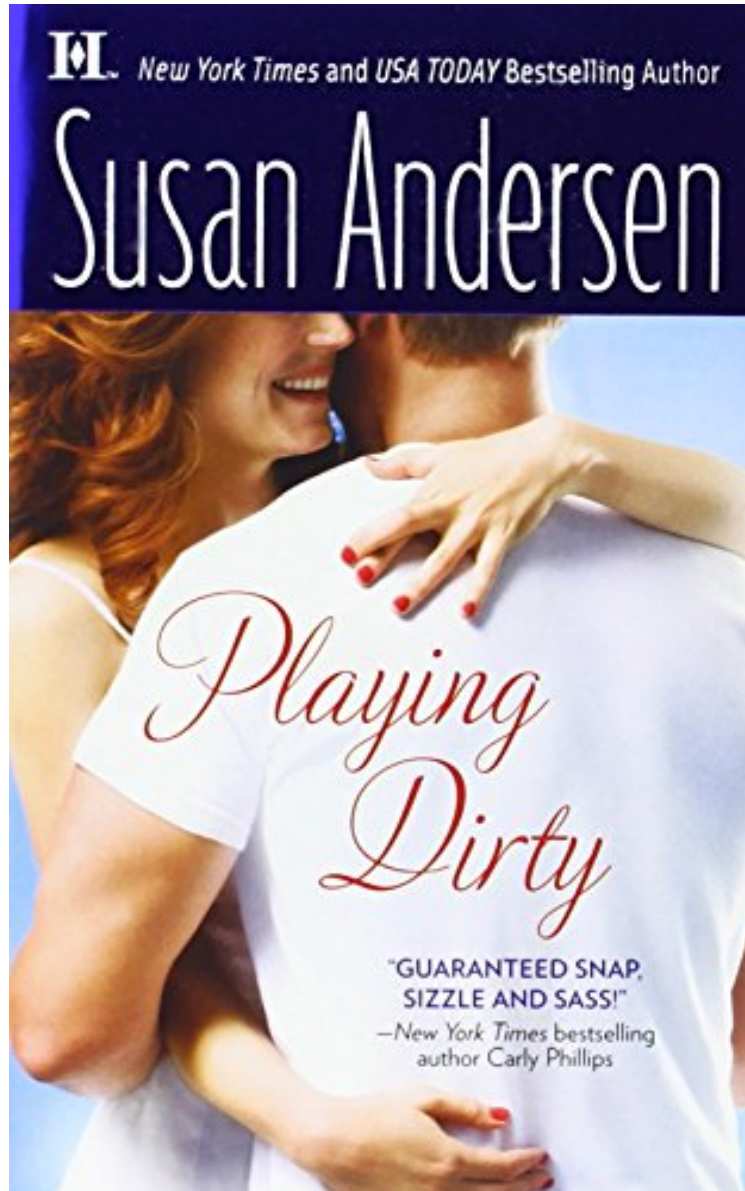


(Mobile pdf) Playing Dirty (Hqn)

## Playing Dirty (Hqn)

*Susan Andersen*

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#1094383 in Books HQN Books 2011-07-26 2011-07-26 Original language: English PDF # 1 6.62 x .89 x 4.211, .35 Binding: Mass Market Paperback 336 pages Great product! | File size: 21.Mb

**Susan Andersen : Playing Dirty (Hqn)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Playing Dirty (Hqn):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. the first but not the last By M. Morris I haven't read Ms. Andersen until this book. It appears Ava and Cade's story is part of a series so I'll definitely go to the beginning. Besties Ava, Jane and Poppy have very different personalities and it will be interesting to read each book. Ms. Andersen has a very

modern voice and the prose rolled effortlessly for me. I was enthralled from the first paragraph with the vivid description of Ava's mood and the physical manifestation of her feelings. The horror of Cade's betrayal felt real and I couldn't wait for the fallout....and resolution. Thankfully, Ms. Andersen drew out the reconnection instead of rushing Ava and Cade back together. There were issues to be resolved and I was thankful the attraction wasn't overdone while the characters worked things through. Secondary characters were used to flesh out the main characters and a backdrop suspense storyline added great depth to the book. I look forward to reading more of Ms. Andersen. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The jokes and one liners in this book were so juvenile that I sincerely thought it was written by a teenager. By Customer The jokes and one liners in this book were so juvenile that I sincerely thought it was written by a teenager. The sex scenes were a complete mess. She even references a child during one of the scenes. That's not what you want to think of during an intimate scene. This is the first and last book I've read by this author. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Wm F. Duncan Enjoyed the entire series, some from the public library, some from .

When old enemies are thrown together, all bets are off Way back in high school, golden boy Cade Gallari publicly revealed he'd slept with "fat girl" Ava Spencer to win a bet. Now a decade older and a head turner with her own concierge business, Ava isn't the gullible dreamer she once was and she plans to prove it when Cade, hotter than ever, breezes back into town with an offer she can't refuse. A documentary film producer, Cade is shooting a movie about the mysterious mansion Ava inherited. And he wants her as his personal concierge. She's certainly professional enough to be at his beck and call without giving him everything he wants. Like another shot at having her in his bed. But Ava doesn't count on Cade's determination. Because he's never gotten over her and he's not above playing dirty to score a second chance at a redhot future

"Guaranteed snap, sizzle and sass!" --New York Times bestselling author Carly Phillips "A sexy feel-good contemporary romance...a winner." --Publishers Weekly on *Bending the Rules* "A smart, arousing, spirited escapade that is graced with a gentle mystery, a vulnerable, resilient heroine, and a worthy, wounded hero and served up with empathy and a humorous flair." -Library Journal on *Burning Up* About the Author Susan Andersen is a bestselling author and proud mama of a grown son. She lives in the Pacific Northwest with her husband of a really long time and her cats Boo and Mojo. To be added to Susan's email list to hear about upcoming releases, please visit her website at [susanandersen.com](http://susanandersen.com) and enter your email address on the contact page. Or become a member of her Facebook fan page at [facebook.com/SusanAndersenFanPage](https://www.facebook.com/SusanAndersenFanPage). Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. I'm not sure if I just made a really savvy move or the biggest blunder of my life. Present day, the ninth of November The bastard was late. Ava Spencer cursed the man she was waiting on as she paced the front foyer of the Wolcott mansion, alternately hugging herself against the cold and trying to rub some warmth into her arms through her coat sleeves. The place had been closed up for several weeks, and between the wind currently buffeting the mullioned windows and the rainstorm that had blown through earlier, leaving a Seattle-centric damp to the bone chill in its wake, she was freezing her ass off. She would've turned on the heat, but there was little point. If the guy ever deigned to get here, she'd be showing him the mansion from attic to wine cellar. And while Jane kept the front parlor and hidden closet in Miss Agnes's upstairs sitting room climate-controlled for the preservation of the Wolcott collections that weren't currently sold or on loan to museums, it would take until noon tomorrow to warm up the rest. And although she had turned on every light in the house, the illusion of warmth from the yellow glow of the lamps and overheads didn't come close to replacing the real thing. A laugh that went a little wild escaped her. Like that was the crucial issue here. Because it's not some guy, Av. It's Cade Calderwood Gallari. Jeez Marie. She couldn't believe she'd agreed to this. So, yes, she was concentrating on the minutiae for all she was worth to keep from thinking about him. Because it was too freaking late to second-guess herself now. Wasn't it? She froze for an arrested second. Hell, no, it wasn't! The heavy feeling in her stomach lightening, she snatched up her purse and started down the hallway to the kitchen. Its exterior door was the direct route to where she'd parked her Beemer. Cade was late? She was out of here. Headlights swept the east wall across from the kitchen archway, stopping her dead. "Shit." Too late. She did a little dance in place to shake off the tension that had her tighter than an overwound watch, throwing in some yoga breathing for good measure. Exhaling a final gusty breath, she nodded to herself. "Okay. Time to pull on your big girl pants." She forced herself to shove down her irritation over Cade's tardiness, over the fact that he breathed, and bury it deep. It's been thirteen years, girl. He's a footnote, someone who no longer matters. Who hasn't mattered for a very long time. So it probably wouldn't do to snap his head off first thing. But, oh, boy. The temptation. She watched him through the backdoor window as he climbed the steps and stopped beneath the porch light, and her annoyance surged back with a vengeance. She fought it to a standstill once more, pushed out a final exhalation and reached out to unlock the door. The knob turned before she could open it, and he blew into the kitchen, shaking himself like a wet dog and sending raindrops flying in all directions from his sunstreaked brown hair. Looking beyond him, Ava saw that it had begun to pour again. "Man, it's wet out there!" He flashed her his trademark Gallari smile, white teeth flashing and deep creases bracketing his mouth. Only she noticed that this time the blue, blue eyes glinting between dense, dark lashes held something. Wariness

maybe or calculation? Something cooler and edgier than the smile that for years had haunted her dreams. It just bugged the hell out of her that she felt his impact like a cattle prod to the breastbone. Why was it like this every damn time she laid eyes on him: this immediate, visceral onetwo to the heart? It was identical to the reaction she'd had around teenaged Cade and even after everything she knew about him, everything he'd done seeing him gave her that same hot punch to the solar plexus. Well, it would be a cold, cold day in hell before she felt the least bit tempted to act on it. She raised an eyebrow. "And you call yourself a Seattle native?" "I forgot how fast the rain can soak a guy up here." She gave him a polite smile. "I suppose living in southern California will do that to a person." She made a show of glancing at her watch. "Tell me why you think I should give you the time of day let alone rent you the mansion for a documentary." "Okay. No small talk." His mouth developed an unyielding slant that somehow looked more at home on his chapped lips than his old smile. "Sorry I'm late. There was a wreck on I5 and it took a while to get traffic moving again." She nodded her acceptance of his apology and watched as he looked around the kitchen. A small pucker of dismay appeared between his dark eyebrows. "It's been modernized." When Ava looked him fully in the face this time, she found it less unsettling. "Surely you didn't expect it to be the same as it was back in the eighties?" "I guess I'd hoped it would be." "As soon as Poppy, Jane and I inherited it, we had the awful sunroom addition removed and, yes, modernized the place throughout. We were expecting to sell it, Slick, not rent it and even that's not a done deal." She raised her brows. "Your pitch?" "As my production assistant told you on the phone, I want to do a documentary on the Wolcott Suite mystery. But more than that, I want to feature Agnes Wolcott." She had, and Ava had to admit that was the reason she was standing here. But "Why? I mean, sure, the Wolcott diamonds gained urban legend status locally, but I doubt the story surrounding it is nationally famous." "Maybe not, but I grew up in this town, and I've been fascinated by the mystery of it since I was a kid." His blue eyes lit with enthusiasm. "It's got everything, Ava a cool old mansion, a fortune in diamonds that were never recovered, a murder and a woman at the heart of it that I find more and more remarkable the deeper I dig." She really liked that last part. What she didn't like was him. "And I should care about what you want, why?" "Because I can do justice to a woman I know you cared for. And because I'll give you and your friends thirty grand for six weeks' use, pay all the peripheral expenses for the time Scorched Earth Productions is here and landscape the grounds back to the way they were in the eighties." "Oh, low. The mansion had turned into an albatross around her and her friends' necks in this economy, and he undoubtedly knew it. Desperately, she wanted to spit in his eye. But she thought of her friends. Poppy and Jane had never complained, but she knew this place was a drain on them, too. So, sucking up her ire, wondering if she was making the worst decision of her life, she gritted teeth and said through them, "Fine." "You'll do it?" "Yes." What the hell. She wouldn't have to see him. "Have your assistant call me for my lawyer's number you can send him the contracts and if he finds it agreeable you've got a deal. Do you want a tour before you go? Since you seemed concerned about the work we had done, I'd be happy to show you. I think you'll agree our crew did a wonderful job of preserving the spirit of the original design in their restoration." She stepped back. "One more thing," he said, halting her. "I want to hire you as the production company's concierge, as well." She laughed in his face. "No. Do you want that tour or not?" "Forget the tour." "Works for me. Send your paperwork to my lawyer." She turned to go. "Look. I'll pay you two grand a week plus a fifty thousand dollar bonus if the documentary comes in on time and on budget." "Which somehow won't happen, right?" "The bonus is a legitimate offer, Ava. I'll email my own contracts for your attorney to look over while he's going over yours, and you'll see I have a lot more to lose than you." "Doesn't matter. Because it's not going to happen. But damn him. Damn him, damn him, damn him! Not only had her trust fund taken a huge hit in the economic downturn, so had the finances of many of the clients who formed the foundation of her concierge business. And as one of the gazillion mortgage holders who'd been caught up in the subprime lending disaster, she was facing a huge balloon payment on her condo that was coming due in the notnearlyfutureenough future. Well, too bad, so sad for her. She'd rather lose the place than spend six weeks in this bastard's company. Seriously? her hardscrabble practicality demanded. She had to admit that was pretty cutyournoseofftospiteyourface idiotic. This could actually be the answer to her prayers. And hell, it wasn't as if she were worried about falling under his spell. Been there, done that." "You'd be in place to make sure I do credit to your Miss Wolcott," he said softly. She blew out a defeated breath. "All right. Contingent on my attorney's evaluation of the contracts, I'll do it to see you do justice to Miss A's story." And if she was also doing it for the money, he didn't have to know. "Do you want that tour? We can start with the dining room across the hall." She turned, only to feel Cade wrap a hand around her forearm to halt her. Heat seeped through the cashmere of her coat sleeve beneath his light grasp, and she promptly swung back around, twisting her arm free. "Do not," she said with hardfought calm, "touch me." Releasing her, he stepped back. "I just wanted to tell you, before we get started, how genuinely sorry I am for what happened back in high school. I was." "Forget it," she interrupted. She so did not want to rehash the ugly details of the past with him. "I have." "Really?" An eloquent eyebrow rose, surprise flashing in the depths of his cobalt eyes. She gave him a regal nod. She had cut him off at the knees the other times he'd sought her out over the years to apologize, but if acknowledging his regret would move him along to a place where they didn't have to discuss the past, then, fine. She'd grant him his damn redemption. "You forgive me then?" "No. Hell, no. That would be a snowboarding day in hell. But she gave him a serene smile, knowing from this point on she had to be professional. "Let's just agree to leave the past in the past, shall we?" Not awaiting a response, she led him to the dining room and got down to business. "As

you can see, great care was taken in here to preserve the integrity of the era in which the Wolcott Mansion was built" She met Jane and Poppy at Sugar Rush, her favorite neighborhood coffee shop/bakery, the next afternoon. As they took their seats at a round table by the play area, she sucked in a quick inhale, then eased it out. "I did something last night I hope you'll be okay with," she said to her two best friends amid the clatter of crockery and conversations. She hesitated for a brief second, then blurted, "I agreed to rent the mansion to Cade Gallari." Okay, her ripping off the Band-Aid delivery was clearly a little too abrupt, for Jane's blue eyes went round with shock. Then her friend slapped both hands onto the tabletop, came half out of her seat to shove her face closer to Ava's own and said, "You agreed to rent it to who?" Ignoring the two women at the next table whose attention was drawn by Jane's incredulous rising voice and aggressive stance, Ava looked at odds with her neat, shiny brown hair and dark-hued clothing that always looked so conservative at first glance. Ava focused on her friends. She knew perfectly well she'd been heard. Nevertheless, she repeated evenly, "Cade Gallari." "Tell me you're kidding." Poppy's voice might have been calmer than Jane's, but as the curly-haired blonde set her coffee cup down the expression in her topaz-brown eyes held identical disbelief. "Why would we let that douche anywhere near our inheritance?" It was a fair question. Miss Agnes, the cool old lady who'd started having the three of them over to her mansion for monthly teas when they were twelve, who'd given them their first diaries and gotten them started on their lifelong journaling habit, had become a friend and a mentor. In Ava's and Janie's case, she'd been more parent-like than their own parents. And when she'd died a year and a half ago, she'd left a big hole. Even in death, however, she'd been full of surprises, and Ava, Jane and Poppy had been astounded to learn she'd bequeathed them her estate. Miss A might well be rolling over in her grave at the thought of Cade in her home. God knows she'd played a large role in helping Ava pick up the pieces after his betrayal. Feeling a little beleaguered, she stared at her friend. "It's not as if I would've chosen to let him use the Wolcott mansion, either, Poppy, given any other option. But I'm fresh out of those. I said yes because the market for houses in our price range is stagnant and we're paying through the nose for taxes, lights, utilities, yard maintenance and all the other crap that goes along with maintaining a place this size. He'll pay very well for the privilege." She told them the terms. "And he'll pay even more if we decide to rent him a few of Miss Agnes's collections to use in his productions something I told him he'd have to discuss with you, Janie. You both know he produces documentaries about unsolved mysteries, right?" The other women shifted guiltily, and she laughed, feeling tension she hadn't even realized she'd been carrying in her neck, her shoulders, her spine release its grip. "Relax, I don't doubt your loyalty you guys have boycotted all things Gallari forever. But we'd have to live in outer Mongolia not to have heard something about the name he's making for himself." "Okay I confess I saw one of his films." Poppy held her hands up in a Don't shoot! gesture when both Ava and Jane gaped at her. "I didn't pick it out Jason ordered the damn thing from Netflix one night. He who shall not be named is never mentioned in our house, so Jase had no way of putting the documentary maker together with the guy he saw upsetting you in that bar in Columbia City last year. Murphy'd just told him he had to see it." Focusing on the sign next to the kiddie play area, Ava did her best to wrestle her curiosity to a standstill. *Unsupervised Kids Will Be Given An Espresso And A Free Puppy*, she read. Usually that tickled her, but now the words simply bounced around in her head like Ping-Pong balls in a box until finally, unable to help herself, she surrendered to her need to know. "All right, I give. Did it live up to all the hype?"