

LINDSEY KELK

Angela's back on home turf –
and in her biggest romantic
scrape yet...

I heart
London



LINDSEY KELK

I Heart London

HARPER

Della, Beth, Sarah, Jacqueline, Ryan, Emma and Rachael.

People always ask me who my Jenny is and I tell them I'm lucky because I don't actually have one, I have all of you ... I would absolutely take your diaphragm out if I had to.

Not you, Ryan.

Table of Contents

[Title Page](#)

[Dedication](#)

[Acknowledgements](#)

[Chapter One](#)

[Chapter Two](#)

[Chapter Three](#)

[Chapter Four](#)

[Chapter Five](#)

[Chapter Six](#)

[Chapter Seven](#)

[Chapter Eight](#)

[Chapter Nine](#)

[Chapter Ten](#)

[Chapter Eleven](#)

[Chapter Twelve](#)

[Chapter Thirteen](#)

[Chapter Fourteen](#)

[Chapter Fifteen](#)

[Chapter Sixteen](#)

[Chapter Seventeen](#)

[Chapter Eighteen](#)

[Chapter Nineteen](#)

[Chapter Twenty.](#)

[Chapter Twenty-One](#)

[Angela's Guide to London](#)

[About the Author](#)

[Also by Lindsey Kelk](#)

[Copyright](#)

[About the Publisher](#)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This never really seems enough but a thousand thank yous to Rowan Lawton – super agent/enabler/general favourite person. Samesies to Lynne Drew and Thalia Suzuma, thank you for being so patient and so helpful and generally helping this book (and all the others) exist. I can't thank HarperCollins enough – everyone in the UK, everyone in the US and especially everyone in Canada (especially, especially Emma Ingram and Paul Covello who I still owe \$30). More thanks to Charlotte and Kasie at Marie Claire – working with you makes me happy.

There are so many people who deserve a thank you-slash-hug-big-drink for keeping me alive during the writing of this book: Della, Jackie, Sarah, Ana Mercedes, Beth, Ryan, Sam, Ilana, Rachael and, good God, loads more people. I'll thank you in person with booze. People I can't thank but were also important include The National, Camera Obscura, The Muppets, the cast of Breaking Bad and WWE Superstar, CM Punk. Long story.

Last but not least, I want to thank all Twitter buddies for convincing me I'm not mad when I'm sat in a Vegas hotel room writing a book at four in the morning. Big shout out to [#TeamKelk](#) and everyone who has taken the time to say hello. It means a lot.

CHAPTER ONE

‘I’m so sorry I’m late,’ I babbled as I ran into the *Gloss* magazine office, unbuttoning my top as I pushed the door open with my arse. ‘I had a Jenny emergency and lost my shoes and couldn’t get a cab, and how come it’s so hot today? Oh and my shirt is covered in crap but I think I left a T-shirt here so—’

‘Ms Clark.’

My blouse was halfway over my head and my arms were tangled upwards in a dying swan when I heard someone who most certainly was not Delia Spencer say my name. The reason I knew it was not my colleague and friend Delia Spencer was because it was a man’s voice. And it was one I had heard before.

‘Mr Spencer?’ I peeped through a buttonhole to see Delia’s grandfather, owner of Spencer Media and ultimately my boss, leaning against Delia’s desk with a very grim look on his face. Behind him, Delia sat in her squishy leather chair biting her lip and trying not to laugh. Neither of them seemed terribly impressed by my bra. It wasn’t one of my best.

‘How lovely to see you,’ I said, trying to pull my shirt back down over my head as casually as possible before offering Mr Spencer a handshake and a dazzling smile. ‘I’m very sorry.’

‘Don’t worry about it,’ he said. Then he stood up, ignoring my hand, and walked straight into our tiny meeting room. ‘I understand you had an emergency and are covered in crap.’

‘And I lost my shoes,’ I whispered to Delia with a wince.

‘Happy Monday,’ she whispered back, following her grandfather into the meeting room. ‘Jenny emergency? What threat level are we on there?’

‘Orange? Maybe even a lovely reddish coral. She’s losing it. I had to intervene.’

‘As long as she’s OK now,’ Delia gave me a sympathetic look and opened the door to the meeting room. ‘There’s a spare sweater on my chair. It doesn’t have any crap on it.’

Delia had enjoyed my BFF, Jenny's downward spiral as much as anyone over the last few months. It had been six months since she'd broken up with her ex-ex and since then she'd been doing a fine job of ruining her life. That or she was auditioning for a role on the next *Jersey Shore*. I hoped that was it, she was definitely going to need a new job soon if she didn't sort herself out.

'Perfect,' I muttered to myself, hurriedly changing shirts and checking out my blouse for permanent damage. 'No good deed goes unpunished.'

'So the launch phase will take place in Q three so we can be out for fashion week, with *Gloss* on limited availability in New York,' I said, as confidently as I could. Out of the corner of my eye, I could see Delia nodding confirmation. Directly in front of me, Mr Spencer, my boss, formerly known as Bob, was not nodding. He was sipping coffee and fixing me with a gaze so steely I was fairly certain it could cut through a tin can. I concealed a tiny squeak and clicked onto the final slide of my PowerPoint presentation. Oh yes, I was a PowerPoint person now. 'Once we're out there and have established a solid audience, we'll launch on the West Coast in Q four, and then, Q one, we go nationwide with a long-term view to international expansion in Q three the following year.'

I was incredibly proud of myself. After a less than promising beginning, I'd got through all my slides without cocking up and I hadn't spilled a single thing down Delia's jumper. Things were looking up. Now all we needed was Mr Spencer's go-ahead and we were quite literally in business. I attempted my best *Wheel of Fortune* pose in front of the drop-down screen and gave my audience of two a dazzling smile. I was ninety-nine percent certain I looked deranged, but still, Bob was pulling his concentrated face and Delia hadn't kicked me yet, so I took that as a win.

'Interesting,' Mr Spencer said. 'Very interesting.'

Once upon a time, Mr Spencer and I had been best buds – he had brunchted with me at Pastis, offered me dream jobs in Paris. We were total besties – but then I might or might not have accidentally called his granddaughter and Delia's identical twin sister, Cici, several very colourful and slightly unflattering names in an email and, well, punched her in the face at Christmas. After that, we sort of drifted apart. He'd given Delia and me a chance to get *Gloss* going, we had a small office in the Spencer Media building and some office equipment, and he had reluctantly agreed to

support my visa application, but that was where it ended. There was no free ride in the Spencer family. Not if you saddled yourself with a foul-mouthed British girl who knocked out a member of your family at a Christmas party while dressed like a slutty Santa. It was a long story, but Cici totally had it coming. Delia agreed. Often. I didn't have a sister but if I did, I'd want one like Delia. Kind, thoughtful and cleverer than anyone who had ever been on *The Apprentice*. I did not want one like Cici. She was the Ursula to her Ariel, the coffee cream to her hazelnut whirl. Pure evil. But she was out of the picture. At least she hadn't actively tried to ruin my life for the last couple of months so that was nice. It was just as well, I had been busy.

At last, we were ready to go. We had a killer dummy issue, we had a business plan that made sense, we had writers on standby, we even had a retailer lined up to distribute for us. We just needed advertisers. And to get advertisers, we had to get Grandpa Bob to include us in the annual Spencer Media sales conference. Delia was convinced it was a lock, but I wasn't so sure. Yes, he'd stayed all the way through our presentation without nipping out to the loo or anything. And he'd only picked up his iPhone once; and there was no way he'd been on it long enough to be playing Fruit Ninja. Unless he was very good. Which he probably was.

'So you have a retailer on board?' he asked Delia.

'*Trinity*,' she confirmed. 'As you know, the second largest women's fashion retailer in the US.'

'And you'll be distributing through them directly?' he asked Delia again.

'We will,' she nodded.

'And is she actually barefoot?' He cocked his head in my direction.

Ohhhh.

'She is,' Delia confirmed. 'But she's also a very good writer, a fantastic creative planner and an absolute asset to your company.'

I tried not to blush. Shucks.

'Even if she is a little eccentric.'

I couldn't really argue with that. Even if it did take the edge off her original compliment.

'I know I'm going to regret asking,' Bob said finally, turning to face me, 'but what did happen to your shoes?'

'Well, I was at my friend Jenny's house –' As soon as I opened my mouth I knew I wasn't going to be able to stop – 'and I'd been borrowing her

shoes, but she was just a big drunken weeping mess and she made me take them off—’

‘You don’t have shoes of your own?’ Bob interrupted. ‘I don’t follow ...’

‘Maybe if we just deal with questions about the magazine right now?’ Delia suggested. ‘And let Angela’s shoe situation resolve itself. Do you have any questions about the business plan?’

Bob looked at Delia, at me, and then his phone. ‘No. It was very clear and concise.’

Delia beamed. ‘Any questions about the creative?’

‘None at all. You know more about that market than I do.’

‘So any questions at all?’ She straightened the collar on her sky-blue shirdress. ‘Now’s the time to ask them, Grandpa.’

The stately, grey-haired media magnate leaned forward and rested his elbows on our glass conference table. ‘In all honesty, Delia, I just really want to know why she isn’t wearing shoes.’

Delia sat back, rubbed her forehead and gave me a quick, sharp nod.

‘So ...’

‘That wasn’t scary at all,’ I said, spinning round and round in my office chair after Bob had left the office. ‘What are we going to do?’

‘It’s fine.’ Delia stretched her yoga-toned arms high above her head. ‘He’s going to say yes. There’s no reason for him not to. I have a good feeling.’

‘I’m glad someone has,’ I said grimly. I didn’t have any good feelings. I only felt like I had dirty feet and a craving for bacon. ‘Then why didn’t he just say yes?’

‘Don’t panic, Angela – I know my grandpa,’ she said. Her confidence was somewhat reassuring. ‘He never says yes on the spot. He likes to think about things, weigh up his options, but we’ve given him every reason to say yes. Besides, I know he wants me on the magazine side of the business. It’s not like Cici is proving herself heir apparent to the business when he retires.’

Despite a lifelong ambition to work in publishing, Delia had avoided Spencer Media until we started working on *Gloss* due to her batshit mental sister already working at *The Look* magazine. But while Cici’s ambitions only reached as far as stealing from the fashion cupboard and ruining the lives of British freelancers (*cough* – me – *cough*), Delia actually wanted to

succeed. On the surface she was a blonde, Upper-East-Side WASP princess, but underneath she was a fiercely ambitious uber-genius. She was basically Serena van der Woodsen with the brain of Rupert Murdoch, and she had enough self-confidence to make Lady Gaga look like she was a bit down on herself. God help anyone who got in her way.

‘I just can’t cope with the idea of this not working out.’ I laid my head on the cool desk and peered at my iPhone. Ooh, some peas needed harvesting in my Smurf Village. ‘If he doesn’t go for it, then the last six months have been for nothing.’

‘Not going to happen,’ Delia said, enunciating each word with a clarity and confidence I couldn’t even try to feel. ‘Look, why don’t you take the afternoon off? There’s really nothing we can do now until he gets back to us.’

‘I was going to try to talk to Mary about some new features ideas,’ I said, twisting the emerald ring around my finger. Mary Stein, once we were officially off the ground, was going to be our editor. I was sort of surprised she’d agreed to it if I was being entirely honest. Mary and I had worked together on my blog when I’d moved to New York and I’d been nothing but trouble but I had a feeling she was itching to get off the blog and back onto a real magazine. That said, until we had full funding, she was still working on *TheLook.com*, but she made plenty of time to bitch out my ideas as often as possible. I loved her dearly. ‘And I could do with looking at the website plans again.’

Delia smiled at me across the office. ‘Do you realize you always do that when you’re nervous about something? Twist your engagement ring?’

‘I do?’ I looked down at my diamond and emerald sparkler and felt my frown turn upside down. ‘I hadn’t noticed.’

‘It’s cute,’ she grinned. ‘When you’re stressed, that calms you down. Bodes well for the future, doesn’t it?’

‘I suppose.’ It was a nice thought. ‘I’m probably just terrified of losing it, though.’

‘Speaking of engagement rings, I have something for you.’ She pulled a thick glossy magazine out from her beautiful Hermès Birkin and tossed it across to my desk. It landed with a pleasing thud and spilled open on a page full of amazing wedding dresses.

‘What is this?’ I said, turning to the front cover. ‘How do I not have this? I have all the magazines.’ I did. There were so many stacks of glossies in