazing.

He was tall, probably six foot three, and was wearing a pair of European-tailored trousers and an expensive-looking white shirt. To her way of thinking he was dressed completely out of sync with his surroundings.

Not that she was complaining, mind you.

His hair, straight black and thick, barely touched the collar of his shirt, and dark piercing eyes that appeared alert and intelligent were trained on her, just as her gaze was trained on him. She blinked once, twice, to make sure he was real. When she was certain that he was, she forced her sanity to return and asked in a level yet slightly strained voice, "Who are you?"

A moment of silence passed between them before he responded. "I should be asking you that question." He

moved away from the doorway and stepped off the porch.

Feeling breathless but trying like hell not to show it, Delaney kept her eyes steady as he approached. After all, he was a stranger, and there was a good chance the two of them were all alone in the middle of nowhere. She ignored the foolish part of her mind that said, There's nothing worse than not taking advantage of a good-looking opportunity.

Instead, she gave in to the more cautious side of her mind and said, "I'm Delaney Westmoreland and you're trespassing on private property."

The sexy-as-sin, make-you-drool man came to a stop in front of her, and when she tipped her head back to look up at him, a warm feeling coiled deep in her stomach. Up close he was even more beautiful.

"And I'm Jamal Ari Yasir. This place is owned by a good friend of mine, and I believe *you're* the one who's trespassing."

Delaney's eyes narrowed. She wondered if he really was a friend of Reggie as he claimed. Had her cousin forgotten he'd loaned this man the cabin when he'd offered it to her? "What's your friend's name?"

"Philip Dunbar."

"Philip Dunbar?" she asked, her voice dropping to a low, sexy timbre.

"Yes, you know him?"

She nodded. "Yes. Philip and my cousin, Reggie, were business partners at one time. Reggie is the one who offered me the use of the cabin. I'd forgotten he and Philip had joint ownership to this place."

"You've been here before?"

"Yes, once before. What about you?"

Jamal shook his head and smiled. "This is my first visit."

His smile made Delaney's breath catch in her throat. And his eyes were trained on her again, watching her closely. She didn't like being under the scope of his penetrating stare. "Do you have to stare at me like that?" she snapped.

His right eyebrow went up. "I wasn't aware I was staring."

"Well, you are." Her eyes narrowed at him. "And where are you from, anyway? You don't look American."

His lips lifted into a grin. "I'm not. I'm from the Middle East. A small country called Tahran. Ever heard of it?"

"No, but then geography wasn't my best subject. You speak our language quite well for a foreigner."

He shrugged. "English was one of the subjects I was taught at an early age, and then I came to this country at eighteen to attend Harvard."

"You're a graduate of Harvard?" she asked.

"Yes."

"And what do you do for a living?" she asked, wondering if perhaps he worked in some capacity for the federal government.

Jamal crossed his arms over his chest, thinking that Western women enjoyed asking a lot of questions. "I help my father take care of my people."

"Your people?"

"Yes, *my* people. I'm a sheikh, and the prince of Tah-ran. My father is the amir."

Delaney knew amir was just another way of referring to a king. "If you're the son of a king then what are you doing here? Although this is a nice place, I'd think as a prince you could do better."

Jamal frowned. "I could if I chose to do so, but Philip offered me the use of this cabin in friendship. It would have been rude of me not to accept, especially since he knew I wanted to be in seclusion for a while. Whenever it's known that I'm in your country, the press usually hounds me. He thought a month here is just what I needed."

"A month?"

"Yes. And how long had you planned to stay?"

"A month, too."

His eyebrow arched. "Well, we both know that being here together is impossible, so I'll be glad to put your luggage back in your car."

Delaney placed her hands on her hips. "And why should I be the one who has to leave?"

"Because I was here first."

He had a point, though it was one she decided not to give him. "But you can afford to go someplace else. I can't. Reggie gave me a month of rest and relaxation here as a graduation present."

"A graduation present?"

"Yes. I graduated from medical school last Friday. After eight years of nonstop studying, he thought a month here would do me good."

"Yes, I'm sure that it would have."

Delaney breathed a not-so-quiet sigh when she saw he was going to be difficult. "There's a democratic way to settle this."

"Is there?"

"Yes. Which do you prefer, flipping a coin or pulling straws?"

Her options made his lips twitch into an involuntary smile. "Neither. I suggest that you let me help you put your luggage back in the car."

Delaney drew in a deep, infuriated breath. How dare he think he could tell her what to do? She'd been the only girl with five older brothers and had discovered fairly early in life not to let anyone from the opposite sex push her around. She would handle him the same way she handled them. With complete stubbornness.

Placing her hands on her hips she met his gaze with the Westmoreland glare. "I am not leaving."

He didn't seem at all affected when he said, "Yes, you are."

"No, I'm not."

His jaw suddenly had the look of being chiseled from stone. "In my country women do what they are told."

Delaney flashed him a look of sheer irritation. "Well, welcome to America, *Your Highness.* In this country women have the right to speak their minds. We can even tell a man where to go."

Jamal's eyebrows shot up in confusion. "Where to go?"

"Yes, like go fly a kite, go take a leap or go to hell."

Jamal couldn't help but chuckle. It was apparent Del-aney Westmoreland was potently sassy. He had learned that American women didn't hesitate to let you know when they were upset about something. In his country women learned very early in life not to show their emotions. He decided to try another approach, one that would possibly appeal to her intelligence. "Be reasonable."

She glared at him, letting him know that approach wasn't going to work. "I *am* being reasonable, and right now a cabin on a lake for a month, rent free, is more than reasonable. It's a steal, a dream come true, a must have. Besides, you aren't the only one who needs to be in seclusion for a while."

Delaney immediately thought of her rather large family. Now that she had completed medical school, they assumed she was qualified to diagnose every ache and pain they had. She would never get any rest if they knew where to find her. Her parents knew how to reach her in case of an emergency and that was good enough. She loved her relations dearly but she was due for a break.

"Why are you in seclusion?"

She frowned. "It's personal."

Jamal couldn't help wondering if perhaps she was hiding from a jealous lover or even a husband. She wasn't wearing a wedding band, but then he knew from firsthand experience that some American women took off their rings when it suited them. "Are you married?"

"No, are you?" she responded crisply.

"Not yet," he murmured softly. "I'm expected to marry before my next birthday."

"Good for you, now please be a nice prince and take my luggage into the house. If I'm not mistaken, there are three bedrooms and all with connecting bathrooms, so it's plenty big enough and private enough for the both of us. I plan to do a lot of sleeping, so there will be days when you probably won't see me at all."

He stared at her. "And on those days when I do see you?"

Delaney shrugged. "Just pretend that you don't. However, if you find that difficult to do and feel things are getting a little bit too crowded around here to suit you, I'd completely understand if you left." She glanced around the yard. "By the way, where's your car?"

Jamal sighed, wondering how he could get her to leave. "My secretary has it," he responded drily. "He checked into a motel a few miles away from here, preferring to be close by just in case I needed anything."

Delaney lifted a cool eyebrow. "Must be nice getting the royal treatment."

He ignored her chill and responded, "It has its advantages. Asalum has been with me since the day I was born."

Delaney couldn't help but hear the deep affection in his voice. "Like I said, it must be nice."

"Are you sure you want to stay here?" His tone was slightly challenging as his black eyes held her dark brown ones.

The question, spoken in a deep, sexy voice, gave Delaney pause. No, she wasn't sure, but she knew for certain that she wasn't ready to leave; especially not after driving seven hours straight to get there. Maybe she would feel different after taking a shower and a very long nap.

She met Jamal's dark gaze and almost shuddered under its intensity. A shiver of desire rippled through her. She felt it now, just as she had when she'd first seen him standing on the porch. At twenty-five, she was mature enough to recognize there was such a thing as overactive hormones. But then, she was also mature enough to know how to control them and not yield to temptation. Getting involved with a male chauvinist prince was the last thing she wanted, and she hoped getting involved with her was the last thing he wanted, as well.

She met his gaze and lifted her chin in a defiant stance and said, "I'm staying."

The woman was as stubborn as they came, Jamal thought as he leaned against the doorjamb in the kitchen. He watched Delaney as she unpacked the groceries she had brought with her. When she finished she turned around. "Thanks for bringing in my luggage and those boxes."

He nodded as his gaze held hers. Once again he felt that sudden surge of lust that made his body tighten and knew she had noticed his reaction. Nervously she licked her lips as she dragged her eyes away from his. It was obvious that she was also aware of the strong sexual chemistry arcing between them.

"If you're having second thoughts about staying…"

Her eyes filled with the fire he was getting used to.

"Forget it."

"Remember it was your decision," he said evenly.

"I'll remember." She walked over to him and glared up at him. "And I would suggest that you don't get any ideas about trying to do anything underhanded to run me off. I'll leave when I get ready to leave and not before."

Jamal thought that the angrier she got the more beautiful she became. "I'm too much of a gentleman to behave in such a manner."

"Good. I'll take your word on that." She turned to leave the room.

He watched the sway of Delaney's hips until she was no longer in sight. His nostrils flared in response to the enticing feminine scent she had left behind, and the primitive sultan male in him released a low growl.

One thing was for certain; he would not be getting bored again anytime soon.

Users Review

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