

The Tycoon's Seduction Plan

By Elizabeth Lennox

www.ElizabethLennox.com

[www.facebook.com/ Author.Elizabeth.Lennox](http://www.facebook.com/Author.Elizabeth.Lennox)

www.twitter.com/ElizabethLenno1

e-book ISBN13: 9781940134390

Copyright 2010

All rights reserved

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, business, places, events and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or used in a fictitious manner. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or actual events is purely coincidental.

Chapter 1

Lana stared at her editor in horror. "You want me to change what?" she asked, her body tense and almost shivering with the revulsion she was feeling. The bland cream walls receded and all she could see was the red glare of humiliation, that sickening feeling of dread and horror as the painful memories came back to haunt her.

"Sex," Nancy Kirkpatrick, Lana's editor replied succinctly, a grin forming on her face as she watched her favorite writer's shocked reaction. "We need sultry, exciting, passionate sex scenes," she went on to clarify.

Lana blinked and stared. Had her friend and mentor just said the one word in the English language which could horrify her more than any other? Spiders, sharks, snakes....ick. Public speaking...terrifying. But sex? Oh no! That one word sent her mind into a tailspin of painful memories.

Lana suspected that her mouth had fallen open but she couldn't do anything to change her stunned reaction. That word hadn't really just been uttered, she told herself. It was impossible. Lana tried to convince herself that Nancy had said something else, something that probably rhymed with the word "sex"...all the while wondering if it was possible to spontaneously explode from anger and frustration.

Snapping her mouth closed, Lana shook her head, as if she were trying to clear it. "Could you repeat what you just said?" Lana asked as politely as possible, ignoring the trembling that had started in her stomach and was quickly spreading outward.

Nancy chuckled, misunderstanding Lana's expression but she was genuinely amused at her stunned features. "It isn't like I just said you need to murder the hero, Lana. The stories just need more sex, more 'oomph'," Nancy replied encouragingly. "Just add a few sex scenes and everything will be perfect!"

It hadn't been a bad dream, Lana realized. Nancy really had said *The Word*. Multiple times, actually. It was a word, a concept that Lana had done her best to banish from her mind for the past couple of years. Just hearing it made Lana feel

queasy. She shook her head, trying to dispel the nausea that was threatening to overwhelm her.

Closing her eyes, she counted to three before opening them again. Nancy was still watching her curiously and Lana dropped her gaze to her hands which were folded demurely in her lap. Taking a deep breath, she accepted that her next statement was potentially life altering, but she just couldn't change that. "I can't do it. It's just not possible."

Nancy laughed, not understanding the depth of Lana's fears. "Of course it's possible. I'm sure you have a boyfriend," she replied, eyeing Lana's long blond hair, almond shaped blue eyes and full pouty lips. If Nancy had to name one person who was genuinely beautiful inside and out, it would be this gorgeous woman sitting in her office. She lifted one shoulder casually and said, "Just ask him to help you come up with some new ideas. I doubt he'll mind reading about his sexual prowess described in a romance novel a couple of months later."

Lana licked her dry lips and shifted uncomfortably. She didn't have a boyfriend and what's more, her ex-husband had considered her impossibly frigid in bed. So even if Lana were to go out right now and find a man, the experience would be doomed to failure. She just wasn't a sexual creature. She'd never been interested in sex in any way and would be completely okay if she never had to deal with the issue again in her life. Unless it meant being homeless, she thought, looking at her editor with rising panic.

Lana's huge blue eyes pleaded with her editor. "But why?" she asked, needing to understand this new change in policy. "Why, all of a sudden, do I need to add sex to my novels?" She stood up and walked to the window of the office, wishing it were big enough to pace in. Unfortunately, the stacks of manuals, plus desk and chairs took up most of the available space so nervous pacing wasn't an option. Getting a window office in New York was a prime deal. Only the extremely well paid executives rated large offices. "I thought my stories were good just the way they are, without the sex scenes." She frantically looked around but salvation didn't magically appear in the office while her hands waved in the air helplessly, "I mean, isn't just the implication of sex good enough? It always has been in the past." She crossed her arms over her chest in

a defensive move as she looked back at Nancy. "Don't women want to imagine things instead of being told outright what is going on?"

Nancy's eyes slid away and she sighed. "Apparently, sales have been dropping for the past year so we've all been ordered to pull in more sex scenes." Nancy grimaced as she sat back in her chair, obviously resigned. "You know the old line; sex, money and murder sell."

Economics? Finally, this was something she could understand; something she could sink her teeth into. Having been broke before, desperate for her next meal and a way to pay her rent, she could easily understand money. "Yes, but the economy will pick up. I don't see why an entire company needs to alter its established practices just on an economic whim which will be over soon anyway. Where's the integrity? Will the readers who like subtlety want to follow us back when we switch to the non-sexual, but wonderfully romantic plots again?" She sank into the chair she'd just vacated since pacing was pointless.

Nancy shook her head, sighing with sadness and frustration. "It isn't just the economy, Lana. We've been bought out because of our contracting sales," Nancy explained painfully. "I've seen how the sales figures have been slipping over the past several months but I hadn't thought much about it. Just like you, I thought it was only because of the economy and things would pick up soon. But the rest of the industry isn't feeling the same trend. In fact, the publishing world is flourishing. It's just us and we've now been bought out by one of the big corporations with huge resources that could really help us out with advertising and other expenses. Our line is going away and only those authors who can produce romances with hot, steamy sex will be published in the future."

Lana felt as if a steel band were wrapping around her chest. It was difficult to breathe and she wanted to scream out or cry. She wasn't sure which. Looking at her editor, she knew that this wasn't a battle she was going to win. She had to deal with this latest obstacle, no matter how overwhelming it appeared right at the moment. How she was going to deal with it, well, she wasn't exactly sure. Her mind wanted screaming and arguing but logic told her that she'd get nowhere. Nancy had mentioned that a big corporation had bought out the publishing company and that meant one thing to Lana; profit won out over loyalty.

Instead of screaming about the unfairness of the situation, she pasted a smile on her face and stood up. Forcing a bright, optimistic expression even though it felt as if her cheeks were going to fall off with the pain of the exercise, she maintained the pretense, not wanting Nancy to see inside too easily. "Okay, then I think I have some more work to do, don't I?" She took Nancy's hand and shook it. "Thanks for your advice," she said and turned to leave the office.

Lana could feel Nancy's worried eyes on her back but she lifted her chin and walked out of the office with as much dignity as possible. The hallways were teeming with traffic as people moved busily from one task to another. Everyone looked so harried that she didn't want to break down in front of them. With a stiff upper lip, she moved along the carpet, praying in her mind to just reach the elevators and she could relax. It became a mantra in her head, echoing with each step she took.

She made it all the way to the outer hallway which was empty, thankfully, before the tears started. She hurried her footsteps to the lobby, then out to the bank of elevators, hiding her face with her head bowed low, praying that no one would stop and question her.

She bumped into something big and solid, then quickly shifted her path to go around the mountain. "Excuse me," she mumbled as an apology, then hurried onto the elevator.

It was blissfully empty for a moment and Lana hoped that she'd have the elevator to herself for the descent. She wasn't sure how long she could keep the tears at bay and she desperately didn't want to cry in front of someone who might know her, even as an acquaintance or another writer.

Unfortunately, as days go, this one continued to roll out poorly and her wish for a solitary elevator was not granted. A large shadow entered and Lana bowed her head once again, closing her eyes in an effort to stifle the tears that were threatening. The elevator dinged as the doors closed and she took deep, cleansing breaths in the hope that she would be able to hold off on the tears that were threatening.

She tried. She really tried hard but it was no use. All the old insecurities, the hateful feelings of inadequacy, all the anger and resentment exploded inside her

and she couldn't hold back the tears any longer. The sobs broke through and she turned her body toward the wall of the elevator cab, desperate to maintain some sort of dignity but the effort was failing. Her shoulders shook as the sobs overwhelmed her and she couldn't stop the flow anymore.

Digging in her purse, she searched fruitlessly for a tissue. Nothing but an old receipt, she thought angrily and wiped her wet cheeks with the back of her hand. Unfortunately, the tears continued to fall and the back of her hand was completely inadequate.

"Here you go," a deep voice said and a moment later, a white handkerchief dangled in front of her face.

She took it with shaking fingers. "Thank you," she said as politely as possible under the circumstances. She pretended to glance at the kind stranger but she only saw a large chest where someone's head should have been. She turned back toward the wall and used the handkerchief to wipe away the tears. Thankfully, she wasn't wearing much makeup so at least she wasn't getting powder and foundation all over the man's immaculate, linen square. The tears continued to flow no matter how hard she tried to stop them. It was just too much, she thought to herself. It wasn't fair. She'd picked herself up once and come out ahead. Now she was being asked to do something completely impossible!

She even hated her pity party, wishing she was stronger and could roll more with the punches. For a while there, she'd imagined herself to be a strong, confident woman and now, here she was, sobbing her frustration out in an elevator. How humiliating!

She'd fought so hard for so long and now, to be dumped with this....well, it was all too much to take in so suddenly. Those thoughts only made her cry harder and she lost a sense of where she was. She tried to look around and get her bearings, but her eyes were so clouded with tears, she couldn't focus on the world around her.

"Come along," the deep voice said and a large, warm, insistent hand was placed at the small of her back, guiding her out of the elevator when the doors opened.

“Please,” she tried to say and pull back but the man’s hand was relentless and she was carried out of the elevator and onto the busy streets with his momentum. “Please, I’m okay, really,” she finally said, twisting around and getting away from the hand that seemed to burn through her red cardigan sweater and white turtleneck shirt. She looked up, then up again. And up some more still so she could see the face of the man who was now directing her out of the stream of impatient body traffic on the busy sidewalk. Her eyes widened at the man’s enormous size but she still couldn’t focus on anything and she didn’t want to talk to anyone. All she wanted to do was to rush home and bury her face in a pillow and have a genuine pity party until she’d worked this latest wrinkle out.

Taking a deep breath in an effort to stem the tide of tears, she blinked her eyes and sniffled slightly. “Thank you very much for the use of your handkerchief but I’m okay now,” she lied. If she only could have made it a few more minutes without more crying, she might have gotten away. But instead, her eyes did that irritating weepy thing and the man shook his dark head.

“You need more than a handkerchief,” he said. “Come along.” He put his hand back to the small of her back and Lana was just too upset to stop him. Besides, she couldn’t see since the tears were blurring her vision once again.

She had no idea where he was leading her but this section of New York City was busy so she wasn’t concerned about crime. And he seemed gentle enough. The hand on her back was lightly insistent, but he wasn’t causing her any pain, except for a sensation of awareness, something she didn’t really understand since she’d never felt it before.

If she weren’t feeling so miserable, she might have laughed at the idea of a man so large being this gentle. She couldn’t see underneath his suit but anyone this tall probably couldn’t be considered gentle. Even with her low-heeled shoes, her head only came up to his shoulder so he quite literally towered over her. And he certainly wasn’t taking no for an answer, she thought with a slight frown.

Suddenly, the noise from the cabs and the masses of people walking along the streets of the early afternoon were gone. He’d pulled her into a restaurant, one of those expensive places that let a patron watch the chaos outside while

enjoying absolute peace and tranquility inside. Her mind barely registered the crisp, white linen table cloths and dark, expensive wood as he guided her through the main dining room to a table tucked away in the back. He pulled out a chair for her and ordered her to sit and Lana was just too grateful for the relative privacy and the ability to simply release the emotions she couldn't contain any longer.

She heard him mumble something behind her but couldn't hear the words. Then he sat down next to her and waited while she continued to cry. She sobbed out all of her frustrations, her fears, the insecurity of what and how she was going to accomplish the next step in her life, unsure of exactly what that next step would even be. It was two years ago all over again. The day Drew had walked out on her had been particularly awful but this day easily made it into second place.

She had no idea how long she sat there and cried, but finally the sobs seemed to wear down. With one more swipe, she used the napkin, the handkerchief completely drenched by now and discarded onto the table next to her. Taking a deep breath, she lifted her head, closed her eyes. Then another deep breath. She started to feel a little more in control and she lifted her shoulders, attempting to release some of the tension that was tightening her muscles. One more deep breath, inhale, exhale, she commanded of her body.

The ritual still worked, she thought to herself and opened her eyes.

Wow! Her first thought as she looked across the table at the handsome man watching her was one of stunned, incredible awe.

The man sitting across from her bewildered her. He was huge! She had no idea how tall he was, but his shoulders were massive. Since he was leaning back in his chair and his suit jacket had fallen open, one arm braced against the empty chair to his left, she could see that the wide shoulders and obviously muscular chest tapered to a narrow waist and his long legs were stretched out in front of him, his ankles crossed over one another.

And he was gorgeous! Goodness, she had been crying for the past...who knows how long...while this handsome man sat there and waited? Good grief! How embarrassing.

Realizing that her mouth had been hanging open as she examined this stranger, she closed it abruptly and glanced away, embarrassed beyond anything to find herself in this awkward position. "Um....thank you," she said finally, getting her mind to function. "I apologize for being so silly," she got out and looked down at her hands, folding them in her lap and taking another deep breath.

"Don't worry about the apology," he said, his voice deep and velvety. He leaned forward and looked into her pretty, soft, blue eyes. "Tell me why you were crying. I'm sure it's a fascinating story and I'm eager to hear it."

Victor Davenport watched in fascination as the tiny, prim woman with beautiful eyes that showed her every thought and lips that were full and luscious, tried to pull herself together. The tears were still in her eyes and on her long, dark lashes, but she was valiantly fighting them now. He wasn't sure which had caught his attention first, her cute, sexy little bottom in the prim, plaid skirt, or the curtain of long, brown hair that fell down her back, dancing around her as if she were some sort of mermaid out of the water.

It was odd, he thought to himself as he watched the emotions flit across her features, he usually hated it when women cried. It was irritating and he'd never allowed it in his presence, knowing that it was more than likely a ploy to manipulate him into buying the woman a piece of jewelry or some other expensive trinket. But this woman's tears were sincere and since she'd been walking out of his building, he considered her his personal responsibility at the moment.

Not to mention she was beautiful. He liked women, thought they were lovely little butterflies and interesting as long as they suited his needs. He respected women in the work place but liked them even more in his bed. At least, the lovely ones. And this one was definitely a looker.

He wasn't sure about her figure since it was covered in the primmest outfit he'd seen in years. The red and black plaid wool skirt ended at her knees and had a coordinating red cardigan sweater covering a neat, white turtleneck shirt. The pearl necklace at her throat and pearl stud earrings were the perfect

complement to the outfit. She wore black opaque tights and black shoes with prim, one inch heels.

Was she trying to counter the face that practically screamed sensuality? Her cheekbones were high and highlighted her stunning blue eyes but it was really her mouth that captured his attention. They were full and pink and his mind wondered what it would be like to kiss her. As well as many other things. How could a woman with lips like that dress like a school librarian?

He watched in fascination as her mouth opened and closed, trying to figure out what she could tell him. He knew the exact moment when she made the decision to lie to him. "I know I made a fool of myself," she started off. "But I just stubbed my toe."

Lana held her breath, waiting for him to call her on the fib. She was a horrible liar but there was no way she could explain to this man what had really happened. Maybe if he'd been old, ugly or even fat and short or bald, she could have come up with some half truths that would be more believable than the silly stubbed toe line. No one in their right mind would cry that long and hard over a small ache. Yes, she could have passed off some form of the truth to someone less attractive and overwhelming. But not this handsome, dynamic man who had probably never cried in his life. He was too strong and looked like "confidence" was his middle name. She wiggled uncomfortably under his intense, dark gaze and was relieved when he looked away.

He ignored her lie and lifted his hand to signal the waiter. Within moments, a martini with two olives appeared at her elbow.

Lana looked at the drink, then up at him in confusion. "What's this?" she asked, not daring to touch it. She rarely drank anything at all and on the few occasions she did, she preferred a glass of wine which she could slowly sip. Generally she could only take half a glass before she put it aside, feeling the impact from only a few ounces. It had been one of the irritants Drew had laughed at her about during their marriage.

"It's a martini," he explained patiently. "You look like you could use a drink."

Her fingers gently touched the bottom of the glass and shifted it away from her slightly. "I don't drink," she explained, but smiled gently to soften the words.

"Ever?" he asked.

She looked down at the linen tablecloth self-consciously. "Of course I drink occasionally. But not liquor." Immediately, her body braced to hear the sarcasm about how weak she was and what a lightweight to not be able to drink. Drew had done it so often she could practically write the script.

She waited a long moment, tense and frustrated. When he said nothing, she glanced up at him but he wasn't looking at her. He was looking for the waiter or bar tender.

He started to raise his hand again but she placed her fingers on his sleeve gently, then pulled them quickly away when she felt the muscles tense underneath the fabric. "No," she said hurriedly, knowing that drinks in this kind of establishment were probably very expensive. "This is fine," she said and to counter the question in his eyes she picked up the drink and took a daring sip, showing him that she wasn't going to waste her present cocktail.

She smiled tentatively, showing him that everything was fine. And then the fire started. As the gin slid down her throat, she felt as if she were going to die! Gasping, she glanced around to figure out how to put out the flames but there was no instant relief in sight.

Knowing that she could either make a fool of herself again, or drink the horrible liquid, she decided against appearing foolish once again. Daring to tough it out, she swallowed all the liquid and smiled, wishing she were anywhere but here, in front of this sophisticated, elegant man who, quite literally, took her breath away. Her eyes were burning and she was sure she'd scorched off most of the taste buds on her tongue but she blinked rapidly in an effort to show him that she was fine with the current drink. "No need for anything else," she gasped out.

Victor watched in amusement as she fought the fire of the martini. He wasn't sure why she didn't want him to order her something more to her liking

but wanted to find out why she'd been so upset instead. He couldn't believe what a fascinating creature she was. He was entranced despite years of cynicism that had made him lose faith in women and humanity. She was an intriguing breath of fresh air.