

## We All Fall Down

Gossip Girl Book 1

Alicia Dean

Blair stood in the doorway of the ballroom at The Pierre, nervously twisting the handle of her beaded evening bag in her shaking fingers. Ugh. She was nervous. That was unacceptable. *Atrocious*. Blair Waldorf was never nervous. But her plan to win Chuck back was failing miserably. She thought she'd have him dancing to her tune in a few days, a few weeks, tops. It had been nearly a month and she was nowhere. Chuck was much more resistant than she had expected.

The ballroom glittered with bejeweled women wearing everything from Dior to Versace and men wearing tuxes by Armani and Gucci. Chuck was throwing an "I Don't Give a Damn That My Father Is a Son of a Bitch—Chuck Bass Isn't Down for the Count Party," although that's not what he was calling it. He was calling it a Summer Soirée.

Blair had every intention of crashing if she had to, but fortunately, she didn't have to. Chuck sent her an invitation. He was no doubt trying to show how ambivalent he was to her. Not inviting her would make it appear that she still affected him. Of course, she knew she did, but he was just too stubborn to admit it. Tonight, all that would change. She was in full battle mode. Before the night was over, Chuck Bass would be hers once again. Forever this time. The only blight on the evening was not having Serena at her side. She would buy off the rack before she admitted that to anyone out loud. But she missed her best friend. Terribly. Maybe she'd overreacted to Serena's betrayal. After all, S hadn't meant for B's diary pages to end up in Gossip Girl's hands. And Blair had started seeing Dan, knowing how Serena felt about him, even though Blair didn't really love him.

Everything was much simpler when their biggest concern was which step to sit on at the Metropolitan or snagging a table at Butter on a Friday night.

The pages Gossip Girl leaked had actually done Blair a favor. Put an end to hers and Dan's relationship and proved to Chuck once and for all that he was her one true love. Too bad Bastard Bass had filled Chuck's head with all that nonsense about a relationship with Blair being an obstacle to his success. She was the best thing that had ever happened to him. Together, they could rule the Upper East Side. She knew that. She just had to make him see it.

She plucked a glass of Cristal champagne from the tray of a passing waiter and sipped as she searched the room for Chuck. So many people. But her built-in Chuck Bass radar soon zeroed in, and her heart fluttered like a wild bird when she spotted him . . . dark, elegant, and sexy, leaning his back against the bar, one hand in his pocket, the other holding a glass of Scotch. He wore a shiny custom-made Kiton tuxedo with a dove grey shirt and salmon colored tie. He looked . . . breathtaking. Well, now she was going to take *his* breath away. She'd taken special care with her wardrobe. She'd chosen a floor length Valentino halter gown with red shimmering underlay and sheer black lace overlay. The underlay ended at the top of her thigh so that her legs were covered by nothing but sheer black lace. Her carefully styled hair hung loose around her shoulders. The Tiffany ruby and diamond pendant Chuck had given her when they were together rested at the vee of her cleavage.

She moved slowly toward him. He must have sensed her presence. He halted in the motion of bringing his glass to his mouth. His head swiveled until he spotted her. His eyes locked onto her. Tingles raced over her flesh. There was something about him . . . about the way he looked at her, like he could devour her, absorb her into him until they were one.