

The Italian's Captive Virgin

The story behind the story...

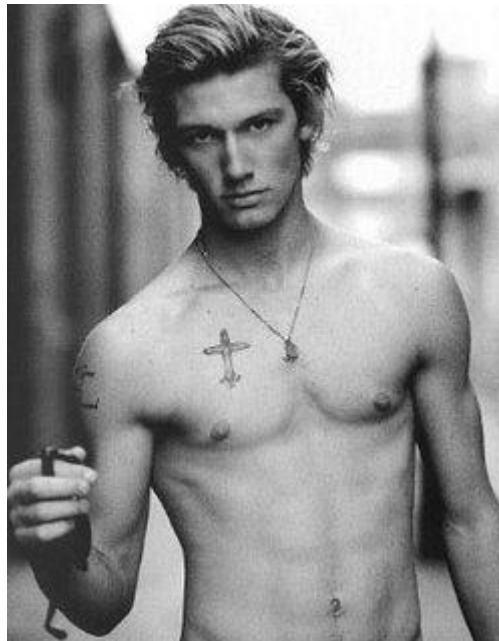
I really loved writing *The Italian's Captive Virgin*.

The idea came to me one lovely summer morning when I was driving home from dropping the children off at school. I was flicking through the radio stations, in exactly the way that drives all of my passengers mad, and found a programme on Radio 4 (which for anyone who lives outside the UK is a station aimed at middle-aged housewives and bored commuters, full of discussion and shipping forecasts and lovely soothing afternoon plays) in which a group of people who'd been involved in protesting against a major road being built recalled the eventful day when the earth movers finally rolled in. One of the contributors was a young girl with a lovely, musical voice who spoke with great passion about her loathing for the 'men in suits'—the wealthy bankers and corporate businessmen who were ultimately responsible for destroying the land she cared so much about.

To this day I don't know her name or what she looked like—but that passionate environmental protester was the inspiration for Anna Delafield.

Her hero and her nemesis was obviously going to be one of those inscrutable 'men in suits', but clearly Angelo Emiliani had to be so much more. I knew from the start that he would be utterly focused and terrifyingly ruthless... but that there would be very good reasons for him being like that. I also very clearly pictured him as being blond...

This was the first book I'd written where I wanted to have real faces on which to base my characters, and it took a long, long time to find the one that fitted Angelo. There was something missing in every gorgeous blond-haired, blue-eyed man I looked at—until I came across a picture of Alex Pettyfer.



At first glance all bets were off for one simple reason-- he's ridiculously young. But that problem was also the key; he embodied the hidden heart of Angelo's character, where his demons lay—in the youth he missed out on. Having a picture of teenage Alex Pettyfer above my desk as I worked reminded me

constantly of the lost boy in Angelo, and added a whole deeper layer to the story.

From that point onwards the story virtually wrote itself. (Or that's how it seems now...) I wrote the final pages on a snowy Friday afternoon in February—the day the children broke up from school for half term. That evening everything should have felt perfect; four inches of glorious snow on the ground, a week of freedom, a book finished, but as my husband opened a bottle of champagne I just felt like crying because I didn't want to say goodbye to Anna and Angelo.

The Music

As well as being the first time I'd used real people as 'faces' for my characters, this book also saw my first venture into putting together a playlist on my i-pod specifically with the book in mind. It worked so brilliantly for me in setting the mood and creating the world of the story that now I do it every time, and it's become an integral and essential part of my writing process. Some of the songs listed have no relevance beyond the personal, others, like Nina Simone singing 'I Put a Spell on You' found their way directly into the story. The Nickelback song, 'Figured You Out' was one I played constantly because it seemed to absolutely sum up the helpless, reluctant attraction between Angelo and Anna at the start... ('And I know who you are, It wasn't that hard, To figure you out....')

To listen to the songs which inspired me, click below.

Extract from the book

The boat was moving.

Throwing herself out of bed she stood up and looked wildly around her. The view through the window showed nothing but sea and sky. She made a sharp exhalation of fury and had reached the door of the cabin before she stopped.

She was still stark naked.

She was in the middle of the ocean and the only items of clothing she had with her were a bikini and a pair of hotpants. Oh, and a sequined evening scarf—which would no doubt make all the difference should formal dress be required. Collapsing back onto the bed she pulled the covers up over her head and let out a howl of rage and frustration.

'Ah, so you're awake.'

In the darkness beneath the covers she felt her eyes widen in horror, and for a second she froze, hoping she'd imagined that dry, mocking voice. But then the covers were drawn back and she found herself staring up into those wicked eyes.

In the clear light of morning his beauty came as a fresh shock. Naked to the waist, and wearing only a pair of long shorts, his blond hair was tousled and untidy. He looked more like a carefree golden surfer-boy than a billionaire businessman.

Which was horribly unfair.

Snatching the covers up to cover her breasts she sat up and glared at him. 'What the hell is going on?'

That cool, unruffled smile. 'I brought you coffee.'

'I don't want coffee!'

'I believe the polite response is 'thank you very much'. I can assure you, you're very privileged. I don't usually do this sort of thing, but I looked in on you earlier and you were rather...exposed. My crew can cope with most things, but a naked eco-warrior might just prove too much, even for them.'

It almost had for him. Lying on top of the cream sheets with her pink hair tumbling over her face and the diamond stud in her navel rising and falling with every sleepy breath she had looked wild but unbelievably sweet. Like a panther cub. He had to keep reminding himself that if he wasn't careful she could do real damage.

Anna took a deep, steadying breath and pulled the sheet more tightly around her. Making a huge effort to keep her voice level she looked up at him.

'Look Angelo.... Last night was...!' Oh God, don't blush. Don't behave like a pathetic, inexperienced kid. Don't give it away... 'A huge mistake. I shouldn't have come here.'

'So why did you?'

He had set the coffee down on the bedside table and was looking at the newspaper he'd had tucked beneath his arm. He looked totally absorbed, as if what she was saying was a minor distraction.

'I didn't have much choice,' she hissed, thoroughly nettled by his obvious unconcern.

He looked up at her, with a slight, puzzled inclination of his eyebrows. It was almost as though he'd forgotten she was there for a second. 'Sorry? That wasn't how I remember it. I think I asked you if you wanted to go back to your 'friends' on the beach,' he looked back down at the newspaper with a faint smile, 'and you said no.'

'I didn't know then that a cruise around the med was on the itinerary.'

'I see. A quick screw. That's all you had in mind, was it?' he glanced back up at her. 'I'm hurt.'

He didn't look hurt. He look supremely unconcerned, hugely pleased with himself. And immensely bloody gorgeous.

Anna gritted her teeth. 'We didn't have sex.'

'No. But you wanted to.'

Oh God, the bastard.

Tugging the sheet she wound it around herself and got up. Sitting in bed she felt at far too much of a disadvantage to be having this conversation. Standing up, she raked a hand through her hair and made a huge effort to keep the hysteria out of her voice.

'Look, I didn't have anything in mind. I wasn't exactly thinking straight. I don't know—maybe I drank more than I thought. I was upset, and—'

'Upset about what?'

She shook her head. 'Doesn't matter.' She said hastily. 'What matters now is that I have to get back. I have stuff that I need to do.'

Rubbing a hand through his already disheveled hair he strode towards the door. Anna squeezed her eyes shut as he passed within a few feet of her, unable to trust herself not to reach out and touch the body that had haunted her dreams all night. At the door he paused and looked at her with great seriousness.

'How good are you at swimming?'

'Very good.'

He nodded gravely. 'It's probably about ten kilometers back to shore. Just as well you brought your bikini.'

Anna gave a howl of rage, picked up a book and hurled it in the direction of his head. It missed and she reached for another, but he was too quick for her. The next thing he knew he was beside her, and had caught her wrist in a steely grip.

'Enough.'

She let herself relax completely for a moment, until she felt his fingers slacken slightly, then seized her chance and gave an almighty lunge to break free.

'Not enough. Not nearly enough.'

Her only thought was to put as much distance between them as possible, but the bed was in the way. Clasp the sheet to her she leapt onto it, and stood, legs apart, chest heaving, looking down at him.

He raised an eyebrow. 'Well, now you come to mention it...'

From the book *The Italian's Captive Virgin* by India Grey
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Reviews

With the release of her second novel for Mills and Boon Modern Romance, *The Italian's Captive Virgin*, India Grey further establishes herself as a writer of amazing talent and extraordinary scope. Sensual, exotic and enthralling, *The Italian's Captive Virgin*, is a captivating romantic read by a writer who is set to become one of the imprint's most popular writers!

(Cataromance, 4.5 stars)

Lady Anna Delafield is determined to stop billionaire property developer Angelo Emiliani from buying her childhood home. To keep the rebellious eco-warrior busy until the Chateau Belle-Eden deal closes, Angelo whisks Anna away on his yacht. In *Angelo's Captive Virgin* (4), India Grey weaves an emotional tale

with witty dialogue and irresistible characters. The passion and love that blazes between the hero and heroine is unmistakable, making this tale a sensational can't-put-down read.

(Romantic Times -- 4 stars)