

*Anastasia DeMars is a successful model enjoying the perks of fame until a humiliating encounter with a Texas sheriff is captured on video and goes viral. Sentenced to community service in small town Pleasant, Anastasia's relationship with fame shifts. Pleasant has gotten under her skin; can a publicity hungry diva find joy out of the spotlight?*

# THE FINAL CHAPTER FOR ANASTASIA DeMARS

by Jan Rosman

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The  
Final Chapter  
for  
Anastasia  
DeMars



JAN ROSMAN

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## CHAPTER 1

On the day of my sentencing I wore a simple black suit. It was Armani, but still, the Carolina Herrera jacket with the bell sleeves would have made a much bigger statement. My attorney, Clayton Fairhope, had issued strict instructions regarding my wardrobe and I would not have gotten past the front door in that magnificent ensemble. Clayton is a bit of a buzz kill, but I must say he takes his job seriously. He appeared in my hotel suite dressing room just as I slipped black pumps on my freshly pedicured feet. This seemed to be taking his job a bit too seriously.

“Clayton, what are you doing in here! Where is Maria? I told you not to worry. I have everything under control.”

Clayton frowned. He has a deep crease between his eyebrows so I think frowning might be his usual face, even when he is not with me. I tried to lighten the mood. “A little Botox would take care of that furrow on your brow. I can ask Dr. Silverman for the name of a good plastic surgeon – if there ARE any good ones around here. My treat!”

“Anastasia, I am a lawyer. I do not do Botox. In fact, I like my face just as it is; we are used to each

other. So thank you, but no. And those shoes are not exactly what I specified in my email.”

“They are black! And if you can give fashion advice, you can get a wee bit of Botox to fix those trenches in your forehead.”

Clayton sighed. “Those black shoes are Louboutin (Clayton pronounced it La-boo-teen) stilettos with tell tale red soles. And this is not fashion advice – clearly I am in over my head on that topic. But I do know we are going to your sentencing, not a photo shoot. You smacked a law enforcement officer in the head with your purse because he accidentally stepped on your Jimmy Choos. Let’s not rub the Judge’s nose in it by wearing another pair of over priced shoes.”

“Why Clayton Fairhope, look at you rattling off designer names like a stylist! Did Maria give you a short course in fashion branding? Surely you haven’t been pricing ladies’ shoes, unless there is something you need to tell us? Have a secret stash of fashion magazines under your mattress, do you?”

Clayton was not amused. As a good old Texas boy, he’d probably be less embarrassed by a hidden stack of *Playboys* than a collection of *InStyles*. I got the distinct impression my teasing was trying his

patience. I did not care, and returned to my last minute touch-ups. I caught his eye in the mirror.

“Besides, you are wrong, Clayton. Every public appearance is a potential photo shoot. Representing a cosmetics empire is a lot of responsibility! I must always look my best.”

“Keeping my client out of jail is also a big responsibility. Let me do my job. Maria?”

My assistant sheepishly poked her head around the door, making me think she had been there all along. She passed a box to Clayton. Traitor! He dropped the lid to reveal a pair of low heeled, sensible pumps. I had seen my dentist wear a pair just like them last week.

“Clayton, I did not assault the officer! That man would not let me explain why I had to run the red light, and he was clearly prejudiced against well dressed women driving expensive foreign cars. There was no reason to make me stand in the puddle; I could have given him a satisfactory explanation from inside my car. Unfortunately, my Marni bag got in between us when I tried to leap the mud. And he didn’t just step on my shoes – he RUINED my new Jimmy Choos!” Maria slunk away backwards, one slow step at a time. The louder I

got, the more soothing Clayton became, like he was asking a toddler to hand over a sticky lollipop.

“Now now, let’s not lose sight of what happened, Anastasia. You were arrested because you hit him with your oversized tote. I’ve seen the video, remember? And so has the Judge. He understands, in your own words, how expensive those sparkly shoes cost. But we are past that part of these proceedings, so let’s get through sentencing with the least amount of drama. And that begins with nondescript shoes and no handbag. You can leave your belongings in the car with Maria.”

Whose side was he on? “That officer is a wimp! Confident females often intimidate average men. I should not have to pay a price for his insecurity. And obviously that bystander who filmed our encounter had no idea what was at stake. My shoes aren’t even in the video! His editing made me look like a crazy person flinging my bag around for no good reason.”

Clayton took a deep breath. True, we had been over this before, but ugly shoes bring out the irritable in me. That video, that 8 second cell phone movie, haunted me. What happened to respecting peoples’ privacy? They say a picture is worth a thousand words, but a picture does not fill in the back story. Anyone in my position would have been frustrated.

It's not like I pulled a weapon on the cop. I simply tried to move him out of my way so I could stand on dry ground. It's not my fault he outweighed me by 200 pounds.

"Anastasia, listen to me. You will not try to explain ANYTHING to the Judge. You will be respectful and polite. You will listen. You will say 'Yes, Sir' and nod. It shouldn't take long. You can do it."

This is hard for me, I admit. Clayton had every reason to be concerned. During my preliminary hearing I was scolded for rolling my eyes, scoffing when the charge was read, and interrupting the Judge. Apparently this is frowned upon in Texas. At home in Los Angeles surely the court system is more accommodating to the temperaments of models and actors. Sterling Garrett, my retained attorney, is not licensed to practice law in Texas; that's how I got stuck with grandpa Clayton. I was still miffed that despite how much he's paid, Sterling couldn't stop that video from going viral. Our last conversation was heated, but how was an attorney to learn without feedback from his clients? He should thank me. My expectations were clear and Sterling failed to protect me when it mattered.

Clayton is nothing like Sterling. In a TV movie of my life, Brad Pitt could play Sterling (the *Ocean's*



11 Brad, not the scruffy unwashed one), and Fred Thompson could play Clayton (if only Fred were still with us and wore a tired brown suit.) Sterling assured me Clayton came highly recommended. He said I needed a local attorney who was familiar with the county courts, one who could translate my profound remorse into a slap on the wrist. Let's hope Sterling is right and not just getting even for being reprimanded. LA types can become spiteful when they are held accountable.

The average person wouldn't be suffering such public scrutiny for trying to protect a \$1500 shoe investment. My high profile profession made me a target for losers hoping to sell photos to the tabloids. Without that video it would be my word against the police officer's, and I'm sure the Judge would have been sympathetic to my side of the story. But once it went viral, and I became the laughingstock of middle America, the Judge had no choice but to adopt a stern tone. People love to hate the privileged.

I surrendered my pretty Louboutins and promised to be a good girl. Poor Clayton looked tired. "Good. Now remove that lipstick and let's go for something a bit less eye catching." What? My Warrior Red lipstick was armor against being washed out in pictures! It was my trademark, my signature. The headlines announced ANASTASIA

DeMARS GOES TO BATTLE AND THE OFFICER SEES WARRIOR RED when they released that damning video. Clayton widened his stance in the door. I relented.

“OK, OK, but it’s on you to explain to my agent why I was caught wearing Barely There lips in public when they pay me to be the face of Warrior Red.”

Clayton attempted a smile. “I think she will understand. Let’s go. I’ve arranged a decoy car and look alike model to leave from the hotel garage. Once the press parade tails her we can slip out the back. I think you will get a kick out of your chariot.”

Clayton had learned a lot since our first meeting. The paparazzi snapped him wearing cowboy boots with his suit that day and dubbed him my legal John Wayne. He was now fluent in upscale shoe brands and decoy strategies. Behind his slow drawl lurked a whip smart mind that moved much faster than he spoke. The lipstick came off. Today I needed John Wayne to save me, mostly from myself.

Maria, Clayton, and I headed down the service elevator to the basement garage. I couldn’t help but notice Clayton’s grin as I struggled to climb into the backseat of a giant Chevy pickup in my slim pencil skirt. My chariot indeed. He offered his hand and

practically launched me into the seat. I was surprised to see TV screens built in for our viewing pleasure. Who knew a truck could be so luxurious? Our young chauffeur greeted me with enthusiasm a bit too eager for a trip to the courthouse.

“Good morning Miss DeMars. You are even prettier in person than on TV! I’m sorry to hear about your troubles.” Clayton handed me a bottle of water.

“Anastasia, this is my grandson Cody. He helps me out on occasion. I trust him and so can you. Cody will get us to the courthouse incognito.” He pronounced it in 4 distinct syllables, in-cog- NEE-toe.

Maria chimed in from the front seat. “Nice truck!” Cody beamed at the compliment.

Clayton tuned in for the day’s headlines. And there I was, closing out the hour with the dig of the day.

“Anastasia DeMars will be sentenced today for the assault of a police officer after a traffic stop earlier this year in the Houston area. The incident was recorded on a cell phone and the video went viral, giving late night talk show hosts plenty of fodder. This caps off a difficult year for DeMars, whose break-up from movie star Grant Adams caught her off guard while they were promoting his latest

adventure film *Warrior in Red*. Looks like being a super model is more dangerous than previously thought!"

The anchors all shared a laugh as the video played in the corner of the screen. The officer was a statue, calmly repeating his request that I exit the car and undergo a breathalyzer test. I had not been drinking, but if I took an objective look at the video I did look a little crazed. I was shouting "Don't you know who I am? You are going to be in trouble for this, mister!" I got out of the car with my bag in hand and tried to step over the mud, but tripped. In an effort to regain my balance, and avoid the puddle, I swung the bag and hit the guy on the side of the head. That's my story and I'm sticking to it. From the video, it looks like I tried to hit him – camera angles can distort all kinds of things, just ask a football referee- but what captured the media's attention was me screaming "MY JIMMY CHOOS! YOU DROWNED MY \$1500 JIMMY CHOOS!" As a side note, my Warrior Red lipstick remained flawless. Score? Me one, guy with the cell phone, several million hits.

"Terrorists are planning attacks around the world and cable news has time to show that stupid video? OK Clayton, turn it off. You look like such a nice guy, but I am beginning to wonder."

“Well, Anastasia, I don’t want you to forget what you are up against. This is Texas, not LA. The rules are different here. You will nod, say ‘Yes Sir’, and be polite.”

I felt 2 feet tall. “Houston is not some outpost, Clayton. Plenty of women here wear Jimmy Choos, and not one of them would appreciate having their shoes ruined by an officer ignorant to the cost of fashion.” I wasn’t one to give in easily. Neither, it turns out, was Clayton.

“Well, you were not arrested in Houston,” Clayton drawled. “You were arrested in Pleasant County, 50 miles and light years away from Neiman Marcus. Do not forget that. Texans outside the city are remarkably old school. They expect their children to use good manners, their bankers to be fair, and their traditions to be observed. One of those time-honored traditions is a respect for the law. Sheriffs are considered public servants; they get a nice watch and a party when they retire. You are considered a foreigner; antics that play in LA don’t translate here. The Judge does not care about your shoes. He cares that esteemed customs remain intact so his grandchildren inherit a world grounded in strong values, not celebrity tomfoolery. So you will play by his rules.” He patted my hand as he chastised me. I retreated into the corner of the seat, silent. Tomfoolery?

We passed a billboard that warned DON'T MESS WITH TEXAS. They weren't kidding. I heard this slogan began as an anti-littering campaign, but it pretty much summed up Clayton's rule book. Fine. Let's just get this over with so I could go back to LA, where people understand that a bad day might lead to a hissy fit. Hey, some people get paid for broadcasting that fit on TV. Why do the Housewives get rewarded for behaving badly, and I got arrested? Life is not fair.

The Pleasant County courthouse anchors a town square that resembles a set on the back lot at Warner Bros. Studios. Mayberry does exist and Opie drives a tricked out pickup. The local theater – stage, not movie – faces the courthouse across the green, a smaller rendition of the courthouse's stately 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture. Its white marquis advertised the upcoming revival of *GREATER TUNA*.

"*Greater Tuna*? Is that a play?" Maria emerged from her cocoon in the front seat. She'd gone radio silent since I glared at her in the great shoe exchange. We were stopped at the red light and she pointed to a poster depicting two old ladies behind a microphone. "Does that say 'Starring Clayton Fairhope as Pearl?'"

I shot out of my corner and opened the window to get a closer look. Clayton tapped Cody on the shoulder. "Light's green, son. Let's go."

I'd bet a dollar Clayton blushed. He refused to look me in the eye. For a moment I forgot my embarrassment over Jimmy ChooGate. "Wait just a minute! Are there two Clayton Fairhopes in Pleasant County, Texas, or did I just see you featured on a life sized poster dressed in drag? At a public theater? Does Judge Goodman know about this? Or wait - maybe the Judge is his co-star!" I could not stop laughing. "Cody, go back! I need to get a picture of this! My day just got a whole lot better!"

Clayton caught Cody's eye in the rear-view mirror. "We need to get to the courthouse. Anastasia, let's get through sentencing without a detour through my community theater resume. Suffice it to say we value local around here - local beef, local theater, and yes, local attorneys. That's why Sterling recommended me. You, however, are not local. So mind your ps and qs young lady." Clayton's tone was stern but the spell was broken. I could not dislodge the visual of him in a white wig and jeweled cat glasses. If laughter is good medicine I was fortified by a hefty dose as we rounded the square.

In other good news, the decoy worked. We passed the black Mercedes idling a block away; several photographers hovered near the parking garage waiting for “my” entrance. Our pickup blended in with all the other trucks and SUVs. Cody maneuvered around a construction barrier on the opposite side of the building and stopped in front of a spot blocked by orange cones. He hopped out, moved the cones, and pulled right in. I got the impression he had done this before. Clayton cleared his throat, straightened his tie, and offered his hand to climb out of the vehicle.

We entered the courthouse through the employee door, proceeded through the metal detector, and made our way up the stairs to Judge Goodman’s third floor courtroom. It was early and we were the first ones on his docket to arrive. A large sign at the door clarified who was in charge.

**ALL PEOPLE WHO ENTER JUDGE GOODMAN’S COURTROOM WILL OBSERVE THESE COURTESIES:**

**NO GUM**

**NO T-SHIRTS WITH SLOGANS**

**NO EXPOSED MIDRIFTS**

**NO UNTUCKED SHIRTS**

**NO BAGGY PANTS**

**NO PHOTOS, VIDEO, OR RECORDING OF ANY KIND**

**NO TALKING ON CELL PHONES, SILENCE THEM**



IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE COMPLYING WITH THESE COURTESIES, PLEASE SEE THE BAILIFF. IF YOU REFUSE TO COMPLY, THE BAILIFF WILL SEE YOU OUT.

I elbowed Clayton in the ribs. “Lucky for you Judge Goodman’s list does not include NO DRESSING IN DRAG.”

Clayton eyed me straight faced. “OK, that is enough.”

I was familiar with Judge Goodman’s decrees. The day I plead no contest the bailiff kindly pointed to the 7 commandments posted on the wall, handed me a tissue for my gum, then resumed his post as sentry. Today he nodded and opened the door, following us in to the empty tribunal. If he noticed my barely contained amusement, he didn’t let on.

“Good morning. Judge Goodman has elected to see Miss DeMars and counsel in his chambers. Please wait here and I will come back to escort you when the Judge is ready.”

I wondered if Bailiff Meecham had considered a career as a character actor. With crime shows all the rage he would be in high demand. How old was he? Hard to tell. Somewhere between 25 and 45. His shiny bald head, Popeye stature, and

authoritative saunter begged to be in a courtroom drama. A low riding belt supported his ample belly while his gun bounced gently against his hip. He disappeared behind the raised altar of the Judge's bench.

I plopped into a wooden chair behind the spectator rail. Things were looking up. The sense of dread that woke me at 5:00 am had lifted. I took a deep breath. "That is so nice of Judge Goodman. Southerners really are gentlemen. The last thing I wanted was to stand here in front of a crowd to get sentenced. That was very thoughtful of him."

Clayton frowned. "Anastasia, he has not invited you to tea. It is to protect his courtroom from turning into a circus. Judge Goodman is the star of this show, not you. Please do not forget that. The same rules apply in chambers as in an open courtroom. Don't speak unless spoken to. Be polite. And try to wipe that smirk off your face. He might assume you are laughing at him instead of laughing at me."

"Clayton, I am not laughing at you! You just surprise me. I didn't expect to see Mr. Country Lawyer dressed in drag to play a woman named Pearl. I am beginning to think there is more to this little town than meets the eye. The paparazzi is confused – I'm not the story, you are!"

Bailiff Meecham interrupted our exchange, much to Clayton's relief. "Please follow me. Do not sit until after Judge Goodman sits." We entered a small office, devoid of the pomp that decorated the courtroom. Judge Goodman's diplomas hung behind his desk, announcing dual degrees in Law and Social Work from the University of Texas at Austin. I hadn't finished college. I was discovered during my sophomore year at University of Illinois when I made the front page of the *Daily Illini* for winning the annual Dance Marathon. My dance partner (assigned to me by my sorority) was 5'8", and I was 6'4" in heels, so we made for a good story when we won. A scout from Fame Cosmetics figured if I looked good in a candid college photo (after dancing for 24 hours), I had potential to look good in a professionally produced ad campaign. It didn't hurt that I was wearing Warrior Red lipstick, still vibrant, at the end of the marathon.

My 'True Story' testimonial hit the pages of *Seventeen* and *Marie Claire* in full color, this time with a 6'6" model named Enrico as my dance partner. I thanked my beautiful mother for the inheritance of a voluptuous kisser – all the better to model lipstick with – and she said you're welcome, please finish college. I signed a contract with Fame and promptly moved to LA.

Judge Goodman snapped me back to the present with a flutter of his black robe. With a nod he excused us to sit, and the butterflies that had flown away earlier landed right back in my gut. He reviewed my file while I tried not to fidget in the uncomfortable wooden chair. You'd think he would have done his research before arriving. Clayton gently stepped on my foot – message received. I sat up straight, tried to arrange my face in a calm repose, and waited. I am not usually good at waiting. Judge Goodman seemed in no hurry.

“Good Morning Miss DeMars. Mr. Fairhope. Miss DeMars, it has been several months since you pleaded no contest to charges you assaulted a police officer during a routine traffic stop. Your attorney Mr. Fairhope has delayed sentencing several times, presumably to convince me you are an upstanding citizen and this incident was an aberration in your usual demeanor. Am I to assume you have been on good behavior?”

“Yes Sir.”

“I'm curious Miss DeMars, since it's just us here in these chambers (and a bailiff and a court reporter, but who was I to correct him.) Why did you hit the officer with your bag? It seems a bit out of character for a young woman dressed in fancy high heels. Your sobriety test revealed no alcohol, so

your judgement was not impaired. Did something happen involving the officer before the camera began to roll? I like to be certain I have all the facts before I sentence offenders, and since you opted out of a trial I am in the dark as to what happened that night. I believe justice is best served when the facts are on the table.”

I glanced at Clayton, not sure how to respond. We had only discussed me saying “Yes, sir”. Clayton raised his eyebrows and nodded.

“Well, sir, I was very frustrated. The officer refused to listen to me. When he first pulled me over, and I gave him my license, he asked if I knew I’d run a red light. Of course I knew! I’d just witnessed my boyfriend kissing another woman in a short skirt. I had to follow them! I came all this way to Texas to surprise Grant at his sister’s wedding, and caught him running around with the flavor of the week. Grant should have been the one humiliated in the press, not me!” With that the tears started flowing. Clayton slowly shook his head and stared at his lap.

Judge Goodman stared at me. The court reporter stared. Bailiff Meecham stared. I am not a pretty crier, I know. My nose gets all runny and I have this hiccupping thing that takes over. Once unleashed, it’s difficult to put the genie back in the bottle. They all waited until I pulled myself together.

“Miss DeMars, perhaps I need to make myself more clear. Did the OFFICER do anything to upset you, besides pulling you over for running a red light?”

“He made me get out of a perfectly dry car and stand in the mud! Was that necessary?” Clayton not so gently stepped on my foot. I realized I was shouting. This was off script.

It was Judge Goodman’s turn to sigh. “He was following protocol Miss DeMars, especially since you appeared to be agitated. Under the circumstances, I think he demonstrated remarkable restraint. Let’s proceed with sentencing. You are clearly suffering ill effects from exposure to the press. That seems an occupational hazard for a model dating a film star, but nonetheless I am not insensitive to your position. I am sentencing you to a fine of \$500 and 100 hours of community service. You will serve those 100 hours assisting a local non-profit, The Joy Chorus. The Director, Duke Valentine, will be your supervisor. He will report your progress to your Probation Officer. Mr. Valentine can be trusted to put you to work without courting media attention. Once you have successfully fulfilled your service, your record will be expunged provided you have no further run-ins with the law. My clerk will provide Mr. Fairhope with all further instructions.”

“But Your Honor, Sir, I live in LA. Can’t I just pay a bigger fine, or give money to this non-profit instead? I have my work to consider.”

Judge Goodman stood up. Bailiff Meecham announced, “All rise!” I felt the tears beginning to flow again. Can a judge do that? Can he impose a sentence that handcuffs me to a small town in Texas when I have an important life in LA? Yes, yes he can.

“Miss DeMars, this is not a negotiation. Your offense happened in Texas, and your sentence will be fulfilled in Texas. My decision is final. I suggest you embrace the experience, you just might learn something.”

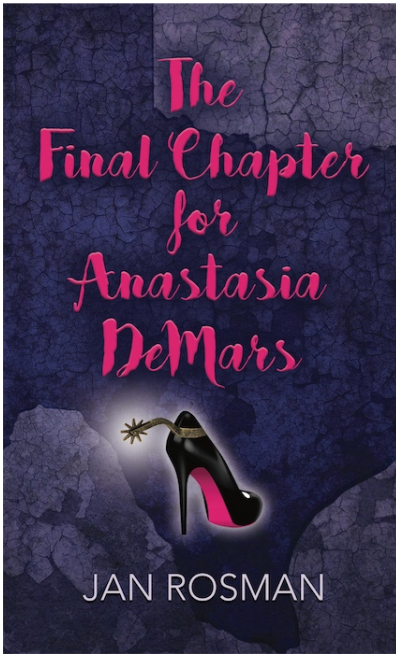
Clayton glared at me to remain silent. Bailiff Meecham escorted us out of chambers. He kindly showed us through the side door so we could escape through the back stairway. I said nothing until we emerged into the hot Texas sunlight. “Clayton! Do something! I...”

“Let’s just get out of here without making a scene, Anastasia. Don’t forget, someone is always watching and they usually have a camera in hand.”

I zipped it and struggled into the back seat of the truck. Cody and Maria wisely kept eyes forward

without asking how things went. This was awful. How was I supposed to do community service in Texas? So much for Southern gentlemen! And sensitive to my position? Ha! These people had no idea how difficult my situation was. I regretted coming to Texas. I regretted hitting the officer with my bag. But mostly I regretted ever meeting Grant Adams.





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