



Playing Dirty: Monkey Business Trio

By C. L. Parker



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From C. L. Parker comes the start of an irresistible new series in which competition is the ultimate seduction.

“Loaded with wit and snark, great characters, and lots of hot, steamy, naughty sex, *Playing Dirty* is sure to satisfy.”—*New York Times* bestselling author J. Kenner

Shaw Matthews plays to win, and he intends to snag a coveted partnership at San Diego’s hottest sports agency by signing America’s top athlete. Only one woman stands in his way: rival agent Cassidy Whalen. But eliminating the competition will be Shaw’s pleasure when he concocts an ingenious plan to seduce Cassidy and show the beautiful ballbreaker who’s the better man for the job. That is, until Cassidy turns the tables—and their steamy encounters start breaking all the rules.

Cassidy has worked hard to make it in a man’s cutthroat arena, and she isn’t going down without a fight, not even against the six-two alpha hunk whose rock-hard body awakens desires she’s never known before. As Cassidy shares night after night of unending passion with Shaw, the game begins to change. Now Cassidy stands to lose everything—unless a fiery contest of wills can become a winning proposition for two people who keep raising the stakes.

***Playing Dirty* is intended for mature audiences.**

Praise for *Playing Dirty*

“Fun, action-packed . . . Readers will be eager to read the sequel, hoping for more rough and dirty sexual acrobatics, friendship, backstabbing, and empathy.”—*Publishers Weekly*

“This snappy, sexy novel moves at breakneck speed, with abundant snark and sports euphemisms. . . . Parker’s penchant for dry humor and vivid, voracious sex scenes breathes life into a well-trodden premise.”—*Library Journal*

“Parker writes intense storylines that anyone can relate to. Her characters are complex, with long and sometimes turbulent pasts that they have overcome, that still continues to affect their present. . . . I cannot wait to see where she takes this

new series.”—*Fresh Fiction*

“*Playing Dirty* is [a] top ten hottest book for this year.”—**Under the Covers**

“Smokin’ hot, toe-curling, yummilicious! Yup . . . just a few words to describe this hot, hot read.”—**The Reading Cafe**

“A story and characters that are unforgettable and equally super hot, intense and emotional!”—**Collector of Book Boyfriends**

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Playing Dirty: Monkey Business Trio By C. L. Parker Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #998584 in Books
- Published on: 2015-05-12
- Released on: 2015-05-12
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.93" h x .72" w x 5.17" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 336 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

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About the Author

C. L. Parker is a romance author who writes stories that sizzle. She’s a small-town girl with big-city dreams and enough tenacity to see them come to fruition. Having been the outgoing sort all her life—which translates to “she just wouldn’t shut the hell up”—it’s no wonder Parker eventually turned to writing as a way to let her voice, and those of the people living inside her head, be heard. She loves hard, laughs until it hurts, and lives like there’s no tomorrow. In her world, everything truly does happen for a reason.

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Chapter 1

Shaw

“So the goal here, people,” Wade Price, CEO of Striker Sports Entertainment, said as he wrapped up—I hoped—his very long-winded pep talk, “is to wine and dine Rockford. Give him any and everything he wants. Romance him until he signs with this agency. Matthews, I’m counting on you and Whalen. And, since you’re the best of the best, I’m sending both of you to meet with him. The decision I make regarding the partnership hinges on who is able to succeed. Simply put, whichever one of you gets me Rockford gets the position.”

It figured.

Every agent employed by Striker Sports Entertainment was present at the weekly staff meeting to give

witness to what was, undoubtedly, the biggest showdown between the most competitive agents in the city. And they just happened to be employed by the same agency. I was one of those agents, Shaw Matthews. The bane of my existence, Cassidy Whalen, was the other.

After Wade's partner, Monty Prather, retired, the vacant spot came up for grabs. Cassidy and I had been competing for the job since it had been announced, three months ago. I think Wade loved to watch us go at each other. I know the rest of the office did. We were both ruthless in our antics, unforgiving in our quest to secure the most coveted prizes, which were usually the same clients every other agent in the nation wanted. More often than not, we won. Combined, our haul was impressive, but it was small potatoes compared to what was in store. Cassidy and I had never gone head-to-head for the same client.

Until now.

It wasn't often that one of the most sought after athletes ditched their agent and publicly advertised that they were on the lookout for someone who could make them even more money than they were already making, which was an insane amount. Wade Price wanted a taste of that insanity, so he was unleashing his favorite pets and pitting us against each other. I had to hand it to him; it was a smart move. Tapping into our insatiable need to one-up each other guaranteed that Striker would bring home the win.

Our target was Denver "Rocket Man" Rockford, San Diego's star quarterback. Apparently, his former agent hadn't had the same vision as Denver for his future, so he got sacked (no pun intended), and Denver was on the hunt for new representation. And it just so happened his contract was up for renewal, with him coming off a more than stellar performance for the season and little time left before he needed to get back to training for the next. Fast decisions needed to be made, which meant fast talking and fast walking. Naturally, Wade felt Striker was the agency that could best negotiate the deal. And even though the payday was a nice bit of incentive, it was the notoriety of being Denver's agent that I craved most.

Cassidy stood in the way of that. I meant to plow her down, but she wasn't going to make it easy.

She was a real man-eater, the sort whose career meant more to her than enjoying the fruits of all that labor. She never missed a day of work, and she knew things about her clients they didn't even know about themselves. Cassidy Whalen was as worthy an opponent as I had ever come up against. In fact, her client list was every bit as impressive as mine. Not bad for a chick. She was good. She was also a bore. And a bitch.

She didn't like me very much, which was unusual, because most women did. Maybe she just needed to get laid. I doubted very seriously that anything like that was happening. I didn't really care, but I'd made it my business to know my enemy, so I'd paid attention to details. No ring on her finger meant she wasn't married or engaged. And around here, no gossip at the water cooler meant she also wasn't involved in any interoffice romances. Not that gossip equaled fact. There were plenty of stories circulating about me, but those were all wishful thinking without an ounce of truth.

My adversary's aversion to me, seemingly without a man to whom she was simply loyal, forced me to formulate my own theories in an attempt to reason it all out. The one at the top of my list was pretty clever, in my opinion. I was betting she was secretly a black widow, sucking the life out of men who dared get near her. Even if I'd hit the mark with that one, I wasn't the least bit intimidated. I could handle her. Admittedly, I was sort of curious to know if she was as much of a hellcat in the sack as she was in the boardroom. Lord knows she'd given me more than one hard-on while strutting her stuff like her shit didn't stink, mostly while taking shots at me.

“Sir, do we have anything on him?” Cassidy’s glasses were perched on the end of her nose, and her long legs were crossed, with her hand poised to jot down any information he could provide on her next target. Somehow she even managed to make suck-up look sort of sexy. Not that she’d intended to.

She and I were alike in a lot of ways, but this wasn’t one of them. I preferred the casual approach, leaning back in my chair and propping an elbow on the table to take it all in. For one thing, I was bored. For another, this meeting had already gone on far longer than necessary, and I had shit to do. I didn’t bother with a pen or a pad of paper; I wasn’t interested in taking notes. I didn’t need to. I had the memory of an elephant and could recall details others missed even if they’d recorded the whole damn thing.

I chuckled under my breath, amused by Cassidy’s eagerness. She must have heard me, because the spike of her heel found its way onto the top of my foot. And it felt none too pleasant. I shot up straight but covered my growl with a cough when Wade’s eyes pinned me to my seat. Cassidy sat prim and proper beside me, like nothing had happened. Innocent, she was not.

I took the look of disapproval from Wade and kept my trap shut so he could answer her and this meeting could be over with already.

“I expect you to do your own digging for his personal details. Makes it more authentic. And you could use a challenge, Whalen.”

Cassidy nodded. “Yes, sir. I look forward to it.”

Suck. Up.

“I want a report from each of you first thing after your meeting. Now get your butts out of here. It’s a madhouse out there, and I want to head home.” Finally. He turned away, mumbling under his breath, “I hate rush-hour traffic.”

As eager as I was for the meeting to adjourn, I was even more eager to mess with my nemesis. Maybe shake her foundation a bit. Any chance I had to do it, I pounced. So I took my time hauling myself out of the leather seat, which had nearly become glued to my ass, while the room cleared and Cassidy studiously gathered her things. No one needed that much crap for a staff meeting.

Once the room was empty, I leaned in. “Ever worry your nose will get stuck in his ass and you’ll have to have it surgically removed?”

Without so much as a pause in her actions or a look in my direction, she came back with “Ever worry you’ll get lockjaw from sucking his cock?”

There she was. Cassidy Whalen had everyone else in the office fooled, but not me. I’d been on the receiving end of her mouth since the day I’d arrived, almost a year before. She was jealous, and she’d formulated her opinion of me before I’d even stepped foot back on American soil after my long tenure abroad.

“Nice, Whalen. Really nice. Do you kiss your mother with that mouth?”

“Who I kiss and with what is none of your concern.”

“How about you pucker up and kiss my ass?”

Cassidy dropped her messenger bag and turned on me. “I am so sick of your crap, Matthews. Since the day you got here, you’ve acted like everything should be handed to you. And now you think you deserve the position I’ve been busting my butt for?”

“Oh, so you’re the only person who’s been busting their ass around here? I’m sure the rest of the staff would appreciate knowing that.”

“Don’t put words into my mouth. You knew what I meant.”

“I’m sorry, but I’m not fluent in bitch.”

Her laugh was sarcastic, but the ire behind those green eyes was completely authentic. She was so cute when she was perturbed.

“Listen up, golden boy.” She leaned in, encroaching upon my personal space. “You might have been Monty Prather’s pride and joy, but he’s not here to pamper you anymore. Which means you might actually have to do some real work, because if you think for one second that I’m going to roll over and play dead to appease your sense of entitlement, you’re even dumber than you look. You want that partnership? You better get your act together, since I will not hesitate for one second to do whatever I need to in order to rip it out of your precious, perfectly manicured clutches.”

Pfft .??. I did not get manicures. And she obviously didn’t know a thing about me, other than how to piss me off. My chair shot back when I stood—not that I’d meant for it to happen, but the effect was cool. “I was going to take it easy on you, but just for that, now I’m going to bury you!”

No, it wasn’t a zinger of a comeback, and I was disappointed in myself. It was like lying in bed with an exotic beauty and having nothing to offer but a limp cock. And no, that had never happened to me, either—the limp cock, not the exotic beauty. I knew Cassidy was quick on the draw, though, so I didn’t stick around for her witty retort. Instead, I bolted out of the boardroom and slammed the door behind myself.

The woman infuriated me to no end. I had never let anyone else get under my skin, and I was perplexed as to why she was able to do it so easily. Normally, I was pretty laid-back, cool as a cucumber, comfortable in any element, without a care in the world. But when Cassidy Whalen walked into the room, something inside me went haywire. She was the Achilles’ heel to my composure, kryptonite to my self-confidence. I kept it together for the most part when she was around, not wanting to show my hand lest she use it to her advantage. I knew she would because I would do the same thing. But she wasn’t going to win. I’d never concede victory to a woman. I just wasn’t made up of the stuff that would allow me to utter those blasphemous words from my mouth.

My feet landed heavily on the trek back to my office to pull my shit together so I could get the hell out of there and find a tall cold one. I even blew past the gaggle of assistants and receptionists who liked to bat their lashes and show way too much cleavage; I wasn’t in the mood to flirt. Okay, I could’ve used the boost to my ego, so I probably should’ve made that stop, but I didn’t.

When I reached my suite, my assistant snapped his head up from his desk and stared after me. “I take it the meeting went well?”

“Can it, Ben!” I barked. “Shit! Shit! Shit!”

“What happened?”

“I’ll give you three guesses.”

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Cecil Atkins:

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Eleanor Abney:

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