



Act of Will

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Audra, orphaned at a young age, is sent by an unkind aunt to train as a nurse. She thrives, prospers, and marries the lusty Vincent. The harsh Depression and war years drive most of the joy from their lives. Their talented daughter Christina is their single hope and glory. They revel in her artistic gift, scrimping and saving to train her at the finest academies.

Christina rejects their plans for her and channels her art into commerce. Soon, eager customers flock to the House of Christina for clothes, perfumes, and cachet. When a hot-blooded affair goes sour, she expands her markets to the United States, marries, and has a single child, a daughter. Kyle is carefully groomed to step right into the business. When, at age nineteen, she stubbornly refuses, her Grandmother Audra is fetched from England to negotiate.

As she ponders the tug-of-war between mother and daughter, Audra recalls how she made her peace years ago: "I may have given you the chance to have a better life but I cannot live that life for you." Wisely understanding that Christina and Kyle have inherited her implacable will and driving force, Audra eases the inevitable frictions caused by strong women who differ about destiny and duty.

Hailed as the first lady of women's fiction, Barbara Taylor Bradford has again hit her bestselling stride. Her writing shows a special power to transform mundane episodes and ordinary people into rare escapades and memorable characters. In her world, forceful women are always right to reach for the stars because rewards in the form of opulent comforts, elegant surroundings, and good sex will surely arrive.

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