



What the Lady Wants (Hqn)

By Jennifer Crusie

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If he's Cary Grant, where's his Girl Friday?

Mitch Peabody was learning pretty fast that the life of a private detective was nothing like the movies. He'd envisioned a world of tough-talking detectives and smart-mouthed, stunning dames. Instead he saw case after case of cheating husbands, suspicious wives and unsuspecting mistresses...until she walked through the door.

Right down to her stilettos, Mae Sullivan was a knockout with a lethal body—and a lethal family to go with it. There was something not quite on the up-and-up about her, but she came with a case he couldn't afford to refuse...and left him with a case of lust he hadn't had since high school. It didn't take long for him to fall for her, hook, line and sinker. But was Mae interested only in catching the double-crossing crooks who murdered her uncle...or did the lady want to catch him?

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Editorial Review

Review

"Cruise . . . seems incapable of writing a boring page, or one that's not aglow with the sparks of with and romance." -- *Kirkus Reviews*

"Wonderfully fresh, funny, tender, outrageous . . . Crusie is one of a kind." -- *Booklist*

About the Author

Jennifer Crusie has written more than fifteen novels and has appeared on many bestseller lists, including those of Publishers Weekly, USA TODAY and the New York Times.

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Mae Sullivan frowned up at the grimy old office building and shifted from one aching spike-heeled foot to the other, trying to keep the weight off her blisters. From the looks of the neighborhood, her chances of getting mugged were only slightly greater than the chances of the building falling on her. Only a loser would work in a place like this.

Good.

It hadn't been easy finding an incompetent private eye on such short notice in a midwestern city like Riverbend. But now there was Mitchell Peatwick. She could picture him, leaning back in his office chair, balding and overweight, slack-jawed and beady-eyed, no brains to speak of.

He'd patronize her because she was female.

She'd play him like a piano.

All she had to do was convince him that he was investigating a real murder case, and he'd swing his paunchy weight around, creating noise and confusion until whoever had taken her uncle's diary would be forced to either give it up or bury it forever if he didn't want to be accused of murder. Yep, that was all she had to do. *So go do it.* She took a deep breath and winced as the waistband of her borrowed pink skirt cut into her flesh. Then she pulled the veil on her hat over her eyes and walked toward the cracked glass doors of the old building, watching her reflection as she climbed the steps.

Even through the dumb pink veil, she really did look sexy. It was amazing what clothes could do.

Now, if she could just get this damn interview over with before the waistband of June's skirt cut her in two and June's heels made her lame for life, she'd be on her way to solving all of their problems.

Please let Mitchell Peatwick be dumb as a rock with a weakness for women in tight skirts, she prayed as she rang for the elevator. Please let him be everything I need him to be.

The window behind him was cranked wide-open, and the ceiling fan above him stirred the air, and Mitch was sure if he got any hotter, he'd die. As it was, he was pretty sure that the only thing that kept him alive was the fact that he wasn't moving. If he moved, his body temperature would rise, and he'd melt right there in his office chair.

He didn't want to move, anyway. He was too depressed to move. He leaned back in his cracked leather desk chair—sleeves rolled up, hands laced behind his head, heels crossed on his battered metal desk—and thought about the way he'd planned things and the way they'd turned out. Big difference there. Anticipation was a lousy preparation for reality. That's why he was giving it up for fantasy. Fantasy was not particularly productive, nor was it lucrative, but it beat reality hands down.

Reality sucked.

Fantasy was leaving a prosperous career to become a private detective. Reality was regretting it. He closed his eyes and tried to recapture the dream, the part where he'd be the Sam Spade of the nineties. Then the elevator cables rumbled across the hall and Mitch knew another divorce job was coming his way. He hadn't had many illusions about relationships before, he thought sadly, but he had absolutely none now. Even the people who weren't married had him investigate to see if the people they weren't married to were telling the truth. And of course, they weren't. That was the one irrevocable truth Mitch had learned in a year, the only thing, he realized now, that he'd taken away with him.

Everybody lied.

Sam Spade would have understood that part, but he would have spit on the divorce work. Mitch had the uncomfortable feeling that he should be spitting on it, too, instead of making a precarious living at it. Too precarious. He had one week left in the year, one week to earn the last of the twenty thousand dollars and win his stupid bet and go back to his regularly scheduled life, but to do that he needed a client who would shell out \$2,694 before Friday.

It wasn't going to happen. Prying money out of clients was the second least favorite thing he'd learned about this job.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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