



The Wayward Son

By Yvonne Lindsay

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But as fascination becomes insatiable desire, Judd begins to question his intent. He'd believed the worst of his father, and of Anna. Now, when long-buried family deceits are uncovered, Anna's fierce loyalty to his father forces Judd to rethink his plans—because destroying the man who hurt him will mean losing Anna, too....

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Editorial Review

About the Author

New Zealand born, to Dutch immigrant parents, Yvonne Lindsay became an avid romance reader at the age of 13. Now, married to her 'blind date' and with two children, she remains a firm believer in the power of romance. Yvonne feels privileged to bring to her readers the stories of her heart. In her spare time, when not writing, she can be found reading a book, reliving the power of love in all walks of life. She can be contacted via her website www.yvonnelindsay.com

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She hadn't seen anything quite this beautiful in forever. The exquisitely colored autumnal landscape aside, the figure of the man chopping wood in the distance, shirt off, muscles rippling in the still-warm Adelaide Hills sunshine, was quite enough to remind Anna of every hormonal response her body was capable of. And then some.

Never averse to indulging in appreciation of the male form—even if her busy work-filled schedule meant she rarely did anything about it—she walked a little closer. A tingle of awareness skimmed across her skin, raising goose bumps on the surface, which had nothing to do with the hint of evening breeze that rolled through the hills. It was only when she was about twenty meters from him that recognition hit her with all the subtlety of a bucket of ice water.

Judd Wilson.

Her entire reason for being in Australia. Although they'd never met, there was no mistaking Charles Wilson's son. Obviously tall, Judd had dark hair and warmly tanned skin stretched over a physique that was the epitome of every woman's fantasy. His sharply sculpted features hinted at a resemblance to his father. She'd hazard a guess his eyes were the same piercing blue, as well.

Anna was surprised when her inner muscles clenched on a purely instinctive female reaction and her heart stuttered a little in her chest. She hadn't responded this strongly to anyone in a while, and she sure as hell never expected to feel so drawn to the son of the man who was not only her employer, but practically a father to her. She drew in a deep breath and forced back the flood of attraction that threatened to swamp her anew—reminding herself that she was here on business. She'd made a promise to Charles—a promise she fully intended to keep.

His instructions had been painfully clear. Somehow she had to persuade Judd Wilson to come home to New Zealand, before the father he hadn't seen in more than two decades died.

Anna took a few more tentative steps through the pathway designated amongst the rows and rows of grapevines that striated the land. Her eyes were fixed on the male figure working ahead of her—the man completely oblivious to the bombshell she was about to drop on his world. She paused for a moment, sudden nerves weakening her resolve.

Judd had been only six years old when his parents' divorce resulted in his and his mother's leaving New Zealand—not to mention leaving Charles, and Judd's baby sister, Nicole—behind for good. Did he even remember his father? Would he be pleased at the chance to reconcile, or would he be bitter over all the lost years?

Anxiety over Judd's potential reaction was swiftly followed by a swirl of familiar anger and defensiveness on Charles's behalf. If it hadn't been for Cynthia Masters-Wilson's deceptions, Charles would never have been separated from his son in the first place. Anna hadn't yet met the woman who had torn apart Charles's very reasons for existence, and she certainly wasn't looking forward to it. No doubt it would prove to be a necessary evil at some stage, but for now her focus was on meeting Charles's son and on gauging what his response to his father's contact would be. Her intense physical reaction to him now promised to make that a little more complicated than Anna had anticipated.

She was here with a job to do, she reminded herself sternly, even as her eyes flicked back toward Judd's sun-kissed torso one more time. She couldn't afford to let herself get distracted. Perhaps right now was not the best time to meet him and try to broach the topic. This was a matter that would require good timing and not a small amount of finesse if she was to be successful, and she owed it to Charles to be successful. Lord only knew he'd done more than enough for her family over the years. The least she could do in return was bring some peace of mind to the man who had supported Anna and her late mother for most of Anna's life. She couldn't just barge in and potentially destroy her one opportunity to bring Judd Wilson home.

She took a turn in a different direction, determined now to create some distance between herself and the very man she'd flown almost five hours to see. There would be time enough during her stay here at The Masters' Vineyard and Accommodation, she reasoned with herself. She had to tread this road very carefully if she was going to succeed.

Despite her best intentions, she didn't get very far.

"Hi, there," a voice as rich and sensual as a classic Shiraz called out from behind her. "It's a beautiful evening, isn't it?"

She couldn't ignore him now—not when it was vital she make a good impression. Anna braced herself as she turned around to face her boss's son.

Must be the new guest for the accommodation side of the business, Judd thought to himself as he watched the woman come closer. His cousin Tamsyn sent an update to all staff at the vineyard at the beginning of each week as to which of the luxurious cottages on the property would be accommodating guests for the coming days. She certainly hadn't mentioned that their newest visitor was so stunning.

Judd narrowed his eyes and tracked the movements of the woman in the blue dress as she approached. She walked with a gracefulness that belied the uneven ground she strolled along, and there was a sensual sway to her hips that sent a jolt of pure male appreciation rocketing through his body.

"Judd Wilson, welcome to The Masters'." Judd shifted the ax to his left hand so he could reach out his right to shake. She smiled in response, a slow movement of her lips that made his groin tighten almost imperceptibly, but the effect when she placed her hand in his was unmistakable. Raw need, hot and greedy, unfurled with latent intent. Interesting. Very interesting. Perhaps he'd found a solution to the boredom that had been plaguing him for weeks. He smiled back and clasped her hand firmly.

"Hi, I'm Anna Garrick," she said, her voice husky.

Her eyes searched his face keenly. As if she was looking for something. Perhaps some spark of recognition from him? No, the instant he thought of it, he eschewed the idea. If he'd ever met Anna Garrick before, he had no doubt he'd have remembered her.

From the top of her burnished dark chestnut-colored hair to her perfectly proportioned body and the tips of

her painted toenails, she was his every fantasy. Even her voice—slightly soft, slightly rough—stroked his senses in a way he could never forget.

"Lovely to meet you, Anna. Did you arrive today?"

Her eyes flicked away, as if she was suddenly nervous—or hiding something. Judd felt his instincts go on alert.

"Yes, I did. It's wonderful here. You're so lucky to live in such a beautiful area. Have you...worked here long?" The question was innocent, but he'd caught the slight hesitation, as if she'd started out with the intention of asking something else.

"You could say that," Judd replied, his smile tightening. "It's something of a Masters family business—I grew up here."

"But your name..."

Ah, yes, his name. The reminder of the father who cast him aside all those years ago—and the reason why, even as the very successful head of The Masters' far-flung interests, some of his cousins still never quite treated him like he belonged.

"My mother is Cynthia Masters-Wilson," he replied. No need to go into details. Not when there were so many more pleasurable things he'd like to discuss with this woman.

"And do all Masters chop wood for the winery fireplaces?" she teased.

"But of course," he replied in kind. "Anything at all we can do to make your stay more...pleasurable." That certainly sounded better than admitting that he'd needed the tension release after an incredibly frustrating day of work.

Some days were like that. Bashing at the keys on a laptop didn't quite cut it when you just needed to get physical. And when his choices were either to chop wood or to resort to physical violence against his cousin Ethan, Judd had, reluctantly, chosen chopping wood.

Of course, Ethan really did need someone to knock his head straight. The man might run the winemaking side of the business with undeniable skill—their stock of award-winning wines was proof enough of that—but he was so stuck in his ways, he might as well be cemented in place. Ethan was devoted to maintaining the integrity and superiority of the wines that were synonymous with The Masters' brand. With the current glut of certain wine varieties on the local market, Judd was equally adamant that Ethan needed to diversify. He'd been suggesting it from the day the first projections about the excesses had arisen some years ago. His cousin was like a bear with a sore head on the issue and even more stubborn with it.

Yes, he definitely needed the distraction Ms. Garrick provided.

"And I do hope you'll let me know if there's anything at all *I* can do for you," he added.

"I'll keep that in mind," she replied. "But I can't think of anything I need at the moment. My plan for now is just to enjoy a ramble through these lovely grounds before it gets too dark."

"Then I'll let you return to it. But I'll be seeing you at dinner tonight?"

"Dinner?"

"Yes, we have a family dinner to welcome the new guests every week. There would have been an invitation in your welcome pack when you checked in. It begins with drinks in the formal sitting room of the main house at seven o'clock." Judd stepped closer, taking hold of her hand again. "You will be there, won't you?"

"Yes, I'd like that."

"Excellent," he murmured. "Until then." He lifted her hand, brushing his lips against the back in a soft kiss. She seemed taken aback for a moment, but then she gave him another slow, delicious smile before walking away. Ju...

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