

# **Wanton Angel**

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### **Other Books by Mia London**

Life To The Max

Perfect Seduction (Perfect, 1)

Perfect Surrender (Perfect, 2)

Beyond Lace (Hard Men of the Rockies, 4)

## Chapter One

People packed into the bar like canned sardines. The band played so loud, the fierce beat could be felt coming up through the floor. The vibe in the place was like a high-end frat party for all ages. Of course, Sixth Street oozed energy, period. Austin was the place to be during the South-by-Southwest music festival.

“This place is packed,” Stacey called out to her friends.

“And loud,” Jen said as she focused on the live band on the stage at the far side of the bar.

“Yeah! Just the kind a place we want to be in,” Piper said with a smile.

Piper Diamond, Jeneva Reese, and Stacey McCallum were friends since grade school. Close friends. They’d made the trip down to Austin for an extended weekend, planning to hit a few bars before meeting up with other Dallas friends for some more partying.

The women made their way to the bar and waited for an opening to order some drinks. Piper was the tallest, so she maneuvered closer and caught a bartender’s attention.

“What can I get you ladies?”

“Three Coronas, please.”

The bartender smiled and winked before spinning around to get her order. As she waited, Piper caught sight of a tall, dark-blond man watching the band. The scruff of his jaw gave him a slightly bad boy look, but his high-end attire told a different story. She liked the effect—all business Monday to Friday, but chill on the weekend.

“Here you are, ladies.” The bartender set the beers on the bar and wiggled a lime slice into each bottle.

“Thanks, cutie.” Piper set down some bills and handed the beers to her friends.

“C’mon, let’s go dance,” Jen suggested.

The trio wove through the crowd to the dance floor in time for the band to start another fast song. In the crush of people, movement was limited, but considering she had a beer in her hand, Piper didn’t mind. They danced through four more songs until the band announced they would be taking a short break.

“Wanna refill?” Stace called out to her friends.

They both nodded as Stace turned toward the bar to order another round. Piper found herself scanning the bar in search of the good-looking blond she saw earlier.

Her breath got lighter when she found him in the crowd, but this time his body faced her direction. Great freakin’ body with toned arm muscles and nicely rounded shoulders leading to a defined chest. He stood at least six-two, but maybe taller. When he looked to his friend, she could see his eyes for the first time. They were a fantastic green color and showed confidence, yet appeared caring. She could imagine staring into those eyes for hours.

Stace returned with their beers in hand, diverting her attention.

“Thanks.” Piper took a much-needed gulp to help cool her off and redirect her focus.

While they were talking, a short, beefy guy in a too-tight t-shirt walked by, blatantly eyeing Piper up and down.

“Hey,” he said, gave a single nod and a wink, and oh-so-slowly kept walking. Once he passed, she didn’t bother to hold back her obvious eye-roll.

“Going out with you, Piper, is never boring,” Jen leaned in to say.

Piper chuckled because she knew Jen was right.

Once the band started to play again, the women wended their way back to the dance floor.

“After this set, let’s go find Brenda and Rachel,” Stace said loudly so she could be heard over the music.

Jen nodded. Piper agreed, although deep inside she didn’t want to leave while she had that cute blond to scope out.

Distracted by her thoughts, it took Piper a few minutes to notice the guy who pushed up against her backside with his arms wide, trying to dance with her.

Piper circled away, putting some space between them. “Sorry, dude. Girls-only night tonight.”

He made a step toward her, reaching for her hips. “C’mon babe. Dance with me.”

Christ, he reeked of alcohol. She put her right forearm against his chest, but she was unable to put any more distance between them. The guy was as solid as a moose.

She looked him dead in the eyes. “I said *No*.” Her heart beat faster now.

The drunk just smiled, grabbing her and pulling her up flush to his body. His hand went south, cupping her ass cheek. She felt his other hand stroke up her back, pushing her forcefully to him. He ground his pelvis into her. She felt trapped.

“Hey! I said no! Now back off.” But despite her shoves against his chest, he was going nowhere. She glanced at Stace and Jen; both wore panicked looks on their faces. *Where were the bouncers?*

Then out of the blue, the cute blond guy captured the drunk guy by the shoulder and pulled him back. The drunk staggered, but remained standing.

“The lady said *No*,” he ground out.

“Stay the fuck out of it. This’s between me ’n her.” The drunk boldly took a step in Piper’s direction, grabbing her arm.

Before he could pull her close again, the blond delivered a right hook in the gut that had him doubled over in a fraction of a second. The guy grunted, clutched his stomach, and cursed loudly. A crowd began to form a circle around them.

Piper stood frozen. With eyes wide, she stared at her rescuer.

In a matter of moments, two burly bouncers appeared and grabbed the drunk by the upper arms, hauling him to the front door.

“Are you okay?” Jen spoke first.

She forced herself to focus on her friends. She turned to look at Jen and Stace, but no words came out. She gripped her hands to hide their trembling. Her heart pounded in her throat.

“Piper?” Stace’s brow furrowed.

“Do you need to sit down?” The man spoke in a gentle tone.

*Breathe. Think.* “I just need to go. Back to the hotel.”

“Okay, we’ll go with you,” Stace said as she took a swig of beer.

“No, y’all stay. I’ll be fine.”

“No, Piper, he could be out there waiting,” Jen said in earnest.

“I have my phone, plus the hotel isn’t that far from here.”

“I can walk you,” the man offered.

They all lifted their gazes to the man before them. He only looked at Piper, his stance relaxed and unflappable. Piper couldn’t say what it was exactly, maybe the energy, the confidence, he exuded, but she trusted him to walk her to their hotel. This unnerved her because she didn’t trust many people. Especially men.

Stace interjected. “No, that’s fine. We got her.” She reached for Piper’s hand and gave a little tug.

If the drunk was out there, it might be three against one, but he was too strong for even all three of them.

Piper stopped, keeping eye contact with just her friends, and took Jen’s hand. “It’s okay, Stace. Jen. He can walk me. If that guy *is* out there, I prefer this kind of bodyguard.” Piper jerked her head slightly back toward the tall blond and gave a reassuring smile.

“Are you sure?” Stace asked in a low tone.

“Yes, I’m sure. Have fun. Tell Brenda and Rachel I’ll see them tomorrow. I just wanna get outta here.”

Stace and Jen nodded. She hugged them goodbye and, clutching her purse, she navigated through the crowd to the front door, the blond right behind her.

She took a few steps onto the closed-off street and drew in a deep breath. She wrapped her arms around herself. Quickly, she scanned the crowded, lit street in search of any visible assholes. Nothing could be done about the invisible ones.

The blond came up beside her, genuine concern appearing in his eyes. “Are you alright?”

“I will be.” *Once the disgusting, creepy feeling crawling over my skin goes away.*

“Where’s your hotel?”

“Second Street. We need to go down a few blocks, then take a left.”

“Okay.” He scanned the street and they started their slow walk up Sixth Street. “By the way, I’m Scott Reid.” He held out a hand to her.

“Piper.” She shook his hand.

He raised an eyebrow. “No last name, Piper?” he said as the corner of his lips curled upward.

“No last name,” she echoed.

“So, just Piper?”

She nodded.

“Like Adele or Madonna?”

“That’s right.”

“Do you sing?”

A tiny laugh escaped unexpectedly. “Only in the shower,” she joked back.

“Well, you must be famous in some other way then. Are you an actress?”

Scott was successfully distracting her from the episode that took place moments ago in the bar and the tension that had built because of it. She felt her shoulders relax and the tightness in her chest ease.

“Nope.”

He tilted his head and leaned back, then he narrowed his eyes. “I’ve got it.” His eyes rounded. “You’re a roller derby queen.”

That made her laugh aloud. This guy not only had good looks, but also a great sense of humor. Piper was certain she made the right decision having Scott walk her back. Her mood was improving with each passing minute.

“*Former* roller derby queen,” she replied. “I’m retired. Now I serve as vice-president of the Women’s Flat Track Derby Association.”

His green eyes twinkled when he chuckled. The deep, rich sound awakened her body in a lighthearted way, and also felt oddly intimate. She couldn’t help but smile back, watching him crack up over their banter.

“Ya know, I think I might believe it, Madam Vice President.” He shook his head, looking down and grinning.

“So what do you do, Scott?” The question was out before she could stop it.

She never asked personal questions of men. Mainly because it didn’t matter since she was rarely around them long enough to *need* to know.

“I work for Baum Technologies in the operations department.”

“Nice. Good company.” They were a Fortune 1000 company, and Piper knew her company was trying to bring them on as a client.

She and Scott proceeded down the street a few blocks from her hotel, weaving through the party hoppers heading to their next event. Live music filled the air.

“How ‘bout you? What do you do, Piper?” he asked.

“I’m an Oracle database programmer.”

“Really?”

“You sound surprised.”

He held eye contact before he said, “Brains and good looks. You don’t strike me as someone who wants to be behind a computer all day. You strike me as—”

“As a *people person*?”

“Exactly.” He grinned. “For what company?”

“Can’t say.” She shrugged a shoulder nonchalantly.

“I see. You don’t give much away. Do you think I’m going to stalk you?” He grinned.

“Nah. You don’t look the type.”

As they approached her hotel, an inexplicable feeling came over her, like she didn’t want the night to end.

“Well, Piper Somebody who works as a programmer somewhere, it was really great to meet you. I hope I run into you again.” He gave her a smile. “Hopefully under better circumstances.”

“Yes. And thanks for what you did back there.”

He slipped his hands into his jeans pockets. “You’re welcome. Good night.” He spun around to head in the direction from where they came.

She bit the inside of her cheek in indecision. “Scott!”

He stopped and turned to face her.

“Do you have to go back right away?”

“No. I texted my friends when I left the bar.” He tipped his head slightly.

“Care to go for a walk on Town Lake?”

He smiled, and the way his face lit up made her heart jump. “Sure. That’d be good.”

After a short walk toward the lake, they came to a small rock retaining wall that ran along the length of sidewalk bordering the lake. Scott hopped down and held out his hand for her. She hesitated a brief moment before taking his hand and stepping down onto the sidewalk.

“You do pretty well in those heels.”

Her lips curved at him. As they walked, he continued to hold her hand. It didn’t bother her. Holding hands was a rather new sensation for her. And with Scott, she quite liked it.

In fact, the warmth from him traveled and wound up her in a subtle, sensual way. He exuded an assured, commanding persona that made her feel . . . safe. She hadn’t particularly felt that way around other men. It wasn’t that she’d felt unsafe; her partners were just *there*. The feeling she had around Scott was altogether different.

## Chapter Two

Scott's mind was in a whirl. Piper had completely blown him away in the span of a few brief moments.

He'd noticed her the moment she walked into the Sixth Street bar. A woman like her would be damn hard to miss. Tall, blonde hair that fell to the middle of her back, curvy body, and drop-dead gorgeous. She'd appeared to be having fun with her friends until some douchebag ruined it. Scott wondered where her boyfriend was because the likelihood she had a boyfriend was incredibly high. And that was precisely why he'd planned to walk her to her hotel, expecting nothing more. Now with her invitation, he couldn't stop wondering, because—God help him—he wanted to kiss her in the worst kind of way.

Only one way to know for sure.

“Piper, are you married? Or do you have a boyfriend?”

She paused and looked his way. Despite the darkness around them, the city lights cast an amazing glow on and around her, like an angel's halo. Even the world's best photographer couldn't have put her in a better light.

A sassy little grin crossed her face. With a shake of her head, she said, “No. I don't do the boyfriend-girlfriend thing.”

He raised his brow. That was last thing he expected her to say.

“Really?”

“Yes, really. Why do you ask?”

“Because from the moment you walked into that bar, I wanted nothing more than to kiss you.” Truthfully, desire made him want to devour her from head to toe. His cock stirred at the thought.

Her eyes turned a deeper shade of gray-blue, nearly impossible to detect in the dark, but he'd seen it. Her tongue glossed over her bottom lip.

“Is that all you wanted to do, Scott?”

*Fuck!*

He took a step closer and caught her face in his hands, her skin soft under his touch. He shook his head, knowing he was pushing past a point of no return.

He stroked his thumb over her bottom lip, and her lips relaxed. He closed the space between them and his lips latched onto hers. His tongue moved sinuously against hers as his fingers slid through her long silky hair. Her warm, soft mouth sapped the last ounce of control he deluded himself into thinking he had.

He tilted her head and kissed her deeper. Her moan and the feel of her hands tangling through his hair made him stone hard.

He pulled back, and resting his forehead to hers, he fought for a breath. When had his libido become so unruly? He wasn't a hormonal teenager. And less than an hour before, she'd been accosted at a bar! He cursed.

“What is it?” she asked.



He straightened to meet her gaze and dropped his hands, his brows pinching together. “I think we should stop. As much as I want to keep going, I need to stop.”

Her eyes grew round and her mouth curved into a beautiful smile. “This isn’t the eighteen hundreds, Scott. We’re both consenting adults.”

He heard the amusement in her voice, but that didn’t dissuade him. “C’mon. Let’s walk some more.”

He clasped her hand and wove his fingers between hers. He was still insanely aroused and wanted her so badly he could taste it. Still the one-night-stand thing wasn’t much his game.

“Where do you live, Piper?”

Ignoring the question, she said, “Look, Scott. I’m gonna be honest with you. I don’t reveal much about myself, and that’s just how I am. I have a vague idea of what’s going on in your head, but you don’t have to worry about it.” They stopped, and she stroked her hands over his chest. “We have the here-and-now, and the fact that we may never see each other again shouldn’t make the decision for us.”

He glanced down, running a hand through his hair.

She stepped closer. “I am wet from the kiss you just gave me, and I want nothing more than to continue what we started.”

His cock twitched. Her honesty floored him. The woman before him was smart, confident, gorgeous, and offering her sexy body to him for the night. What kind of a fool would he be to turn her down?

“Fuck, Piper.” With that, he wrapped his arm around her feminine waist, hauling her body into his. With his other hand, he cupped the back of her head before his lips claimed hers in a passionate, hungry kiss.

She stretched her arms to clasp his neck, pressing her luscious breasts into his chest. He groaned.

His hand slipped down her hip to cover her full, rounded ass, his large hand barely able to cup her cheek. She whimpered in his mouth.

His. Tonight she would be all his.