



THE SCANDAL CLAUSE

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BOOK SYNOPSES

(709 word/1344 word)

Logline: John Russell, globally prominent neurosurgeon, designs a unique contract to avoid the devastating professional and personal scandals bringing down so many prominent world leaders. But Laura Greenwald, the nurse implementing his plan, stumbles into the one flaw which could destroy their careers and their lives as well.

BOOK SYNOPSIS—short

(709 words)

Laura Greenwald, forced by rape from her first job as a nurse in New York City, is again browsing online job offers. When a \$700,000-a-year nursing job shows up, she's sure it's a hoax.

After a mysterious and extensive application process, Dr. John Russell offers her the coveted position as his executive nurse—with one major contingency. To safely continue his global neurosurgical practice, he must avoid the devastating scandals bringing down prominent leaders everywhere. So, *would Laura also consent to be his sexual partner?*

Filled with trepidation but unable to resist the lure of the job, Laura agrees. She has no inkling her tasks will consume every hour of her life, thrust her into high stakes medicine, travel, political intrigue, sexual morality, and crises of personal and professional integrity.

These conflicts develop against exotic backgrounds—Saudi Arabia, Buckingham Palace, Costa Rica, Washington, DC, the hallways of the White House. She learns to be ready for surgical emergencies anywhere in the world, at any moment, from any place. At the same time, John Russell teaches her how the enormous pressures of work can be relieved through intense sexual pleasure.

Laura's struggles over work grow more complex when she meets Arlo Stephanopoulos, neurosurgeon and colleague. She cannot imagine disclosing to him her contractual sex with John Russell—nor could she imagine Arlo understanding it. She decides to end the relationship.

Months pass. Laura grows more isolated as she settles into the demands of her job. However, when she discovers the startling fact that she's pregnant, Laura is certain who fathered her child since John had been her only partner for some time. He refuses to believe it, touting his longstanding vasectomy and her intensely supervised and regulated birth control. "Get rid of it," he demands.

Outraged, Laura resigns, removes her IUD to protect the growing fetus, and is able to get a sample of John's DNA tested to prove paternity. However, she collapses in a cab on the way home and is taken to the ER. Upon awakening, the doctor informs her his team had averted a miscarriage. She is admitted overnight for observation. By chance she encounters Arlo visiting a patient. She tells him of her pregnancy. He guesses who fathered the child.

A pregnant Laura is offered work at the White House Medical Unit. Laura soon finds herself being harassed by an angry John Russell who wants her out of the city. At a medical meeting she explodes, accusing him of stalking her and being her baby's father. She quits this second job, and flees to Cleveland to stay with her family. She has a miscarriage on the airplane. Arlo visits her overnight in the Cleveland hospital to encourage her to stand up for herself.

A month later, from her parents' home, she applies for a job at a local hospital. She is told Dr. Russell left a strong recommendation for the hospital to hire Laura. This latest John Russell intrusion into her life triggers a full-blown panic attack. But it also stirs deep anger. She formulates a plan, flies back to DC, and calls Arlo to discuss her plans with him. She stays at his apartment.

Laura confronts John in his office, requesting a 2 ½ million-dollar endowment for a non-profit she will develop—Sexual and Legal Wellness in the Workplace. She leverages her request with the threat of media exposure if he does not comply. Russell counter offers in a phone call and then sends one of his lawyers, unannounced, to Arlo's apartment.

Laura, outraged at yet another overt intrusion, makes an emergency appointment with attorney Johneen Johnson, a specialist in workplace harassment. Johnson rapidly sets up meetings

to discuss Laura's terms. Russell and his lawyer struggle to outmaneuver them. Laura's anger at his ongoing arrogance and entitlement finally spills over. She rips into her ex-employer with the power of her rage and determination to move forward regardless of what happens.

Russell submits to the demands with reluctance, knowing a media scandal could ruin his reputation and practice. John, angry and unrelenting to the end, finds himself alone, deserted even by his lawyer. Laura, on the other hand, delights in her hard-won success. She plans to move forward with the newly endowed business and her relationship with Arlo.

BOOK SYNOPSIS—longer

(1344 words)

Laura Greenwald, forced by rape from her first job as a nurse in New York City, is again browsing online job offers on a Sunday morning in her Somerville apartment. As administrator in a large Boston hospital, she's had her fill of unrelenting work demands and being turned down for raises. The final straw had occurred the day before—the hospital's-married-with-children lawyer arranged an urgent Saturday meeting and used it to attempt sexual seduction.

When a \$700,000-a-year nursing job shows up on the computer screen including travel and a \$50,000 bonus, Laura is sure it's a hoax. But she's too fed up with life to be cautious.

Laura fills out the application then forgets about it as the demands of a major hospital accreditation review overwhelm her attention.

Two weeks later, she receives a very unusual phone call at work which describes requirements even more unusual than the call itself. And so begins the complex and mysterious job interview process for which she is a finalist—private planes, secret contracts, brain operations, haute cuisine luncheons, psychological testing, and a three-day on-site interview process.

Dr. John Russell, prominent global neurosurgeon based in the DC area, offers her the coveted job as his executive nurse. But he has a contingency. He needs to protect himself from the horrific scandals bringing down prominent leaders everywhere. So, *would Laura also consent to be his sexual partner?* Although Dr. Russell would be sexually exclusive with her, that would not be a requirement for Laura.

She feels this is the most difficult of the decisions she faces during the three days of interview. She has no inkling the job will demand much, much more of her, that it would consume every hour of her life, pull her into the worlds of power, high stakes medicine, political intrigue, sexual morality, and crises of personal and professional integrity.

But, unable to resist the lure of the job, Laura signs the contract.

With that signature she also accepts the severest of restrictions, knowing Dr. Russell's organization has the resources to back them up—total confidentiality, unquestioned non-disclosure restrictions, and absolutely no pregnancy while employed.

Her move to DC marks the beginning of rigorous job training, creating a learning curve Laura describes as “straight up”—unending hours of back-to-back surgeries and clinical work. She must travel abroad with minimal notice. She must absorb the intricate details of medical politics played out with clients at the highest rungs of power. She must balance Dr. Russell's arrogant, rude, dismissive work behaviors with his charming at-ease persona. She must also grow into her sexual responsibilities and accept rigorous birth control guidelines insisted upon by her employer.

During her training time, Laura meets Arlo Stephanopoulos, neurosurgeon and Dr. Russell's colleague. They continue to see each other. As they become more intimate, she finds balancing the secret sexual duties of her contract interfere with their relationship.

Laura's conflicts develop against many backgrounds—Costa Rica, Saudi Arabia, Buckingham Palace, Shenandoah Valley, the city haunts of Washington, DC and the White House.

Her struggle with the intimacy issues grow until she breaks up with Arlo and chooses to stay with the job. This distresses both Arlo and Laura, but she reasons she could never tell Arlo about her contractual sex with John Russell and he might never understand.

At the same time, Laura experiences firsthand with John Russell how the intense pressures of her work are relieved with intense sexual pleasure. This occurs one evening after a precarious surgery when Laura initiates all night sex with Russell.

She becomes more settled in her work, and begins to say ‘no’ to some of John's demands.

Months pass. Then Laura finds out she is pregnant. John Russell is the father since he's been her only partner for some time. He refuses to believe her because he has a longstanding va-

sectomy and she has very regulated birth control. Several times he refuses to listen to or believe her. He insists she ‘get rid of it.’

In one meeting, she is able to obtain a DNA sample from a napkin into which John Russell coughed.

The next day Laura resigns, has her IUD removed to protect the fetus, and submits John Russell’s napkin for DNA testing. The next day after collecting the DNA results, she collapses in the cab on her way home and is taken to the emergency room. The ER doctor says his team was able to avert a miscarriage but recommends she stay overnight for observation.

Because the hospital is full, Laura, considered a ‘clean patient’ with no diseases, is housed in a bed on the neurosurgical floor. She wakes at 3:00 a.m. desperate to go home. She leaves her room but runs into Arlo just exiting an urgent care visit to a patient. Flustered and disoriented, she tells Arlo she is pregnant. At that moment he guesses the father to be John Russell.

She goes to her apartment and falls into a depression. During the next week, the Vice President’s daughter, Anika, calls and asks Laura to be her obstetrical nurse during the second pregnancy—Anika suggests that could happen if her father arranges a nursing position for Laura at the White House Medical Center.

Laura starts work a month later. John Russell, who has replaced Laura with another nurse, begins to harass Laura, ultimately wanting her to leave the city. At a White House medical meeting including Russell and several others, Laura explodes, accuses him of harassing her and being the father of her baby. She quits her job, closes up her Washington apartment, and retreats to Cleveland where her family lives. She has a miscarriage on the flight and ends up in a Cleveland hospital.

Arlo attempts to connect with Laura but discovers her apartment has been vacated. She has not answered his previous calls, but he tries again. The night of the miscarriage, she decides to pick up and explains to Arlo what happened. He flies to Cleveland and visits overnight in hospital. She goes to her parents next day, after encouragement by Arlo to stand up for herself.

A month passes before Laura feels well enough to apply for a job. She calls one of the Cleveland hospitals. The personnel office informs Laura Dr. Russell has left a strong and positive

recommendation about her. An interview is set. Laura reacts with a full-blown panic attack to this latest John Russell interference.

She recovers an hour later, but the experience stirs deep anger. She formulates a plan, flies back to DC, and calls Arlo, hoping to discuss it with him. He invites her to stay at his apartment.

Over dinner Laura describes her plan. Arlo approves. He also describes his public confrontation with John Russell, publicly accusing him of fathering Laura's child.

Laura follows through with her plan by going to John's office. She tells him that she wants a 2 ½ million-dollar endowment of a nonprofit to be called Sexual and Legal Wellness in the Workplace. She leverages her request with media exposure.

That evening John Russell's lawyers call Laura with a counter proposal. She refuses. The next day one of his lawyers knocks on the apartment door wanting to talk further. Laura is outraged at the ongoing stalking and harassment. She makes an emergency appointment with attorney Johneen Johnson, a specialist in workplace harassment. Johnson rapidly sets up a meeting for the next morning to discuss Laura's terms.

John Russell and his lawyer struggle to outmaneuver Laura and Johnson. At the last moment, Laura's anger at his arrogance and entitlement finally spills over. She rips into Russell with the power of her rage and determination to move forward regardless of circumstances.

Russell submits to the demands with reluctance, knowing a media scandal could ruin his reputation and practice. He is angry and unrelenting to the end when even his lawyer resigns. He finds himself alone, but still burning with resistance.

Laura, on the other hand, is delighted with her success. She plans to move forward with the newly endowed business and her relationship with Arlo.

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Chapter by chapter synopsis