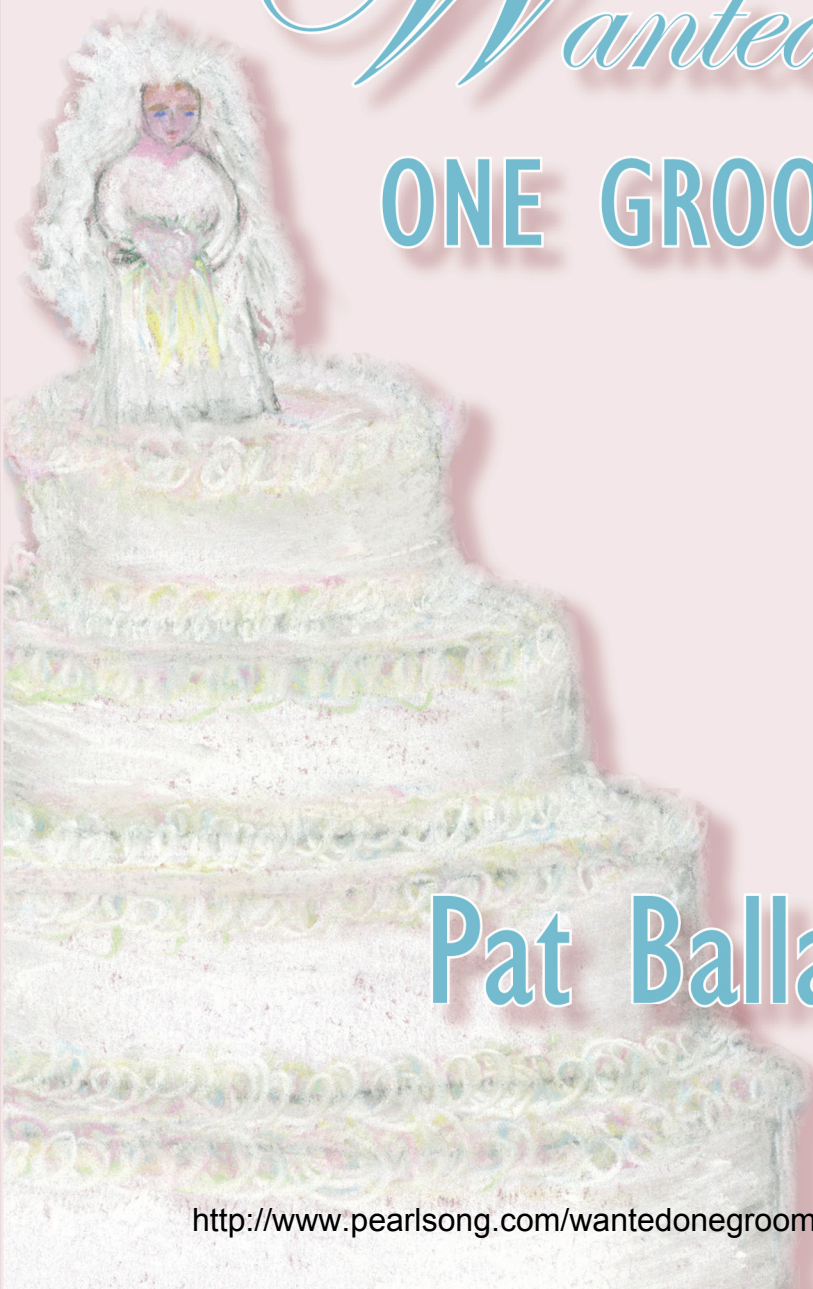


Wanted:

ONE GROOM



Pat Ballard

<http://www.pearlsong.com/wantedonegroom.htm>

Wanted:
ONE GROOM

Pat Ballard

Pearlson Press
Nashville, TN

Wanted: One Groom
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www.patballard.com

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<http://www.pearlsong.com/wantedonegroom.htm>

*To my husband, Joe, and my son, Eric,
just because I love them.*

Chapter 1

“Hanna, you know what your grandfather’s will stipulated.” Hanna sensed the barely concealed agitation in her mother’s voice.

“But, just in case you’ve forgotten, let me refresh your memory,” chimed in Hanna’s brother, Will, two years her senior. “You have to be married, in order to receive the money that the old codger left you. And if you aren’t married by the time you’re thirty years old, everything goes to charity.” Will didn’t try to conceal the contempt he felt for his grandfather, not only for leaving him totally out of the will except for a substantial monthly allowance, which he blew on a monthly basis, but for leaving the conditions as such that they might all wind up on the streets with nowhere to live.

“Everything, Hanna,” interjected her mother. “That means this house, all the land that goes with the estate, all the furniture in the house, and all the money in the bank, including our allowances. Are

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you going to let that happen to us? To your brother and me, and to yourself?” Desperation was apparent on her face and in her voice.

Suddenly, Hanna understood for the first time why Grandfather Rockwell had held so much contempt for these two people prostrating themselves before her. They were users. They depended on someone else to make their lives okay. She loved her mother, but she had lost all respect for her, years ago. And she loved her brother, simply because he was her brother, and for no other reason. He was a spoiled little rich boy, and he loved that image of himself.

Hanna was tired of the pressure the two of them had been putting on her to get married. And even though she could barely stand either of them at times, she knew she wouldn't be the cause of them losing the only home they had ever known.

Frankly, she'd always wondered how it would be to live somewhere else. She had spent her life right here at Rockwell Place, so at times, she thought she would welcome a change. But she knew she wouldn't make that stand against them, so she decided to go with the plan that she had been quietly formulating for the right moment. That moment seemed to be upon her, so taking a deep breath, she challenged them.

“Okay, Mother, start planning the wedding. Give it your best. We'll have a wedding on my thirtieth birthday, June 17.” She heard both of them suck in their breath at the same time.

“Sis, have you been holding out on us? Who's the lucky guy?” Her brother's sardonic facial expressions of just a few minutes earlier had suddenly turned to complete joy.

“That's where you come in, dear brother.” Hanna's emerald green eyes filled with contempt as they perused her weakling of a brother. “You get to find the lucky guy! Find someone that will marry me in

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three months, and we'll have ourselves a wedding." She found great pleasure in the look of disbelief on his face. "Just do me one favor," she continued, "try to make sure he's not a serial killer, or rapist...if you get my drift."

"How am I supposed to find you someone to marry?" her astounded brother asked. "Do I run an ad in the paper that says, 'Wanted: One Groom?'"

"However you want to handle it is fine with me. It's not my problem," Hanna answered him.

"Hanna?"

"Don't start, Mother. This is what you want, isn't it? You and Will have driven me to distraction these past few months, insisting that I find someone and get married. If you think it's as easy as all of that, then you two knock yourselves out. Just tell me what time to show up, and I'll be there." And she headed for the door. But just before she left the room, she turned back to them. "I've just realized why Grandfather wanted me to be married before I could receive what he left me. He wanted me to have someone to help protect me from you two money-grabbers."

Their gaping mouths almost made her sorry for her outburst. She turned and fled the room before they could see the tears flowing down her face.

The next morning, Hanna made her way down the spiral staircase and headed toward the formal dining room for her usual bagel and cup of coffee. Cook always prepared several breakfast items and had them waiting for the family as they drifted down to start their day.

Hanna hoped against hope she would be able to start her morning alone, but as soon as she came through the door she spotted her

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mother sitting at the huge antique oak dining table, dramatically grasping her head in her hands. Hanna knew she was in for a long lecture.

“Good morning, Mother,” she said, and sat down at the opposite end of the table, hoping to discourage any conversation. All she wanted was to eat her breakfast in peace.

“Hanna, come down here and talk with me.” Hanna could tell by the whining note in her mother’s voice that she might as well give in and get this over with, so, reluctantly, she gathered up her bagel and coffee and moved closer to her mother.

“Hanna, what you said yesterday really hurt me. I’m your mother, and I love you. I’m just trying to look out for you and your brother. I want what’s best for you. I want us all to be able to continue living in the custom that we’ve always been used to. None of us know how to go out into the world and make a living.”

Hanna knew when her mother used this tone of voice that there was no use trying to reason with her, so she didn’t volunteer any conversation, and her mother continued.

“Maybe if you would have listened to me all these years I’ve tried to encourage you to lose that weight, we wouldn’t be in this situation. You have such a beautiful face, and I know you would be able to find a fine young man to marry if you looked more like those models in the magazines and on TV.”

There had been a time when her mother’s comments would have caused Hanna to run to her room and cry for hours, then get up the next day and go on the latest fad diet. But not any more. She had long since learned to ignore her mother and Will’s hard comments about her size. She had learned how to tune them out, and think about something that made her happy.

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This morning, she gazed lovingly at the life-size portrait of her grandparents that hung over the large mantle at the end of the dining room, where on cold winter nights a roaring fire blazed in the huge fireplace, turning the large formal room into a warm, welcoming haven.

Even in death, it seemed her grandfather kept watch over the family from his vantage point, as he looked down on gatherings in the room he loved the most. Her grandfather stood tall and handsome, and his piercing blue eyes seemed to look into the soul of anyone looking up at the portrait. His eyes seemed to follow a person around the room, and Hanna loved that about the portrait. It almost seemed as if Grandfather was there with her.

The portrait of her grandmother could have been of Hanna, it looked so much like her. She had inherited her grandmother's golden red hair, big emerald green eyes, peaches and cream complexion, and her voluptuous body. That's why Grandfather had loved Hanna so much. She had reminded him of his beloved Victoria, whom he had lost when she gave birth to their only son, Greg, Hanna's father. And even though Hanna had never seen her grandmother, she knew more about her than most people know about their living grandmothers. Grandfather had spent hours on end, telling her stories about her grandmother.

And as her mother droned on, Hanna again memorized every detail of her grandmother's image. She was glad she looked like her, but Hanna knew she would never find a man like Grandfather, who would love her and her own voluptuous body like he had loved her grandmother. In her grandmother's day, it was considered beautiful to be well rounded. But it seemed that all the men these days were taken with Hollywood's typical size six female body, so she had given

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up on ever finding the man of her dreams. The man who would love her for her mind as well as her body.

“Hanna, are you listening to me?” Her mother’s impatient voice interrupted her thoughts.

“Actually, I wasn’t, Mother. So if you’re finished, I have things to do.”

“Hold on! Not so fast, I have great news!” Will burst into the room just as Hanna was about to make her exit.

Sinking slowly back into her chair, she waited to see what new scheme Will had come up with.

“Sis, I’ve found your future husband!” He couldn’t hide the jubilation in his voice.

Hanna felt as if her insides were going to shrivel up and die. She had hoped this plan wouldn’t work, but here he was, the day after she had laid down her challenge, with a prospect for her to marry. He had really spent a lot of time trying to find the man she was supposed to spend her life with, she thought ruefully. Actually, Grandfather’s will hadn’t specified how long she stayed married, just that she got married. She planned to get a divorce as soon as the will was settled. This farce of a marriage wouldn’t last long.

“Well, don’t you want to know who he is?” Will asked impatiently.

Hanna had a sudden urge to reach over and slap him in the mouth. But instead, she said, “Not really, but I can tell you’re going to tell me anyway.”

“Matt Corbett!” Satisfaction sounded in every word.

Laughter exploded from Hanna’s throat.

“*The* Matt Corbett?” Her mother asked in awe.

“The one and the same!” Will practically shouted.

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“But how? Why?” Their mother was flushed with excitement from the news.

“Oh, Mother, can’t you see he’s just playing one of his childish tricks on us? Surely you don’t believe Matt Corbett would agree to marry someone he’s never seen. With all he has going on for him, he can choose anyone he wants.” Hanna’s sound reasoning brought her mother back to earth.

“Well, Sis, ol’ Matt has run into a little trouble with the Internal Revenue Service. It seems that his manager has been skimming off the top, bottom, and middle of Matt’s finances, and hasn’t been paying any of Matt’s bills, so he’s in big trouble. The IRS came in last week and confiscated everything he owns that’s worth a dime, and Matt’s about to declare bankruptcy. I just happened to find him drowning his sorrows in his beer last night, and I gave him the proposal of a lifetime. I told him I would pay off his debts if he would marry my sister, sight unseen. He agreed.” Will slapped the polished oak table so hard it made both women jump.

“Will, he was drunk! I’m sure when he wakes up this morning and realizes what he’s done, he’ll change his mind.” Hanna couldn’t believe her brother was naive enough to believe Matt Corbett would marry her.

“It won’t matter if he does want to change his mind,” Will stated with a smug look on his face. “He’s in the palm of our hands!”

“And why is that?” Hanna wondered what Will could have possibly done to be so sure of his “catch.”

“As soon as he agreed to my terms, I called Carl Hardin, and took Matt to Carl’s office and we drew up the papers last night. It’s legal. He can’t back out.”

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“Will, one of these days that crooked lawyer friend of yours is going to get the two of you into something he can’t talk your way out of. This just may be it,” Hanna warned.

Matthew Corbett came slowly awake. His mouth felt like it had a three-pound cotton ball stuck where his tongue was supposed to be. His head felt as if it would explode if he moved it at all, and when he tried to open his squinted eyes to the sun shining in through the dingy window, he gave a cry of pain and fell back on the bed.

Moving very slowly, he made himself get off the bed. He had to go to the bathroom or he was going to pee on himself. Finally, after washing his face and combing his hair, he stumbled back into the small dingy hotel room where he had spent the night.

Reality crept into his foggy brain. His house was gone. His car was gone. Hell, he barely had the money to rent this cheap hotel room for the night. And going out last night, spending money getting drunk wasn’t the smartest thing he’d ever done, either. When he got a chance to find that damn manager who had screwed him out of everything, he wouldn’t have to worry about a place to stay. He was going to kill that son of a bitch, and then he’d be in prison. At least he’d have a place to sleep and food to eat.

He slumped into the uncomfortable chair beside the wobbly table in the corner of the room and was about to hold his throbbing head in his hands when he spotted the papers on the table. Not remembering laying any papers on the table, he reached over and started to read the contents.

The letterhead was from a lawyer’s office, and the document stated that he had agreed to marry someone named Hanna Rockwell, sight unseen, in exchange for enough money to pay off all his debts

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plus settle the score that was left over with the IRS if what they collected from his possessions didn't cover what he owed them.

Sight unseen? What kind of woman was she that he would have to agree to marry her "sight unseen"? Was she some kind of monster? His hangover didn't stop him from conjuring up all kinds of horror images of some woman who didn't want to be seen until after her wedding. And why did she have to have an arranged wedding? Was she so repulsive she couldn't even find her own husband?

But the worst horror of all was finding his own signature at the end of the three-page document. He had already agreed to do this! He couldn't deny his own signature scrawled in the spot marked by an X. But how? When?

He vaguely remembered some guy having a couple of drinks with him last night, but he had already been pretty far gone when the guy joined him at his table, so he didn't remember anything about him. Was he the one who had gotten up this bogus contract? He picked up the phone and called the number that was on the letterhead.

"Carl Hardin's office," a man's voice answered.

"Carl Hardin, please," Matt requested.

"Speaking."

"Carl, this is Matt Corbett. I need to talk to you about a contract I supposedly signed last night."

"Hello," Hanna spoke into the phone receiver.

"Hanna? This is Carl Hardin. Is Will there?" Hanna had never heard Carl sound so stressed before.

"Yes, he's here. Do you want to speak with him?"

"No, just tell him to get down here right now. Matt Corbett is on his way to see us."

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Hanna hung up the phone and turned back to her mother and Will, who were discussing the possibilities of having Matt Corbett as part of their family.

“I do believe there’s already trouble with your new business partner, Will. That was Carl. He wants you in his office right now. Seems as if a certain Matt Corbett is on his way to see you two.” Hanna couldn’t keep the note of victory from her voice.

Will’s face turned a little white as he bounded for the door.

“Really, Hanna, I think you like making things difficult. I believe you secretly want this whole thing to fall through,” her mother said, and stormed from the room.

Carrying a fresh cup of steaming coffee, Hanna opened the sliding glass doors that led from the dining room and stepped onto the adjoining deck. A cool spring breeze danced through the treetops to the music of singing birds. Leaning back in a chaise lounge, Hanna closed her eyes and reveled in the peace of the moment.

Matt Corbett. What would life be like with Matt Corbett, the rock star? Well, he used to be a rock star. She remembered when she thought he was the most handsome man who ever lived. And sexy! Her full understanding of the word “sexy” came as a result of her teenage crush on Matt Corbett.

She used to have a full size poster of him in her room. What happened to that poster? Did she still have it stored away somewhere? She would look for it later. But she didn’t need a picture to remember how he looked. He was medium height, not a big man, but that dark hair and those smoky brown eyes, and that olive complexion, made him look so masculine that women made fools of themselves constantly over him. And when he was on stage, shaking his hips like he did—Hanna felt her body go warm all over.

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A smile played on her full lips as she let herself fantasize briefly about being married to Matt Corbett. *She* sure wouldn't mind. She wouldn't be in as big a hurry to divorce him as she had planned on if *he* wound up being her husband.

What if it did happen? And wouldn't it be a hoot if he found her really attractive and fell in love with her, and—

“*Hooold it!*” she admonished herself out loud. She wouldn't let herself get too carried away with a fantasy she knew could never happen.

But she couldn't get Matt Corbett off her mind. After several attempts to relax and enjoy the morning, she gave up and headed upstairs to see if she could find her teenage treasures. Soon she found the box where she had stored some of her old memorabilia. Standing in the far back corner of her closet was the cardboard poster of Matt.

Pulling the poster out of the closet made Hanna feel like a teenager again. Her heart pounded faster, just gazing at Matt's beautiful smile. He had been her idol. Her dream man.

In the poster he had on the tight jeans and black leather jacket that was his trademark. His dark hair was slicked back off his face, but hung to his shoulders. The guitar strap was drooped loosely around his neck and the guitar hung seductively between his legs as he stood with feet apart and hands in the air, as if he had just finished a perfect performance.

And his performances *had* been perfect. But then he started to quietly fade from the public's eye, and gradually disappeared as so many of the great performers do.

She had mourned his slow disappearance almost as one would mourn a lost lover. She had acquired any and all information about him that was available to the public. She knew his likes and dislikes.

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His favorite colors. His favorite foods. She could have answered any trivia question about him that anyone could have possibly asked.

She wondered if he'd changed much in the last 15 years. Did he still wear black jeans and a black leather jacket? Did he still have that smooth, sexy voice?

She was so lost in her memories that she didn't hear Will calling her name until he was almost to her room. Hurriedly, she stood the poster back inside her closet and barely had the door closed when Will burst into her room.

"He's going to do it! He's curious as to why he can't see you until after the wedding, but Carl and I talked to him until he agreed to go through with it!"

"Will, I'm curious about that, too," Hanna interrupted him.

"What?" He looked puzzled.

"Why can't my prospective husband see me? Why did you come up with that stipulation?"

"Well—uh—I just thought—"

Will's stumbling over an excuse irritated Hanna, because she knew full well the reason he'd come up with that stipulation. He was afraid if Matt Corbett knew she was fat, he wouldn't agree to the wedding.

"Forget it, Will. Just go. I have things to do." She shooed him from her room.

After closing and locking the door behind Will, Hanna went back to the closet. She found her favorite Matt Corbett CD and stuck it into the CD player. Remembered schoolgirl emotions swept over her as his voice started crooning her favorite love song. It was one of his slower songs, which allowed the quality of his voice to come through.

She took the poster out and stood it against the wall. Suddenly Matt's eyes seemed to lock with hers, and panic washed over her. She

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was going to marry Matt Corbett! She was going to marry the only man she had ever had a crush on! And she was scared!

She sank slowly to the floor in front of the poster and gazed up at it. Her chest felt as if her heart would tear its way through her ribcage. Her palms started to bead up with moisture.

What was she going to do? What if she went through with this wedding and he found her repulsive? In her fantasies, he had always been the one who had loved her unconditionally. He had loved her just the way she was, and had never wanted her to starve herself and lose weight. Now that fantasy was going to be blown.

She couldn't let that happen. She would just stick with her initial plan. She would go through with the wedding, and then she would disappear until the will was settled. Then she would get a divorce. She would arrange it to where Matt Corbett would never see her, except on their wedding day. That way, she would never have to see the disappointment in his eyes when he realized what she looked like.

With that decision made, Hanna could feel herself start to calm down. She stood the poster in the closet, but left it where she could see it when the door was open. She could dream, even if nothing would ever come of those dreams.

Sunday morning when Hanna came down for breakfast, her mother already had the Sunday paper spread out on the dining room table. Good, Hanna thought. Maybe if her mother was reading, she wouldn't start babbling about Matt Corbett like she had done continually since Will had announced that Matt had, indeed, agreed to the wedding contract.

Hanna had her usual cup of coffee and bagel, and was contentedly nibbling the raisins off the bagel when she heard her mother's sharply in-drawn breath.

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“Oh—my—word!” She screeched, half rising from her chair.

“Mother, what is it?” Hanna asked, giving her mother her complete attention for a change.

But all her mother could do was point at the paper.

In exasperation, Hanna got up and went to read what her mother was pointing at. There on the front of the “Living” section of the paper was a large picture of Hanna, with a headline reading *Rockwell Heiress Finally Sets the Date*.

Hanna stared open-mouthed at the photo. It was a recent picture that had been taken one day when she had gone to the park for a brief getaway from Rockwell Place. One of the local TV crews was out filming “first signs of spring,” as they called it. She had been standing beside a huge old oak tree, watching the squirrels, when a young photographer had walked up to her and asked if he could take her picture. She had agreed, but had asked him not to put it on TV.

She’d had on a cream-colored chiffon dress that reached to her ankles, and the wind had it plastered against her body. Her hair had been whipped into a mass of reddish golden curls that seemed to be everywhere at once. Hanna smiled to herself. The young photographer was really good. He’d made her look like a sex goddess from some other century.

“I’ll sue that stupid paper. Look what they’ve done to you! They’ve made you look like some wanton floozy! I’m calling them right now!”

“No, Mother. You aren’t going to call or to sue.” Determination sounded in Hanna’s every word. Seldom did she stand up to her mother, but when she did, she usually got results.

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“But why? We didn’t give them permission to print this. They can’t print something like this without asking us first.” Frustration sounded in every word.

“Who have you told about the wedding?”

“Well—I—uh—well—a lot of people,” her mother stuttered.

“I know. I’ve heard you on the phone constantly talking about it,” Hanna said, accusingly.

“But I have to make plans. I can’t plan a wedding without talking about it.”

“Did you speak with Mrs. Tolbert?”

“Yes,” her mother said. “I asked her to tell the bridge club I wouldn’t be there for a few weeks. I would be busy with the wedding.”

“And did she ask about photos for the paper?” Hanna persisted.

“Yes, she asked if I had any pictures of you. I told her I didn’t have any good ones.” Her mother didn’t even consider how her statement might make Hanna feel.

“And? What did she say?”

“Hmmmmm. Oh, she asked if I did have a good picture, would I agree to let the paper run an article about the wedding. I told her I would, and she asked a few more questions, and that was all of the conversation.”

“Well, Mother, that was how the picture got into the paper. Tom, the photographer who took the picture, is Mrs. Tolbert’s son. He does freelance photography for the paper and TV stations.”

“But still, I didn’t give them permission.”

“Forget it, Mother. It’s my picture. If anyone has a right to have a problem it should be me, and I don’t have a problem with it.”

“But it makes you look so—so—”

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“Fat?” Hanna filled in the word she knew her mother was trying so hard not to say.

“Well, I didn’t say that!”

“No, but you wanted to,” Hanna said, and, taking her bagel and coffee, escaped to the balcony.

Matt Corbett perched on a stool in front of the counter at the little coffee shop two blocks from the motel where Will Rockwell had paid his expenses until the wedding. He ordered coffee and a sweet roll from the waitress, who kept flirting with him every chance she got.

He wasn’t totally broke, but his assets were frozen until he could get this IRS fiasco straightened out. So Will had also given him a food allowance until the wedding. He didn’t like Will Rockwell much. He couldn’t figure out the guy’s motives. Why was he in such a hurry to get his sister married off, and why couldn’t Matt see his future wife? He had an occasional nightmare of lifting the veil to kiss his new bride and finding a snake’s head in place of a woman’s.

He couldn’t believe what a mess his life had gotten into. How in the hell had he, Matt Corbett, come to the point in his life that he was having to depend on a rich playboy to support him until he could say “I do” to the playboy’s mysterious sister?

He probably could have gotten out of the contract he’d signed when he was dog drunk, but the next day at the lawyer’s office Will and the lawyer had been so persuasive, he’d decided to give it a shot. After all, what did he have to lose? His career was sure shot to hell. His band had long since broken up and each member had found another gig to pull. And now that the government had confiscated all his possessions, he had absolutely nothing. He should be thankful that something like this Rockwell situation had come along when it

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did. Where would he be without it? On the streets, probably. Of course, the IRS didn't give a damn about that as long as they got theirs.

But the mysterious bride-to-be bothered him a lot. Would he be expected to perform sexually? Just like a real husband? There had been nothing in the contract about that.

Weary from trying to figure it all out, Matt reached for the Sunday paper someone had left lying on the counter. The "Living" section was on top. As he pulled the paper toward him he was captivated by a picture of a gorgeous woman that covered most of the page. Whoever had taken the photograph was good. They'd captured the golden highlights in her light red hair. They'd captured the creamy complexion and those big green eyes.

Matt's eyes traveled down her body. The wind had pressed her dress against her, outlining her large breasts and full hips. It even revealed the V between her legs. Now here was a woman! She almost looked like a goddess from a long-lost island. One that he would like to be stranded on, if she was there, he mused with a lopsided grin.

At 36, Matt had reached a place in his life where he was secure enough in his manhood that he wasn't afraid anymore to admit he liked women with a little meat on their bones. He had spent years trying to make himself feel attracted to the skinny women that were splashed everywhere he looked, but he finally realized he just wasn't attracted to that type of woman. He knew a lot of men who were, or who said they were, and to each his own, but he had "come out."

He was no longer a closet lover of big beautiful women. He loved them right out in the open, and it felt so good. He had been amazed when some of his friends gladly agreed with him when he stated his

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preference for larger women. It was almost like they had been afraid to be the first to admit they felt the same way.

But why couldn't he have met someone like this gorgeous babe before he agreed to marry "the monster lady," as he had taken to calling her in his mind? Did the paper give her name? Maybe he'd call her if she weren't married. If this goddess was available, he might have to call off this farce of a marriage.

Then his eyes fell on the headline, *Rockwell Heiress Finally Sets the Date*. Realization didn't sink in when he first read the words. So what's her name, he wondered, looking for the article that went with the picture. Then it hit him.

"*Rockwell?*" He didn't realize he'd spoken out loud. Could this be? Frantically, he searched for the article.

Hanna Rockwell, heiress to the Rockwell Place estate, has set her wedding date. According to sources, unless Hanna marries by her 30th birthday, she and her family lose the entire estate. The wedding will take place on June 17.

So that's it! Suddenly, the mystery cleared up. Brother Will had to find his sister a husband or the family would lose their estate.

But why wasn't Matt allowed to see her? That didn't make any sense. And why couldn't a woman who looked like that picture find a husband on her own? Why did her brother have to get a total stranger to sign a contract to marry her sight unseen? Was there something else wrong with her? Something that didn't show up in this picture? Was she mentally unstable? Solving the mystery of finding out how she looked just seemed to add more questions for him.

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But looking again at the picture in front of him, suddenly Matt didn't care. She was beautiful! He laughed out loud as he picked up the paper, stuck it under his arm and left the coffee shop.

Life had suddenly taken on a whole new meaning.

About the Author

Pat Ballard lives in Nashville, TN. She writes motivational romance novels with Big Beautiful Heroines to show that plus-size women can be just as sexy, romantic, and exciting as their slim sisters.

Visit Pat at www.patballard.com.

Check out other books by Pat — and more — at the Pearlsong Press website at www.pearlsong.com.

If Hanna Rockwell isn't married by the time she reaches her 30th birthday, she will lose her home and her entire inheritance.

A novel by the
*Queen of
Rubensque
Romances*
Pat Ballard

Hanna's mother and brother, who live with her at Rockwell Place, are desperately afraid they're going to lose their home and allowance. Their constant nagging at Hanna to find someone to marry has driven her to challenge them. "Start planning the wedding, Mother. And Will, you find the groom. And I'll get married on my 30th birthday!"

Feeling confident her plan will never work, Hanna is dismayed when Will announces that Matt Corbett has agreed to marry Hanna. *The Matt Corbett?* The has-been rock star who was her teenage idol? No way!

Matt Corbett can't believe the string of events that's led him to make a decision to marry a stranger. But he's determined to get back on his feet. And he's determined to make his former manager pay dearly for getting him in the financial ruin he's in.

Yes, he'll marry Hanna Rockwell so he'll have a place to live, just long enough to jump-start his country music career.

But he hadn't counted on falling in love with her.

PRaise FOR

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Once again another book by Pat that I just can't put down. If you plan on getting this book and reading a few chapters, forget about it. If you start the book before bedtime, plan on being up late.

—Paula Johnson from *W.P.B., FL*

If you're looking for romance, Ms. Ballard delivers! *Wanted* is definitely worth the read. Ms. Ballard pulls you into her story from the beginning and doesn't let you go until the last page. Her love scenes sizzle and her plot has plenty of sexual tension to keep the reader turning the pages...ENJOY!

—H. Barrett from *Raleigh, NC*

Finally, realistic heroines!...I was delighted by the book, and had a hard time putting it down. Ms. Ballard paints her characters with a vivid brush—I even found myself daydreaming about Hanna! This book proves that all women are beautiful, not just what Hollywood considers beautiful.

—Rick Bentzen from *Anaheim, CA*

What fans have to say about Pat:

Thank God, someone has the strength to be sane, and let a woman "just be." Someone can look the societal ideal in the eye and say "no thanks, I'm valuable as I am." Women are tired and overstressed from doing it all... We need a collective "enough already," and to send out the message that who we are as individuals is worth enough. Thanks.

—Jena Leonardo

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