

MURDALAND ISSUE #2 PREVIEW PDF VISIT WWW.MURDALANDMAGAZINE.COM TO ORDER MURDALAND ONLINE

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Sinny and the Prince: A Fairy Tale Vicki Hendricks

Once upon a time, nothing but pure pleasure here in twin-sis Lydia's palace on the Florida Intracoastal. Cindy in paradise, that's me – called myself Sinny in the trade. Sun slashing through palms, the slap of waves at the sea wall after a yacht passes by. A sweet rotting smell of jungle, hanging orchids, giant-leaf plants and ferns, deep privacy. Orchid plants look dead, but according to Hudson – Lydia's new husband, Hudson Prince – the orchids are healthy and plenty rare. Don't touch! – as if I would.

Steel drum music on surround sound, water spurting over rock into the free-form pool. I'm itty-bitty-bikini'd on my throne, Lydia's floating chair, smearing on coconut sun block, a salt-rimmed margarita in the drink holder – or a mojito – depending. Often a joint in my left hand, Lydia's creamy high-quality stuff. It's a land of milk and honey, far from the assholes who follow naturally pouty lips, big tits and tight pussy on Bourbon Street. Ha! Goodbye to my old tricks, no more cunt-popping ping-pong balls into a net. Hit the bull's-eye, ring a damn bell!

Me – the unlucky half of identical twins – got stuck with mom and heroin when Lydia fetched a high price from the rich lawyer, the household where mom did the cleaning. A couple years later, when my little Cindy-ass slowed her down on the biker scene, she dumped me fast for nothing. Sure, I'd love it, a family with a real dad, perfect, according to the state of Ohio.

Me, raped at ten in a foster home. Lydia, ballet and piano in the music room of her childhood mansion. Not her fault that at an early age I learned to take a finger up the wazoo without a peep. It got me ice creams. And no, it didn't stop there. It never does. So that's the tale, one princess and one pauper, an old story. No excuse for murder, I know!

Desperate at twenty-six, when Katrina cleaned out my life in one huge surge, I gambled my victim money on a PI and hit big-time when he found sis. In a heavy New Orleans accent – to contrast with hers – told her and Huddy-boy how I lost my Gulf Coast bed and breakfast, barely escaped alive (one part true). So lucky to find my sweet, generous sister when the whole world was swept away.

As her twin, so easy to memorize Lydia's habits, get her signature down pat. The change to Lydia's speech, back to my old Midwest voice when I kill her. Piece of cake.

So here I am, the day before the deadly step, my eyes closed, legs wide open astride the floating chair, feet dangling in the warm water. I review, testing myself on facts and Lydia's mannerisms, but mostly wallowing in decadence.

The glass door slides open and shut. My guess, athletic Hudson in his skimpy Speedo, ready for an after-work swim while Lydia downs a few drinks first at her leopard-print decorated bar. Hud oozes sleaze – a world I know – through three-hundred-dollar Hawaiian shirts he can afford with Lydia. Slap of flip-flops, scratch of toenails on terrazzo – prancing Lulu, the rat-sized dog, a better life for the spoiled pooch than I ever had. I don't look, hope Hud goes away. Flip-flops cross the patio, pause... the whoosh of him... a wave... a splash!

“Fuck!” I wipe the water from my face, check the roach in the ashtray. Wet.

He laughs. “Thought you were dead, Cindy, finally overdid the booze and sun.

” Remember the accent. “Ya’ll would spla-ash a corpse, Hud?”

“Not as a rule, but you, yes.” He shakes the water from his curly shoulder length hair, diamond ear stud catching light. “Hudson. Not Hud.”

I shut my eyes, reject the bait from Prince Sorry-Piece-of-Shit married to the money. Lydia must be dreaming if she thinks he’s in love. He’s using her, leaching funds for a business that neither will talk about. Some scam he knows I’ll see through, so he’s sworn her to secrecy. She’s wrapped around his finger seems to me, but she’s not stupid. With her kind of money and lawyers, there’s a pre-nup for sure. When I’m her, I’ll divorce Hud’s ass, collect the house and bank account – which must be huge since the old adopted mother passed, Palm Beach society folk, according to the obit. Sweet Lydia. She wouldn’t say “shit” if she had a mouthful. At least, that’s her act. So easy with the life of fantasies.

“How much longer you plan to stay?” Hud asks. He’s back-stroking with his head above water.

“Soon as Ah fah-nd a job, get paid, Ah’m out a he-ah.”

“Fish and guests, you know – three days tops. You’ve been here three weeks already.” He laughs and pauses mid-stroke to pinch his nose for emphasis. “Time to start hustling that pussy.”

I don’t know if he suspects my real career or is just being crude. I ignore him, since he doesn’t matter. Everything is Lydia’s.

He reaches the side, ducks, flips over and swims the length of the pool under water. If only I could kill him instead.

That evening at dinner, Lydia is the princess for sure. Hair swept up, gold and pearls dripping from her ears, a pale blue kimono – pure silk, I bet. Make-up perfect, full glossy lips, long lashes brushing soft powdered cheeks. She smiles when she pours the wine, her dimple showing. She’s exactly like me, yet so lovely that I want to kiss her. But I don’t know her and I never will. The longer the wait, the harder murder gets. She passes foie gras on a chilled sterling platter. No goose safe from the moneyed.

I hand the dish to Hudson. Only meatless meals for Sinny – to set up more contrast between me and Lydia. I’m anemic waiting to make the switch! Even Lulu has a tender bite of liver in her crystal dog dish under the table.

“We have to go out tonight, Cindy. A charity event. Too late to get a ticket for you.”

She’s too embarrassed for me to meet her friends. “Shu-ah, Lydie, but we nev-ah get to talk.”

Hudson turns my way, on the side Lydia can’t see, a silent snarl.

Lydia chews a tiny bite, gulps her wine. “I know.”

I nod, eager to have the place to myself at night, watch the giant-screen TV with five hundred channels, sipping Grand Marnier and nibbling left-over liver before it’s Lulu food. More luxury in one evening than in my whole life till now.

“Tomorrow Hudson can handle business alone. We’ll spend the afternoon together – girl talk.”

My stomach drops. I lift the wine glass to hide my feelings. This is the chance I’ve been waiting for.

Chef Phillip serves them filet mignon with black peppercorns and me a cheesy vegetable soufflé. I try to finish my mushroom bisque, act normal.

“We’ll all go out to eat at The Forge,” Lydia says. “Take the afternoon off tomorrow, Phillip.”

I smile. “Fa-an-ta-stic.” But I know we’ll never make it. Time alone with Lydia is time to kill her. As always, I check her napkin – reinforcing – the way it’s folded, her dabbing at her lips. She eats clockwise ’round her plate, switching knife and fork, cutting filet. I eat left-handed – until tomorrow night. Thinking of the plan, I can hardly swallow. The maid removes the plates and Lydia serves herself more wine. She’s had

three glasses, or four, from appetizer to dessert, scotch straight up before dinner. I can't imagine what part of this tale she's drinking to forget, but her problem makes my luck.

At noon the next day Phillip serves us lunch on the patio, a salad with pears and blue cheese, sugared pecans tossed on top. We toast with champagne. It helps me get the food down. Phillip and the maid leave soon after. I want to forget the plan and go to the restaurant for dinner, but I'll lose my nerve if I wait any longer. Cindy's days are numbered in this household, one way or another.

"To twins, happy together," Lydia toasts.

"Ah owe you so much, Sis-ta."

She shakes her head and drinks up, lips scrunched to her nose, meaning it's nothing – an expression I've practiced in the mirror, too cute for words.

I can do this. There's no choice. I'll make up for it, become an even better Lydia, innocent and giving to the core, an angel – after the divorce. The world won't miss Sinny and Lydia will live on.

After lunch I bring out a box of dye, the auburn color I have on my hair. Our hair is equal length, but mine's curled tight to seem shorter. Only the most exquisite salons have touched Lydia's 'do, but she agrees to let me dye it, for sisterly bonding.

"It'll be fun to look a-lahk," I say, "and it's a tenth the pr-ahce of a salon."

"You get what you pay for," she tells me, wagging her finger.

"Not always, shuga. Sometimes you get mo-ah." I point to my own auburn head. "Ah know what Ah'm doin' with this."

Upstairs she smokes some weed while I section her hair and squeeze on the gel. We talk about her life, her past, the loving adopted family, some aunts and uncles. Even high, she won't say a word about Hud's business. We finish the champagne, waiting for the color to work. She washes her hair and I blow it dry in her normal way, parted in the middle and curved toward her face, a style I'll soon enjoy. She kisses me on the cheek and says thanks, even though I can tell she's not thrilled.

I take her hand. "How 'bout some drinks by the pool? Ah fix a great mah-ga-rita."

We sit at the umbrella table by the waterfall and talk. She drinks, I sip. I tell her about my childhood and tears well in her eyes. I can almost believe she's real. Her act would break my heart if it wasn't smashed to pieces long ago. I drink up, soak in more details – still nothing about the business. She starts to slur.

"Let's take a dip," I tell her. We change into our bikinis and I make her another strong margarita. We sit in the pool on the concrete steps. She talks, I don't listen. Finishes her drink fast. Blotto.

Now or never. I take her by the arm. She smiles, her glassy eyes helping to convince me that it won't hurt. She'll never know what happened, as they say.

That's all of the story we can give you online.

To read Vicki Hendricks' 'Sinny and the Prince: A Fairy Tale' in full alongside an additional 176 pages of dark original fiction order the second issue of 'Murdaland' online at www.murdalandmagazine.com.

