

you definitely *have* picked an impossible task," she said. And left. Pleasantly.

Inwardly, I kicked myself.

"How to make friends and influence people!" Lee quoted.

And I knew it.

"Really, Christina," he said.

"Totally wrong?" I asked.

"Without a doubt, the prize-winning Hoof-In-Mouth performance of the year."

"In other words, she's not thrilled with the idea."

"Let me tell you something," Lee said.

"Lay it on me, bruthuh," I replied.

"I'm not too thrilled about it myself."

"All right, interviewing Georgiades isn't such a good idea," I agreed politely.

"My opinion is not."

"So don't push it," I said, reading his look.

"Too late," Lee said. "You just pushed all the wrong buttons. That's one lady who's gonna stick close as glue from now on."

"Oh?" I asked. "Is it me or my deodorant?"

Lee laughed. "A little of both," he said. "I don't know if you know this. It isn't any secret that she grew up in a poor family."

"Who didn't?" I asked. I'd paid dues.

"That's not how she sees it," Lee said.

"What makes you so positive?" I asked, with a trace of bitchiness. Still reckless after all these years, Lord.

"I'm a writer," Lee said. "People and people-reading are my business, and what I saw was one very pissed off lady. Add the fact that she hates women generally, and you're in the deep shits, I'd say."

"She hates women?" I asked.

"I don't know if she knows it, at least consciously. But it's been obvious to me for a long time. She always gives herself away."

"How?"

"Tone of voice, a slight stiffness. Little things. But