



Simply Irresistible (Chinooks Hockey Team Book 1)

By *Rachel Gibson*

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Georgeanne Howard leaves her fiancé at the altar when she realizes she can't marry a man old enough to be her grandfather, no matter how rich he is. Hockey superstar John Kowalsky unknowingly helps her escape, and only when it's too late does he realize that he's absconded with his boss's bride. This bad boy isn't looking to be anybody's savior but his own. Still, a long night stretches ahead of them—a night too sultry to resist temptation.

Seven years later, Georgeanne and John meet again. She is on her way to becoming Seattle's domestic darling and he is past his hellraising days. Shocked to learn that he has a daughter, John's determined to be part of her life. Georgeanne has loved John since the moment she jumped into his car, but will he risk the wrath of his boss, and one final chance at glory, to prove that this time his love will be everlasting?

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

In this saucy romance, charm-school graduate Georgeanne Howard has only two real talents: cooking and talking. Her Mae West-like body, though, is what attracts Virgil Duffy, a man old enough to be her grandfather but richer than Croesus. But when it comes time to actually marry Duffy, Georgeanne just can't go though with it. She makes her escape with bad boy John Kowalsky, the star hockey player for the team that Duffy owns. John has no idea that the gorgeous babe he is about to have a one-night stand with happens to be his boss's bride-to-be. It's not an auspicious start for a romance, but romance Georgeanne he does. Seven years later, Kowalsky discovers that their one night of unforgettable passion produced an incorrigible little girl who is even wilder than her parents--and Georgeanne is even more beautiful than he remembered.

About the Author

Rachel Gibson lives in Idaho with her husband, three kids, two cats, and a dog of mysterious origin. She began her fiction career at age 16, when she ran her car into the side of a hill, retrieved the bumper, and drove to a parking lot, where she strategically scattered the car's broken glass all about. She told her parents she'd been the victim of a hit-and-run, and they believed her. She's been making up stories ever since, although she gets paid better for them nowadays.

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Chapter One

1989

The night before Virgil Duffy's wedding, a summer storm pounded the Puget Sound. But by the next morning, the gray clouds were gone, leaving in their place a view of Elliot Bay and the spectacular skyline of downtown Seattle. Several of Virgil's wedding guests glanced up at the clear sky and wondered if he controlled Mother Nature the same way he controlled his shipping empire. They wondered if he could control his young bride as well or if she was just a toy like his hockey team.

While the guests waited for the ceremony to begin, they sipped from fluted champagne glasses and speculated as to how long the May-December marriage would last. Not long was the general consensus.

John Kowalsky ignored the buzz of gossip around him. He had more pressing concerns. Raising a crystal tumbler to his lips, he drained the hundred-year-old scotch as if it were water. An incessant thud pounded his head. His eye sockets throbbed and his teeth ached.

He must have had one hell of a good time last night. He just wished he could remember.

From his position on the terrace, he looked down on a cross-cut emerald lawn, immaculate flower beds, and sputtering fountains. Guests dressed in Armani and Donna Karan drifted toward rows of white chairs facing an arbor festooned with flowers and ribbon and some sort of pink gauzy stuff.

John's gaze moved to a cluster of his teammates looking out of place and uncomfortable in their matching

navy blazers and scuffed loafers. They didn't look like they wanted to be stuck in the middle of Seattle society any more than he did.

To his left, a skinny woman in a flowing lavender dress with matching shoes sat down at her harp, leaned it back against her shoulder, and began to pluck the strings just slightly louder than the noises rolling off the Puget Sound. She looked up at him and gave him a warm smile he instantly recognized. He wasn't surprised by the woman's interest and purposely let his gaze travel down her body, then back up again. At the age of twenty-eight, John had been with women of all shapes and sizes, economic backgrounds, and differing levels of intelligence. He wasn't averse to taking a swim in the groupie pool, but he didn't particularly like bony women. Although some of his teammates dated models, John preferred soft curves. When he touched a woman, he liked to feel flesh, not bone.

The harpist's smile grew more flirtatious, and John looked away. Not only was the woman too skinny, but he hated harp music just about as much as he hated weddings. He'd been through two of his own, and neither had been real blissful. In fact, the last time he'd been this hungover had been in Vegas six months ago when he'd woken up in a red velvet honeymoon suite suddenly married to a stripper named DeeDee

Delight. The marriage hadn't lasted much longer than the wedding night. And the real bitch of it was, he couldn't remember if DeeDee had been all that delightful.

"Thanks for coming, son." The owner of the Seattle Chinooks approached John from behind and patted him on the shoulder.

"I didn't think any of us had a choice," he said, looking down into Virgil Duffy's lined face.

Virgil laughed and continued down the wide brick steps, the picture of wealth in his silver-gray tuxedo. Beneath the early afternoon sun, Virgil appeared to be exactly what he was: a member of the Fortune 500, owner of a professional hockey team, and a man who could buy himself a young trophy wife.

"Did you see him last night with the woman he's marrying?"

John glanced across his right shoulder at his newest teammate, Hugh Miner. Sportswriters had compared Hugh to James Dean in looks and reckless behavior on and off the ice. John liked that in a man. "No," he answered as he reached beneath his blazer and pulled a pair of Ray-Bans from the breast pocket of his oxford shirt. "I left fairly early."

"Well, she's pretty young. Twenty-two or so."

"That's what I hear." He shifted to one side and let a group of older ladies pass on their way down the stairs. Being a practicing womanizer himself, he'd never claimed to be a self-righteous moralist, but there was something pathetic and just a little sick about a man Virgil's age marrying a woman nearly forty years younger.

Hugh poked John in the side with his elbow. "And breasts that could make a man sit up and beg for buttermilk."

John slipped the sunglasses up the bridge of his nose and smiled at the ladies who glanced back at Hugh.

He hadn't been real quiet with his description of Virgil's fiancee. "You were raised on a dairy farm, right?"

"Yep, about fifty miles outside of Madison," the young goalie said with pride.

"Well, I wouldn't say that buttermilk thing too loud, if I were you. Women tend to get real pissed off when you compare them to cows."

"Yeah." Hugh laughed and shook his head. "What do you think she sees in a man old enough to be her grandfather? I mean, she isn't ugly or fat or anything. In fact, she's real good-lookin'."

At the age of twenty-four, Hugh was not only younger than John but obviously naive. He was on his way to being the best damn goalie in the NHL, but he had a real bad habit of stopping the puck with his head. In view of his last question, he obviously needed a thicker mask. "Take a look around," John answered. "The last I heard, Virgil's worth over six hundred Millon.

"Yeah, well, money can't buy everything," the goalie grumbled as he started down the steps. "Are you coming, Wall?" He paused to ask over his shoulder.

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