



COCKY BASTARD

New York Times Bestselling Authors

PENELOPE WARD
VI KEELAND

**This is an exclusive sneak
peek of**

COCKY

BASTARD



I wondered if the vibration would feel good between my legs.

The sun caught the chrome of a Harley Davidson parked a few spots over, gleaming in the sweltering midday sun. I waited until Maroon Five finished playing on the radio, oddly fixated on the two-wheeled-man-toy as I fished in my purse for my cell phone. The motorcycle was simple—high gloss black and shiny silver, worn leather saddlebags with a skull embossed below the initials *C.B.*

How good would it feel to ride? Wind blowing through my long hair, arms wrapped around a man with a tough sounding nickname, engine purring beneath my jean clad thighs. Horse? Drifter? Guns? Wait. No. Pres. My imaginary biker was most definitely called Pres. And he'd look just like Charlie Hunnam.

I glanced down at my iPhone and found a half dozen new messages from Harrison. Inwardly, I smirked. Certainly, there is no one named Harrison that ever rode a Harley. Tossing my phone back in my bag, I cut the engine of my packed BMW and glanced behind me into the backseat. Boxes piled to the ceiling were beginning to make my full-size car feel claustrophobic.

A bus full of travelers pulled into the rest stop. *Great.* I'd better go in now and get my lunch, otherwise I'd never get out of here. Ten hours into a cross-country trip from Chicago to Temecula, California, I was somewhere in the middle of Nebraska with about another twenty some odd hours to go.

After a fifteen-minute wait inside for Pepsi and Popeyes fried chicken bites that I planned to eat back in the car, I stopped into the small souvenir shop. I was so tired and didn't really feel like driving the additional five hours I had to go before

finding a place to sleep for the night. Yawning, I decided to stall and browse for a few minutes. Checking out some trinkets, I eventually picked up a Barack Obama bobblehead and shook it mindlessly, watching its maniacal smile as the head bounced up and down.

“Get it. You know you want it,” a deep, raspy voice said from behind my shoulders. Startling me, it caused a knee-jerk reaction that resulted in the bobblehead slipping from my fingers and falling to the ground. The head broke off of the spring neck and rolled away.

The woman at the register shouted, “I’m sorry, ma’am. You’ll have to pay for that. Twenty dollars.”

“Damn it!” I spewed, following the path of the rolling head. As I bent down to pick it up, there was the voice again from behind me.

“And to think, some people say he’s got a good head on his shoulders.” He seemed to have an Australian accent.

“You think this is funny, asshole?” I asked before turning around and getting my first look at the man behind the voice.

I froze.

Oh. Shit.

“You don’t need to be a fucking bitch about it.” His mouth curved into a wicked grin as he handed me the bottom half of Obama. “And for the record, I did think that was really funny, yes.”

I swallowed and seemed to lose my ability to speak as I took in the Adonis standing before me. I wanted to smack that cocky smile right off his face, though—his gorgeous, chiseled, scruffy face, framed by a thick head of copper-brown hair. *Fuck me.* This man was insanely hot, not someone I expected to come across out here. This was the middle of nowhere USA, not the Australian outback for Christ’s sake.

I cleared my throat. “Well, I didn’t think it was funny at all.”

“Then, you need to take the stick out of your arse and lighten up.” He reached out his hand. “Give it to me, Princess. I’ll pay for the damn thing.” Before I could respond, he grabbed the two broken pieces from me, and I cursed at the shiver that

ran down my spine from the brief contact of his hand brushing against mine. Of course, he had to smell amazing on top of it all.

I followed him to the register as I fished through my messy purse for money, but he was too quick and had paid for it already.

He handed me a plastic bag containing the broken bobblehead. "There's some change in the bag. Buy yourself a sense of humor."

HUE-MA. That accent.

My jaw dropped as he walked away and out of the store.

What an ass.

It was. A fine one. A thick, juicy, round ass hugged tightly by his jeans. God, I really needed to get laid, because it didn't seem to matter that this guy had just insulted me to my face; my panties were practically wet.

After several minutes of staring into space at a shelf of Nebraska Cornhuskers t-shirts, I gave myself a mental kick in the butt. My reaction to the incident proved that fatigue had gotten the best of me; I wasn't usually that short-tempered. It was time to shake off the bizarre encounter and get moving. My stomach was growling, and I was looking forward to breaking into the fried chicken once I hit the road. I snuck a piece out of the box in my bag as I walked out of the building. My chewing ceased when I noticed *him* two spots down from my car—sitting on the very motorcycle I'd been fantasizing about earlier.

Approaching slowly, I hoped he didn't notice me. No such luck. Instead, when he spotted me, he flashed an exaggerated smile and waved.

Frantically searching for my keys, I rolled my eyes and muttered, "You again."

He snickered. "Did you end up buying a sense of humor?"

"I used the change to buy you some couth instead."

Chuckling, he shook his head at me. Running his hand through his hair, he put his shiny black helmet on and cranked the Harley. The rumble shook me to my core.

Getting in the car and slamming the door, I couldn't help taking one last look over at him, seeing as though I'd never see this guy again in my lifetime. He winked through the helmet, and my pathetic heart fluttered.

I watched through the rear view mirror as he backed out of the spot. I expected him to take off like a bat out of hell, but after moving away slowly, he abruptly stopped. He kept trying to rev the bike to get it to move, but nothing was happening. Eventually turning off the engine, he removed his helmet and ran his hand through his hair in frustration before getting off to inspect things. I should have just left, but couldn't take my eyes off him as he struggled to get it to run. *Man, that sucks.*

I dipped one of the chicken bites into the honey mustard sauce and popped it into my mouth, continuing to watch this like a spectator sport for several minutes. At one point, he took out his phone and made a phone call as he paced back and forth.

Putting his phone away, he looked in my direction and glared at me. Caught in the act of watching him, I let out a nervous laugh. I didn't mean to laugh at the situation, but it just came out. He raised his brow, and that made me cackle harder. He slowly walked toward me, clutching the helmet by his side. He knocked on my window, and I lowered it.

"You think this is funny, Princess?"

"Not really...maybe." I snorted.

"Well, I'm glad you finally managed to find your sense of humor."

HUE-MA.

God, his accent was sexy.

He arched his neck to look into the backseat and took notice of all the boxes.

"You homeless or something? Living out of your car?"

"No. I'm in the middle of a cross-country move."

"Where you headed?"

"Temecula."

"California." He nodded. "Me, too."

I looked toward his Harley. "Well, it looks like *you're* not exactly headed *anywhere* anytime soon. I guess it's payback for calling me a bitch."

"Well, that would seem to be the case."

"That it's payback?"

"No, that you're a bitch."

"Very funny."

"You know what's even better than payback?" he asked leaning into the window, his cologne intoxicating me.

"What?"

He wiggled his brows. "Karma."

"What are you talking about?"

"Come around and have a look at the back of your Beemer."

BEE-MA.

I got out and walked around to the back of my car to find my right rear tire was completely flat.

What? This cannot be happening.

With my hand on my forehead, I looked over at his smug expression. "Are you kidding me? Did you know my tire was flat all this time?"

"I noticed it right around the time I caught you popping chicken and laughing at me, yes. It was real hard for me to keep a straight face at that point."

I didn't know how to change a tire to save my life. I couldn't believe what I was about to ask of him.

"Do you know how to change a tire?"

"Of course I do. What kind of a man would I be if I didn't know how to change a tire?"

"Will you help me? I know you have no reason to want to...after our little altercation, but I'm seriously desperate. I don't want to be stuck out here all alone at night."

"Let me ask you a question."

"Okay..."

He rubbed the scruff on his chin. "How badly do you want your tire changed?"

I backed away from him. "What exactly are you getting at?"

"Get your mind out of the gutter, sweetheart. I'm not fucking propositioning you if that's what you think. You're not my type."

"And what exactly *is* your type?"

"I typically go for women who don't have the personality of a door knob."

"Thanks."

"My pleasure."

"So, what are your conditions?"

"Well, as you clearly know from your laughing fit, my Harley is experiencing a technical malfunction at the moment. It needs a part that I don't have. I just called a tow company. But I'm on a deadline, and like you, I need to get to California."

"You're not suggesting..."

"Yes. Yes, I am. If I change your tire, you let me ride with you."

"Ride with me?"

"Ride me, yes."

"What did you just say?"

"You're hearing things."

I shook my head to rid the images now flashing through it. Did my tired mind only imagine that he just said that, or was he messing with me?

"I cannot drive hundreds of miles with a total stranger," I said.

"It's a fuck of a lot safer than driving alone."

"Not if you're a serial killer!"

"Look who's talking. You're the one who decapitated a U.S. president."

I couldn't help but laugh. This situation was seriously insane.

"Holy shit, Princess, is that a laugh at your own expense, I see?"

"I think you're making me delirious."

He stuck out his hand. "So, you in?"

I crossed my arms instead of taking it. "What choice do I have?"

"Well, you could always have *him* change your tire." He gestured to a large and scary-looking man who seemed to be watching us. This guy looked like Herman Munster in the flesh.

Letting out a deep breath, I conceded. "I'm in. I'm in! Just get me out of here."

"I thought you might say that. Please tell me you have a spare."

"Yeah. But I have to move some of my boxes so you can get to it."

He started to crack up when he got a load of the situation inside my trunk.
“Damn, what the hell is all this crap?”

I looked into his eyes and answered honestly, “My entire life.”

I temporarily piled the contents of the trunk onto the pavement. He got the spare out and immediately got to work.

As he was changing the tire, his white t-shirt rode up, exposing his tanned, rock-hard abs and a thin trail of hair that ran into his underwear line. Unwanted tension built between my legs. I needed a distraction, so I walked over to his bike and sat on it, gripping the handles and imagining what it would be like to ride in the wind. But all I could envision now was him in front of me, and that wasn’t helping.

He slid his body from under my car. “Be careful, little girl. That’s not a toy.”

I hopped off and ran my finger along the letters emblazoned on the saddlebags. “What’s C.B. stand for anyway?”

“Those are my initials.”

“Let me guess...*Cocky Bastard?*”

“See...I would have told you my name, but since you’re so clever, I think I’ll just let you guess.”

“Whatever, Cocky.”

He lay back down on the ground. “I’m just tightening up these nuts, and we’ll be ready to go.”

“Nuts?”

“Lug nuts...on the wheel, dirty girl.”

“Oh.”

Hopping up, he lifted his shirt and used it to wipe his forehead. “All set.”

Damn.

“That was quick. Are you sure it’s on right?”

“I’ve got a few screws loose, darling, as you’ll soon find out, but none of them are on your wheel.” He winked and for the first time, I noticed his dimples. “We should probably stop tomorrow and get a new tire put on. This spare is really not meant for long term use.”

Tomorrow. Wow. This was really happening.

"We should get going," I said. "I'll drive. I need to be in control of this situation."

"Whatever you want," he said.

I could feel the tension in my neck as I backed out of the spot. This was going to be very interesting to say the least. He wasted no time digging into my chicken bites.

I playfully slapped his hand. "Hey, lay off my food."

"Honey mustard? I prefer barbecue." He licked his thumb, and I swore at myself for getting turned on a little. This was going to be a long ride.

He smirked and lifted the plastic bag from the souvenir shop. "Did you even open it?"

"No. What's the point? It's just a broken bobblehead."

Handing it to me, he said, "Is it?"

With one hand on the steering wheel, I took out the bobblehead which was...in one piece.

"What the...how did you?"

"You seemed to like it, so I paid for the other and bought you a different one. You were too busy looking through your purse to notice."

I couldn't help but smile and shook my head.

"Well, whaddya know. A genuine smile." He held out his hand.

"Here...gimme." When, I handed it to him, he took an adhesive strip off the bottom and stuck it to the dash. Obama's head was now bopping up and down with every movement of the car.

I broke out in laughter at the ridiculousness but also couldn't help the warm feeling that came over me with that sweet gesture. Maybe he wasn't really a bastard at all.

We were quiet for a while as he lay his head back and shut his eyes. Somewhere along I-76 after the sun set into a bright orange glow that illuminated the horizon in the distance, he turned to me.

His voice was groggy. "I'm Chance."

After several seconds of silence, I said, "Aubrey."

“Aubrey,” he repeated in a breathy whisper, seeming to contemplate my name before closing his eyes again and turning his head away.

Chance.

★ ★ ★ ★

We hope you enjoyed this extended preview!

Would you like to read the FULL BOOK before it's published?

CLICK to sign up for our mailing list and you are automatically entered! TWO winners will be selected on 8/12!

<http://eepurl.com/brAPo9>

ARCs can only be sent to Kindles or Kindle apps.

COCKY BASTARD

Coming 8-17-15

Want us to text you a reminder on release day?

Just text the word **books** to 77948

Add **COCKY BASTARD** to your TBR list on Goodreads

<http://bit.ly/1LzjOng>