

TILLY BAGSHAWE

*Fame*

HARPER

This novel is entirely a work of fiction.  
The names, characters and incidents portrayed in it are  
the work of the author's imagination. Any resemblance to  
actual persons, living or dead, events or localities is  
entirely coincidental.

*Harper*  
An imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers  
77-85 Fulham Palace Road,  
Hammersmith, London W6 8JB

[www.harpercollins.co.uk](http://www.harpercollins.co.uk)

A Paperback Original 2011

1

Copyright © Tilly Bagshawe 2011

Tilly Bagshawe asserts the moral right to  
be identified as the author of this work

A catalogue record for this book  
is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-0-00-732652-5

Set in Meridien by Palimpsest Book Production Limited,  
Falkirk, Stirlingshire

Printed and bound in Great Britain by  
Clays Ltd, St Ives plc

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be  
reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted,  
in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical,  
photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior  
permission of the publishers.

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not,  
by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out or  
otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent  
in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it  
is published and without a similar condition including this  
condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.



**Mixed Sources**

Product group from well-managed  
forests and other controlled sources  
[www.fsc.org](http://www.fsc.org) Cert no. SW-COC-001806  
© 1996 Forest Stewardship Council

(FSC logo incorporating Cert. No. SW-COC-1806)  
FSC is a non-profit international organisation established  
to promote the responsible management of the world's forests.  
Products carrying the FSC label are independently certified  
to assure consumers that they come from forests that are managed  
to meet the social, economic and ecological needs  
of present and future generations.

Find out more about HarperCollins and the environment at  
[www.harpercollins.co.uk/green](http://www.harpercollins.co.uk/green)

*Heathcliff shall never know how I love him: and that, not because he's handsome, Nelly, but because he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same.*

*Emily Brontë, Wuthering Heights*

*You can take all the sincerity in Hollywood, place it in the navel of a fruit fly and still have room enough for three caraway seeds and a producer's heart.*

*Fred Allen*

## PART ONE

## PROLOGUE

At the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood, the Eighty-Fifth Academy Awards were about to get under way.

In the hushed luxury of the auditorium, opposite the vast, 130-foot stage, designed by David Rockwell especially with the Oscars in mind, two men took their seats. Tonight, their bitter feud would be settled for better or worse. It would be settled in front of their peers, the three thousand of Hollywood's chosen sons and daughters who'd been invited to tonight's ceremony. It would be settled in front of the estimated sixty million Americans expected to tune in to the broadcast at home, as well as the hundreds more millions who would catch the Oscars around the globe. For one of the men, tonight would be a victory so sweet he knew he would still be able to taste it on his deathbed. For the other, it would be a defeat so catastrophic, he would never recover.

As the ceremony dragged on interminably – *Best Live Action Short; Best Sound Mixing; Did anybody in the universe care?* – both men kept their eyes fixed straight ahead, ignoring the smiles of well-wishers as totally as they ignored the pruriently

intrusive television cameras constantly scanning their features for a reaction.

Disappointment.

Hope.

Humour.

Despair.

The cameras got nothing. Neither of the two men had got to where they were today by giving away their emotions. Certainly not for free.

At last, after almost three long hours of torture, the moment arrived. Martin Scorsese was standing at the podium, a crisp white envelope in his hand. He gave a short, pre-prepared speech. Neither of the men heard a word of it. Behind his diminutive Italian frame, a montage of images flashed across an enormous screen, clips from the year's most critically acclaimed pictures. To the two men, they were nothing but shapes and colours.

*I hate you,* thought one.

*I hope you rot in hell,* thought the other.

'And the Academy Award for Best Picture goes to . . .'

## CHAPTER ONE

‘I’m not asking you, Sabrina, I’m telling you. You *have* to take this part.’

Sabrina Leon looked at her manager with queenly disdain. Ed Steiner was fat, balding and past his prime (if he’d ever had a prime). In cheap grey suit trousers and a white shirt with spreading sweat patches under each arm, he looked more like a used-car salesman than a Hollywood player. He also had an intensely irritating, domineering manner. Sabrina did not ‘have’ to take the part. She did not ‘have’ to do anything. *I’m the fucking star here*, she thought defiantly. *I headlined in three Destroyers movies. Three! That’s Destroyers, the most successful action franchise of all time. You work for me, remember?*

Ignoring Ed, Sabrina got to her feet and walked across the room to the French windows. Outside her room, a lush, private garden exploded with colour and scent. Bright orange, spiky ginger flowers fought for space with more traditional roses in white and yellow, and orange and lemon trees groaned with fruit beneath the perfectly blue, cloudless California sky. Then there were the views. The house was built at the top of a steep canyon, so even from the ground

floor they were spectacular, across the rooftops of the exclusive Malibu Colony, home to some of Hollywood's biggest, wealthiest stars, and beyond to the endless, shimmering blue of the Pacific Ocean. If it weren't for the resolutely hospital-like furnishings in all the rooms – white metal beds, uncomfortable, hard-backed chairs – you could almost imagine you were in a junior suite at the Four Seasons, and not locked up like a prisoner at Revivals, the infamous \$2,000-a-night rehab of choice for burned-out Young Hollywood.

It had been Ed Steiner who had forced Sabrina Leon to check herself into Revivals. Two weeks ago, Ed had driven round to his client's mansion off Benedict Canyon at eight in the morning, packed an overnight bag while she watched, and frog-marched Sabrina into his shining new Mercedes E-Class convertible.

'This is ridiculous, Ed,' she'd protested. Still in her party clothes from the night before, a black leather Dolce & Gabbana minidress and sky-high Jonathan Kelsey stilettos, with heavy black eye make-up smudged around her eyes, Sabrina looked even more desirable and vixen-like than the tabloid caricatures that were wrecking her career. 'I'm not an addict. There's nothing wrong with me.'

'Grow up, Sabrina,' Ed Steiner snapped. 'This is not about you. It's about your career. Your image. Or at least what's left of it. How many ratzies saw you staggering out of Bardot last night looking like *that*?'

'Looking like what?' Sabrina bristled, her sultry, almond-shaped eyes narrowing into slits, like a cat about to pounce. 'Looking sexy, you mean? I thought looking sexy was part of my job.'

Ed fought back the urge to slap his truculent, twenty-two-year-old client across her spoiled, heartbreakingly sensual face. Sabrina knew full well she had no business being in that club

last night, or any club for that matter. She could be foolish, and reckless, but she wasn't stupid. He started the engine.

'Right now your job is to look contrite,' he said crossly. 'You are deeply sorry for your behaviour, for what you said to Tarik Tyler, you are addressing your problems, you are asking for privacy while you heal during this difficult time, yadda yadda yadda. You know the drill as well as I do, kid, so do us both a favour and quit playing dumb, OK?' He glanced over to the passenger seat. 'What the fuck is that?'

In the outside zip-up pocket of the overnight bag, a bottle top was clearly visible. Pulling it out, Ed Steiner found himself clutching a half-drunk bottle of Jack Daniel's.

Sabrina was unapologetic. 'Helps me sleep.'

'You think this is funny?'

'Oh, c'mon, Ed, give me a break. Rehab's boring. I'm not gonna get through it without a drink.'

'You think you're Marianne Faithfull or something?' To Sabrina's consternation, Ed flung the bottle into the rosemary bushes that lined her driveway. 'You think people are gonna forgive you this bullshit because it's so *rock 'n' roll*? Well, let me tell you something, Sabrina: they won't. Not this time. You are *this close* to being finished in this town.' He held up his thumb and forefinger, waving them inches from Sabrina's face. '*This close*. Now put your fucking seatbelt on.'

Sabrina yawned defiantly, but she buckled up anyway, slipping on a pair of Oliver Peoples aviators to shield her eyes from the sun's early morning glare. Outwardly, she continued to play the rebel – it was all she knew how to do. Inside, however, she felt her stomach flip over, a combination of last night's excessive alcohol consumption on an empty stomach and visceral, gut-wrenching fear.

What if Ed was right?

What if she really could lose it all?

*No. I can't. I won't let it happen. If I have to go back to my life before, I'll kill myself.*

The headlines of Sabrina Leon's rags-to-riches, *True Hollywood Story* were familiar to everyone in America. Homeless kid from Fresno gets plucked from obscurity by big-shot Hollywood producer Tarik Tyler, becomes a mega-star thanks to her lead role in Tyler's *Destroyers* movies, and slides spectacularly off the rails.

*Snore.*

No one was more bored by Sabrina's past than Sabrina, as she'd made patently clear in Revivals' group therapy sessions.

'Hi, I'm Amy.' A shy, middle-aged woman in a drab knitted cardigan introduced herself. 'I'm here for alcoholism and crystal meth. I pledge confidentiality and respect to the group.'

'I'm John, I'm here for cocaine. I pledge confidentiality and respect.'

'Hi, I'm Lisa, I'm an alcoholic. I pledge respect to the group.'

It was Sabrina's turn. 'What?' She looked around her accusingly. 'Oh, come on. You all know who I am.'

'Even so,' said the therapist gently, 'we'd like you to introduce yourself to the group. As a *person*.'

'Oh, "as a *person*,"' Sabrina mimicked sarcastically. 'As opposed to what? A dog?'

No one laughed.

'Jesus, OK, fine. I'm Sabrina. I'm here because my manager is an a-hole. Good enough?'

Things got worse when patients were asked to talk about their childhoods. Sabrina sighed petulantly. 'Dad was a junkie, Mom was a whore, the children's homes sucked. Next question.'

'I'm sure there was more to it than that,' prodded the therapist.

‘Oh, sure. There were the assholes who tried to rape me,’ said Sabrina. ‘From twelve to fifteen I was on the streets. Poor little me, right? Except that it wasn’t poor me, because I got into theatre, and I got out. I got out because I’m talented. Because I’m different. Because I’m better.’

It was the first time Sabrina had expressed any real emotion in session. The therapist seized on it gratefully. ‘Better than who?’ she asked.

‘Better than *you*, lady. And better than the rest of these junkie sad sacks. I can’t believe you guys actually signed up for this piece-of-shit programme out of your own free will.’

Everyone knew that Sabrina Leon was not at Revivals by choice. That her manager, Ed Steiner, had staged an intervention as a last-ditch attempt to salvage her career.

Stumbling out of a Hollywood nightclub a few weeks ago, with a visible dusting of white powder on the tip of her perfect nose, Sabrina had lashed out at Tarik Tyler, the producer who’d discovered her and made her a star, calling him a ‘slave driver’. Tarik, who was black and whose great-grandmother had been a slave, took offence, as did the rest of the industry, who demanded that Sabrina should apologize. Sabrina refused, and a scandal of Mel Gibson-esque proportions erupted, with outrage spewing like lava across the blogosphere. *Access Hollywood* ran Sabrina’s feud with Tyler as their lead story, devoting three-quarters of their nightly entertainment roundup to a vox-pop of ‘celebrity reactions’ to Sabrina’s ingratitude, all of them suitably disgusted and appalled. Even Harry Greene, the famously reclusive producer of the hugely successful *Fraternity* movies, emerged from his self-imposed house arrest to brand Sabrina Leon ‘a graceless, racist brat’. In one, single, ill-judged night, the tide of public affection and goodwill that had swept Sabrina Leon to unprecedented box-office success – America loved a good rags-to-riches story

and Sabrina had been the ultimate poor girl made good – turned so suddenly, so violently and completely, it was as if her career had been swept away by a tsunami.

And when the tide finally receded, she'd washed up at Revivals.

'There's no need to be insulting,' chided the therapist.

*Isn't there?* thought Sabrina

She had to get out of this place.

Two weeks she'd been here now. It felt like two years, what with the early-morning starts, the gross, tasteless health food served at every meal, the boring, self-obsessed patients. All the faux emotion of the therapy sessions, the embarrassing over-sharing of feelings, the fucking hand-holding. It made Sabrina want to throw up. Rehab was such a cliché. And, according to Ed Steiner, she still had six weeks to go.

Now, turning back from the window, Sabrina glowered at her manager defiantly.

'I'm not working for free, Ed,' she announced bluntly. 'Not in a million fucking years.'

Ed Steiner sighed. He was used to spoiled, ungrateful actresses, but Sabrina Leon really took the cake. She ought to be on her knees, kissing his hand in gratitude. Here he was offering her a life-line – not just a role, but the *lead* role in Dorian Rasmirez's much-hyped remake of *Wuthering Heights* – at a time when she couldn't get cast in a fucking Doritos commercial. And she was bitching because Rasmirez wasn't going to pay her. *Why the hell should he? Dorian Rasmirez doesn't need you, you dumb bitch. You need him. Wake up and smell the coffee.*

'Yes you are,' he said robustly. 'I accepted on your behalf this morning.'

'Well you can damn well un-accept!' screamed Sabrina. 'I decide what roles I take, Ed. It's *my* life. *I* have control.'

‘Actually, according to the release you signed when you admitted yourself into the eight-week programme here, *I* have control. At least over your career and business decisions.’ He handed her a piece of paper. Sabrina glanced at it, balled it up in her fist and threw it to the ground.

‘And it’s a good job I do,’ said Ed, unfazed by this childish show of temper. ‘Let’s not go through this charade, OK, Sabrina? It’s boring, it’s bullshit, and you know I’m not buying it. You know as well as I do that you need this part. You *need* it. Right now no other director in Hollywood would piss on you if you were on fire. Sit down.’

Sabrina hesitated. In jeans and a long-sleeved navy-blue tee from Michael Stars, with no make-up on and her long hair pulled back in a ponytail, she looked about a thousand times prettier than she had the last time Ed had seen her. Healthier too, less scrawny, and with the glow restored to her naturally tawny, olive skin. *This place must be doing something right*, he thought. *All she needs is to lose the attitude.*

‘Sit,’ he repeated.

Sabrina sat.

‘Dorian Rasmirez has had his issues,’ he went on, ‘but he’s still a big name, and this is gonna be a big movie.’

Sabrina softened slightly. ‘When does it start shooting?’

‘May probably. Or June. They’re still scouting for locations.’

‘Locations?’ Sabrina pouted petulantly. A location shoot meant months away from LA, from the clubs and parties and excitement that had become her drug of choice. ‘What’s wrong with the back lot at Universal?’

‘Nothing,’ said Ed sarcastically, ‘except the fact that it’s not a Universal Picture. And it’s *Wuthering Heights*.’

Sabrina looked blank. She’d never been big on literature.

‘*Wuthering Heights*? One of the greatest classic novels of all

time? Cathy and Heathcliff? Set on wild, windswept moorland?' Ed shook his head despairingly. 'Never mind. The point is, it'll do you good to get out of Los Angeles for a while. Out of the public eye altogether, in fact. We issued your apology statement the day after you came in here, which may have helped a little. We'll probably do another one before you check out. But it's still a shit-storm out there. You need to disappear and you need to work. Come back in a year, healthy and happy and with a hit movie under your belt—'

'A year!' Sabrina interrupted. 'Are you out of your mind?'

Being away from the LA party scene was bad enough. But the thought of being out of the media glare for so long – of not having her picture taken or seeing her face in magazines – made Sabrina's heart race with panic. You might as well tell her she couldn't breathe, or eat. Without attention she would wither and die, like a sunflower locked in a cellar.

Ignoring her, Ed Steiner went on.

'I know they're filming some of it in Romania, at Dorian Rasmirez's Schloss. I'm told that's worth seeing,' he added, trying to strike a more cheerful note. 'Oh, and I didn't tell you the best part. It's not a hundred per cent confirmed yet, but it looks like Viorel Hudson's signing on as Heathcliff.'

Sabrina rolled her eyes. *That was the 'best part'? What was the worst part? Were they filming it naked in Siberia?* The one, the only, good thing about Dorian Rasmirez's offer was that it would be a vehicle for re-launching Sabrina back into the box-office big league. If Viorel Hudson was involved, she'd have to fight for top billing, and probably for the dressing-room mirror as well. Rumoured to be unimaginably vain, Viorel Hudson was probably the one man in Hollywood whose sex appeal, and arrogance, rivalled Sabrina's own. They had never met, but Sabrina knew instinctively that she would loathe Viorel Hudson.

Ed Steiner looked at his watch. 'I'd better go. I have a meeting at The Roosevelt in an hour.'

*Rub it in, why don't you?* thought Sabrina bitterly. *I have a meeting with a bunch of whining alcoholics and a 'speerchal' healer from Topanga Canyon whose last brain cell died in 1972.*

'I'll bike you over the script tomorrow. Give you something to do between sessions. How's it going, by the way? This place helping you at all?'

Serena smiled sweetly. 'Go fuck yourself, Ed.'

That night, staring at the ceiling in her hard, uncomfortable single bed, Sabrina hugged herself and said a silent prayer of thanks.

She'd played it cool with Ed, just as she played it cool with everyone. But she knew what a miracle Rasmirez's offer was. Dorian Rasmirez was one of the most respected directors in Hollywood. He'd have had actresses lining up to play the part of Cathy. Actresses whom the world wasn't unfairly branding a racist. But for some reason, Rasmirez had chosen her.

*Fate, she thought. I was born to succeed. It's my destiny.*

All Sabrina had to do now was to give the performance of her life. And to make sure she out-dazzled the smug, self-satisfied Viorel Hudson. *Still, she reassured herself, that shouldn't be too hard.* If all else failed, she could always seduce Hudson. Once Sabrina Leon slept with a man, her power over him was total.

Hollywood might have written her off. But Hollywood was wrong.

Sabrina Leon was on her way back.