



## Untamed Italian, Blackmailed Innocent (Harlequin Presents, #2911)

*Jacqueline Baird*

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No woman has ever shunned wicked Italian tycoon Zac Delucca! But sweet, studious Sally is in a world of her own, looking after her sick mother. Little does she realize her unfocused disinterest is driving Zac's fury! Especially as her father is responsible for embezzling millions from his company.

There's a debt to be paid. Zac will offer Sally an ultimatum--become his mistress on demand or risk ruin! He's confident she'll make the right choice....

## **Untamed Italian, Blackmailed Innocent (Harlequin Presents, #2911) Details**

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## **From Reader Review Untamed Italian, Blackmailed Innocent (Harlequin Presents, #2911) for online ebook**

### **AgentScully says**

Featuring one of the stronger heroines in the HP line - if you cringe at spineless, overly self-sacrificing heroines, you will love Sally. She doesn't dissolve into a puddle of goo when the dark, handsome billionaire casts his roving eye on her. She doesn't jump to sacrifice herself for a cold, embezzling, louse of a father. The situation with Sally's mother was sad and it was understandable that she would have issues.

I liked the hero too. It was amusing to see a HP alpha billionaire hero get ignored for a change and have to work to capture the heroine's notice. His exasperation was kind of endearing. I enjoyed his ruthless pursuit and I also enjoyed that he came to see how wrong he was. He did suffer there for a while.

This is one of the steamier HP's I've read, with well written scenes. Zac and Sally had scorching chemistry together. My one complaint? The heroine doesn't say ILY until the epilogue, one year later. That's just too late for me - she married him, she should have said the words then. Other than that, this was a great HP read.

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### **Danielle The Book Huntress (Back to the Books) says**

This book was a delightful breath of fresh air for the current mode of Harlequin Presents. I loved how resistant Sally was to Zac. She saw him and dismissed him on first glance because he wasn't her first priority!! How nice. She didn't become a drooling, melting pile of female flesh because of his unbelievable appeal (rolling eyes). Yes, he was attractive, and she was attracted to him, but she kept a good head on her shoulders when it came to him, for the most part.

I like mutuality in a romance. I like seeing the hero and heroine are mutually engaged, and their affections are even on both sides. In real life, the sad thing is that one person seems to love more than the other. I realize this. So, I tend to not go for that scenario in romances.

Unfortunately, I've read way too many where the man holds all the sexual and emotional power in the relationship. It bugs me. Why should the heroine always be the one to concede, to give in, to change for love? Why shouldn't the hero have to work for her? This was a nice change for this reader.

Zac had to work hard to get Sally. He did some less than ethical things, and made some bad assumptions, and he had to eat some crow, more than once. And the great thing was that Sally wasn't out to treat him poorly or out to use and abuse him. She was just trying to deal with the bad situation she had with her ailing mother and loser, lowdown father. Yes, sometimes women do have more important things to deal with than their sex life or love life, or men.

I think Ms. Baird did a great job writing this story. She showed Sally to be a normal woman, with desires and needs. But Sally was a strong woman who had priorities, and those priorities didn't involve chasing men, casual sex, or being someone's sex toy. Zac gave her an ultimatum, and that gave her an excuse to give into him, because she was very attracted to him. But, before that, she did resist him pretty well, because she didn't want the kind of relationship he was offering. Bravo to her. She didn't give her up needs and goals for some

less than satisfactory relationship with a guy who didn't love her. Some might not like that she waited so long to say, "I love you." But it completely made sense, based on the baggage she had with her parents, how her father was a serial adulterer who completely took advantage of her mother, his lovelorn wife. She'd be pretty silly to fall easily for a seemingly inconstant male with her background, in my opinion. And I liked how Zac might have been the typical Italian sex god hero, but in some ways he wasn't. He'd been celibate for almost a year, he worked hard to get what he had, he was able to realize when he was wrong, and make up and apologize for it. And he was willing to take Sally on her terms until she was emotionally able to give him more. I quite liked him for those reasons. I enjoyed their separation (I guess it's my sadistic streak), because Sally was trying to go and find out what life was like without carrying the baggage of her parents on her shoulders. I liked that Zac was the one who was pining. (Yes, I guess I am sadistic. It was so refreshing for me).

I honestly hope to see more books like this in the Harlequin Presents line. With rational, educated, independent women who are not ruled by their libido, and who won't settle for less than they deserve for some 'hot' guy who makes me as a reader question if he's worthwhile for her in the end.

This was a nice book, and such a palate cleaner after a prior Harlequin Presents, who got everything wrong with the sexual/emotional dynamic for this reader.

Overall rating: **4.5 out of 5.0 stars. A for Effort, Ms. Baird.**

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### **Naksed says**

Cheesy but satisfying.

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### **Cecilia says**

Heroine dislikes hero on sight, he decides she's some kind of gold-digging slut. He blackmails her into bed. She acknowledges that he is basically paying her father to have sex with her. They have sex. He says things like "Take off all your clothes or I'll take them off for you" and "You agreed to be my mistress, and the only choice you have left is the one I just gave you". Rather than revolted (my reaction), she's apparently without any qualms, and strips down and pirouettes. After stupendous sex (a 'one-way ticket to the stars'), she's saying things 'teasingly' and commenting that he's a 'magnificent lover' and she only wishes she had known what she was missing, so she hadn't waited so long.' Cliches like the woman commenting on the spectacular view, and the man, gazing at her, agreeing, create glaringly obvious signposts to the romance, but instead of establishing a convincing positive relationship, they just bore.

A few romps in the sack and one dinner date after the initial blackmail conversation, and she's getting chest pains (at least, I think that's what "pain pierced like a knife in her heart" means) from a bottle of perfume and a black hairband in his medicine cabinet. Because of course she's in love. And of course he must be cheating on her. The keen intellect that got her the job as a researcher at the British Museum is thus frequently on display. /sarcasm. When she gives him a jealousy-fuelled lecture on his alley cat morals, he experiences a few moments of chagrin, but then remembers he has another woman in Milan, and shrugs it all off. Indiscriminate whoring is *so hawt*. But I'm too harsh, because of course he won't be able to do it with someone other than the heroine. And he'll be busy looking distracted and being insufferable to all of his

underlings. He's the *hero* - he's got conventions to fulfill! If he doesn't do those stereotypical things, how will we know he's in *looovvve*?

The sex-for-money element is so blatant and dealt with as if it's not problematic at all, the characters written so completely unattractively, the dialogue so clunkily (probably not a word), that this book is just leaving me with a sour taste in my mouth. I like Harlequin Presents - I like the tendency to be melodramatic and I often even enjoy the alpha-hero-who-has-to-learn-to-not-be-a-jerk, and I can tolerate a secret baby, but this book exemplifies the worst of what can happen when a laundry list of conventions are bundled together, without well-written characters and plot.

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### **Emily says**

Zac Delucca is used to getting everything he wants, rich and good looking, woman ordinarily throwing themselves at him has become part of his life. When he meets Sally Paxton, she not only ignores him but manages to put him in his place. With her father embezzling from his company, he finds a way to find leverage over her and try to convince her of becoming his mistress. Everything is going according to plan except Sally, who he just can't seem to do anything right about convincing his feelings for her.

I gave this a 3.75 had a lot of really good moments and I was captivated, but sometimes Zac was a bit too brutish.

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### **Kaycee ❤️? says**

Wow. It wasn't what I expected at all in a way, and it exceeded all my expectations that made me giddy. I mean this book sure did get my blood pumping. And I rarely give a 5 stars to an HP, but this one surely deserved one. This had everything which makes you enjoy reading a Harlequin. Everything OTT! OTT situations. An alpha douchebag of a hero. A misunderstood heroine. Lots of angst, sex, passion, sadness, happiness, hotness, jealousy, groveling... and the list goes on. To say that this book hit all the right spot for me would be an understatement. Everything just worked. I won't go into the whole summary of the story since the blurb is pretty spot on. Let me tell you instead why I loved this book.

Zac. \*sigh\* He is an extremely broody and dominant Alpha male who was very bossy and possessive. And he wanted Sally the first time he saw her and was so sure that she will going to be his After all, Ms. Paxton is nothing more than a cold-hearted, manipulative and spoiled money-digger! And besides Every woman wants a chance to be with him but Sally turned him down flat from the get-go, he's beyond shocked and it completely unsettles him and had him tied in knots. It was nice to see a heroine who didn't melt and go-gaga over the hero the first time she saw him. Yep, you heard it! He had to work hard to get Sally and it was intriguing to see what he would do. He was obviously torn from day one, which is something I love. He found himself unexpectedly jealous with her friend and boss. And it was nice to see Zac struggles to hold his defense against the woman who has, despite his best efforts, found her way into his heart.

Ms. Baird did a great job writing about the heroine Sally. She was one of the best heroines I've ever had the pleasure to read about. I'm a huge sucker for a feisty, smart, independent, strong and isn't afraid to stand up for herself and speak what's on her mind, and she embodied that sentiment perfectly. She easily admitted

how sexy and appealing Zac was. But does Sally fall for his looks, wealth and facade? Hell no. She crushes his play. Hard. And I loved that despite her attraction to Zac she didn't cave and give in. She held her ground and made him work for every little of her time. Because she's worth it. She wasn't perfect though; she had her moments, like any other female leads out there, but what made her different from them was the way she handled all that was thrown at her. She never crumbles under the weight of her problems, she faces them head on.

**EXPLOSIVE. CHAOTIC. PASSIONATE.** Their relationship between Zac and Sally was all that and more. The chemistry between them was white-hot, beyond intense and the fast building sexual tension was completely addictive. I loved how Sally didn't cave in and almost ignored him the whole time when they went out for lunch for the first time. It was refreshing to see a hero that so full of himself and thought that he was god gift to women felt ignored and stumped by a woman for the first time. I also loved the fact that she set a ground rules before agreeing to be his mistress. She didn't give her up needs and goals for some less than satisfactory relationship with a guy who didn't love her. Zac has no qualms about blackmailing her into becoming his mistress, treated her like a gold digging whore at times and said some hurtful words to her but when he finally fell? Oh goody. Nothing hotter than a man that knows how to give a good grovel. It was a nice change to see the hero pining for the heroine instead of the usual "heroine pining for the hero". Another thing I enjoyed about this book was the dual POV. I got to spend time in both Sally and Zac's heads. Of course, I'd rather be in Zac's than hers but I'm glad to see things from both their perspective.

Overall, **Untamed Italian, Blackmailed Innocent** was one of the best HP books I've ever read. And I loved every single word, every heartbreak, funny, and sexy minute of it. I was genuinely happy for both of them and glad that they got their much deserved happy-ever-after. And I would looooved a longer epilogue (probably another hundred pages long). \*sigh\* I just didn't want to let them go.

### **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!**

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#### **Jacqueline says**

I enjoyed this one. It was well written. The plot made sense. All motivations were explained. The characterizations of the hero and heroine were well done. I liked the way the heroine didn't fall into a pile of mush on the floor at the sight of the hero. It was great to see a HP hero have to work to get the heroine to notice him. I particularly enjoyed the scene where he sat down and talked to himself after he found out she was not living off her father but was instead educated and employed. He's like 'what kind of idiot was I to jump to the conclusion that she was a rich bimbo without any proof?' I kind of thought that was a nod to HP readers who always mention such idiocy in reviews.

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#### **seton says**

I mostly liked this story because it's one of the those books where the heroine is oblivious to the hero while the hero had the hots for the heroine on sight.

The hero does blackmail the heroine for sex but he also soon learns the error of his ways. I liked the line that

goes something like 'normally Zac is 6"4' but he felt like 2 inch tall' after an encounter with the heroine.

The sensuality level is high for a HP since the H/H engage in a lot of sex. About Miranda-Lee-level sensuality for those who read her books.

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### **Roksana says**

I was in for some really easy read and even though the "blackmailed in the title" should put me off, I just wanted some escapism and not to worry about anything for the duration of the book and I was for a bit of a shock In comparison to many good reviews, I discover how my view was different from the others!

For starters... what Hero would blackmail an innocent woman to have sex with him to pay the debts of her father whom he has stolen from the Heroes company? Basically, her father pimped her to become the Heroes w\*\*re and the Hero knew exactly what was the situation with the heroine's sick mother and that she needs money to keep her in care and he took advantage of it and had no care to question his immoral actions? I mean how can you romanticise this kind of behaviour in a man? Any decent man would never allow an innocent woman to become his sex slave for his "back and call" but would try to find a different solution that is morally acceptable in the social standings! There were few occasions that he was close to physically harming her and even said when she struck him for verbally abusing her (calling her a prostitute not in a nice way) that "she was lucky she was not a man as she would be cold by now" I am not saying she should be heating him on the face, but he was really abusive to her and she would just stand there and allow the abuse to continue? The fact he was so close harming her physically is enough reason to make me shiver! The whole fact he was so callused to the extreme in some instances and so prejudice, not even considering looking for the actual facts..speak about his lack of judgement and moral compass and he is an international businessman? Where are his ethical values? To treat people like commodities is not ideal romantic hero material...I am just disappointed the author used this plot device in the 21 century to promote the imbalance of power and gender inequality! No wonder we still have sexual harassments and alike in today's world! Look no further, its here in this book and its sold for profit!

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### **Becky says**

Loved heroine's spunk and integrity....for once the usually tired trope of a nearly 26 year old virgin had an explanation within the context of the plot. I star my HPs on their own scale, for me blackmail sex is not legitimate anywhere but an HP, where I love it, especially when the hero experiences real remorse (preferably because of his feelings for heroine, not because of her virginity). Story wasn't perfect (jerk of a father rather one dimensional) but had some very original elements that gave it an extra star (hero had to work for heroine's feelings, heroine did not succumb to the usual threats to marry or else lose custody). I enjoyed the hero's POV and the courtship elements to their relationship.

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### **Leona says**

I loved this book. I very rarely give a 5 star to an HP, but this book is a definite 5 star read! The author did a great job of building tension and chemistry between two very strong likable characters. I liked that the heroine was well educated, had a great career and was self sufficient. I loved that the hero was head over

heels in lust and had a "take no prisoners" attitude! It was refreshing to see a relationship built from more than just sex and above all a relationship that actually grows. The author gave us enough insight into their past to justify their actions, emotions and decisions. So you never felt the need to throttle either one. (LOL) Everything just clicked.

This is my first Jacqueline Bard novel and I will search out more books from this author. It is a great, fun read!

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### **Megzy says**

4.5 stars

I loved the lead characters. Sally is the kind of leading woman I would love to see more of. She was genuine, smart, well educated, independent, compassionate, beautiful inside and out. A real shining example of what we expect from a modern age girl.

The story had a good pace; it allowed us to get to know the characters and sympathize with them. Having read few of Baird's other stories, there could have been a bit more of the wonderful gut ranching emotions I have seen worked in other stories.

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### **Penny Watson says**

This was delightful! The hero was totally stymied by the heroine's disinterest in him. It knocked him down a few pegs and ignited a fire. Hee hee! She was great...never cut her cheating, lying, thieving dad a break. Yay! And I loved the grovel scene at the end where the hero went on and on and on telling her how much he loved her and needed her and couldn't stop thinking about her...and she's all...meh, not interested. Hilarious!

Of course, eventually, we have HEA and baby and she FINALLY admits she loves him. But still, this is not quite the typical HP I've been reading lately, and I found it to be a breath of fresh air.

Excellent!

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### **StMargarets says**

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Hero first thinks the h is the father's mistress, then he thinks she's an experienced

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### **Vintage says**

This was a re-read.

What a hoot.

Sally gives some of the best smackdowns to our poor, arrogant and blackmailing sex-for-money billionaire hero as her loins quiver in longing and other lady parts expand and contract, a stunt few Harley heroines are capable of doing. Okay, yuck.

If you are sick of spineless heroines that roll over, then take a seat.

Who should die? The h's disgusting excuse of a father. Sorry, but the dweeby cancer surviving, weak heart, paraplegic mother that condones her husband's cheating should not be far behind. (view spoiler) That was heartless, but I really dislike enabling women even when they are fictional.

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