



One Heart to Win

By Johanna Lindsey

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In her fiftieth novel, *New York Times* bestselling author Johanna Lindsey takes her readers on a sensual, romantic adventure through the American West.

Some young ladies marry for money and social standing, a few lucky ones marry for love—but Tiffany Warren is marrying to end a feud. Honoring her mother's promise, Tiffany reluctantly travels west to meet her estranged father and his enemy's eldest son, rancher Hunter Callahan. Once the Warrens and the Callahans are united by marriage, both clans will stop squabbling over a disputed strip of land. In the chaos of a train robbery Tiffany seizes a golden opportunity: By assuming the identity of her father's new housekeeper she can live with the father she never knew and assess his true character, as well as that of the neighboring cowboy to whom she is betrothed. But, too late, Tiffany discovers that the rivalry between the Warrens and the Callahans has escalated when the Callahans steal the Warrens' housekeeper as soon as she steps off the train!

Now, Tiffany, who is pretending to be Jennifer Fleming, finds herself living in the enemy camp, under the same roof as her fiancé. All too soon she learns her intended is a handsome, sweet talking charmer whom she has to fight off because he can't keep his eyes—or his hands—off Jennifer. After Tiffany's charade is exposed she refuses to marry Hunter to end the feud. As Hunter goes about claiming his rightful bride-to-be, he knows that although he loves two women—proper, elegant Tiffany as well as spunky, passionate Jennifer—he has only one heart to win.

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Editorial Review

Review

"For her 50th romance Lindsey creates a memorable western, complete with a clan feud, ranchers, miners, and a pair of stubborn lovers who discover the value of family and trust. The secondary plot lines of old loves and dark secrets will keep readers turning the pages along with the joy of watching a young, impulsive heroine mature into a strong western woman. With that special touch of Lindsey humor and sexual tension, she wins her fans' hearts." (Romantic Times Book Reviews)

About the Author

Johanna Lindsey is world-renowned for her "mastery of historical romance" (*Entertainment Weekly*), with more than sixty million copies of her novels sold. She is the author of fifty-two previous national bestselling novels, many of which reached the #1 spot on the *New York Times* bestseller list. Lindsey lives in New Hampshire with her family.

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One Heart to Win

Chapter One



ROSE WARREN STOPPED CRYING before her daughter, Tiffany, opened the front door of their brownstone town house, but she couldn't get out of her mind the words that had provoked the tears. Come with her, Rose. It's been fifteen years, haven't you tortured us long enough?

She usually let her daughter, who had turned eighteen last month, read the letters from Franklin Warren. Frank usually kept them impersonal so she could share them with their daughter. This time he didn't, and she wadded the letter up in her fist and stuffed it in her pocket as soon as she heard Tiffany's voice in the hall. The girl didn't know the real reason her parents didn't live together. Frank didn't even know the real reason she'd had to leave him. After all these years, it was best it remain that way.

"Tiffany, join me in the parlor, please!" Rose called out before Tiffany could go upstairs to her room.

The afternoon light glinting in her shiny reddish-blond hair, Tiffany removed her bonnet as she entered the parlor, then the short, thin cape from her shoulders. The weather was too warm now for a coat, yet a lady in New York City still had to be respectably dressed when she left the house.

As Rose gazed at Tiffany, she was once again reminded that her little darling was not so little anymore. Ever since Tiffany had turned eighteen, Rose had said more than one prayer that her daughter would stop growing. She was already well above average height at five feet eight inches and often complained about it. Tiffany got that height from her father, Franklin, and got his emerald green eyes, too, she just didn't know it. She got fine bones from Rose and delicate features that made her more than pretty, but she'd only partially gotten Rose's red hair; Tiffany's was more a coppery hue.

"I've had a letter from your father."

No response.

Tiffany used to get so excited over one of Frank's letters, but that had been so long ago—about the time she'd stopped asking when he would visit.

It broke Rose's heart to see the indifferent attitude her daughter had adopted toward her father. She knew Tiffany had no memories of him. She'd been too young when she and Rose had left Nashart, Montana. Rose knew she should have let them meet over the years. Frank had been magnanimous in sending the boys to her, though she was sure he had done it to make her feel guilty for not reciprocating and allowing their daughter to visit him. She'd been too afraid Frank wouldn't let Tiffany return home to her. It wasn't a groundless fear, it was her worst nightmare. In his rage he'd threatened to keep their daughter. He'd threatened so many things to try to make his family whole again. And she couldn't even blame him for that effort! But it wasn't going to happen, it couldn't. And now she was going to face her greatest fear: that once Tiffany got to Montana, Rose would never again see her.

She should have insisted that Tiffany's fiancé come to New York to court her. But that would have been the last straw for Frank. He'd honored Rose's wishes for fifteen years and stayed away, but this was the year she'd promised him Tiffany would live under his roof again. Rose couldn't, in good conscience, keep them apart any longer.

Tiffany stopped in front of her and held out her hand for the letter. Rose directed her to the sofa instead. "Sit down."

Tiffany raised her brow at being denied the letter, but took the seat across from Rose. The room was large. The town house was large. Rose's parents had come from old-world wealth, all of which was hers now. When Rose had returned from Montana Territory with her three-year-old daughter, she'd found her mother recuperating from a series of illnesses that had left her an invalid during the five years Rose had been away. Rose's mother had only lasted four more years, but at least Tiffany had gotten to know her grandmother.

That had been a painful time in Rose's life. She'd had to give up her husband, give up her three sons, then she'd lost her only remaining parent. But at least she'd had Tiffany. She would probably have gone mad with grief if she'd had to give up Tiffany, too. But now the day for that had come as well. . . .

"Is it time for the Talk again?" Tiffany asked in a bored tone.

"You've gotten sassy since you turned eighteen," Rose noted.

"If that's what you want to call this resentment that's been eating away at me, fine. Sassy it is."

"Tiffany—"

"I won't go to Montana, Mama. I don't care if it means bloodshed. I don't care if it means I won't ever see my brothers again. I refuse to marry someone I've never met." Tiffany crossed her arms over her chest and jutted out her chin defiantly. "There, I've finally said it and I'm not changing my mind."

"I quite agree."

Tiffany's eyes widened before she squealed in relief. "Thank you! You can't imagine how miserable I've been over the prospect—"

“You should let me finish. I agree you’re not going to marry a man you’ve never met. You’re going to go to Montana to meet him. You will have several months to get to know him. At the end of that time if you have no liking for him, then, yes, you can end this engagement and come back to New York before the weather turns bad. I give you my word on that, Tiffany.”

“Why did you never tell me I would have a choice about this marriage you and my father arranged for me when I was just a baby?”

“Because I hoped you would honor this commitment I made for you of your own volition. I wanted you to grow accustomed to the idea, hoped you might even be looking forward to it by now.”

“But Montana isn’t even civilized yet!”

“Can we have this conversation without the shouting, please?” Then Rose added with a slight grin, “The Territory of Montana is not as uncivilized as you think. I thought your brothers convinced you of that. And it’s some of the most beautiful country I’ve ever seen. You might actually like it there.”

“I like it here, where I’ve grown up, where my friends live, where you live,” Tiffany mumbled, then said louder, “where men don’t wear guns on their hips because there’s always something that needs shooting, including people. How could you even agree to this arrangement in the first place, Mama?”

“I’m the one who suggested it.” She’d never told her daughter that before, and looking at Tiffany’s widely rounded emerald eyes now, she wished she’d been able to explain some other way. But there was no other way.

“So you’re the one throwing me to the wolves?”

“Oh, good grief, Tiff, don’t be so melodramatic. It was the only thing I could think of to end the feud between the Callahans and the Warrens. That strip of land with the water on it between the two properties isn’t even what started it, but both sides are using it to keep the feud alive, both claiming it’s theirs. I’ve never seen such pigheadedness, on both sides. Anytime they got near that water at the same time, shots were fired. If any cows wandered across it, they weren’t given back, which caused more shooting. Giving it to you and Hunter Callahan as part of your marriage agreement will end the contention over it.”

“So you took it upon yourself to end a feud you didn’t start by sacrificing your only daughter?”

Rose made a sound of exasperation. “For your information, young lady, Zachary Callahan is one of the most handsome men I’ve ever met. I had no doubt that his young sons would grow up to be just as handsome, considering the pretty wife he married. I didn’t think I was sacrificing you at all, I was quite sure you’d be thrilled with a Callahan for a husband. But then as an outsider, I saw things differently. The ranchers were aggressive, even possessive, yes, but I don’t think that was unique to the area. Frank and Zachary were just two strong-willed men who weren’t willing to concede an inch. Bad history started it, and that water on the border between the two ranches wouldn’t let it end. Personally, I don’t think the Callahans are bad people. Zachary might be a competitive, ornery cattleman, but he has a reputation of being a devoted husband and a good father, which says a lot for a family.”

“It wasn’t up to you to end the feud, Mama. Why did you even try?”

She wasn’t going to burden Tiffany with the horrors she’d lived through back then. Shots were fired so often

she was afraid one of her children was going to catch the next bullet. Then a simple idea had occurred to her: to end that feud through marriage. When she'd first brought up the idea to Frank, she didn't know that she and Tiffany wouldn't remain in Montana. She'd imagined Tiffany and Hunter growing up together, being friends first, then falling in love naturally . . .

She tried to explain in simpler terms. "I hated that feud, but, yes, I tried to ignore it, until the night your father was carried home half-dead. It wasn't a Callahan that shot him, but one of the Callahans' hired hands. A funny thing about the West: employees take sides, too, and some of them don't follow orders too well. But regardless, your father came close to dying, and I was so desperate to put an end to the bloodshed that I'd try anything. And the betrothal did exactly that. There's been a truce ever since. Your brothers got to grow up without having bullets flying at them every time they went out on the range."

Rose waited breathlessly for Tiffany's response. What she'd told her daughter wasn't all a lie, only partial truths. But it was exactly what they'd all thought when Frank had been shot. But the shooter didn't work for the Callahans. He had another employer, one much more ruthless, who was pulling his strings. When she found that out and learned she couldn't put the blame where it belonged, she did the only thing she could think of to stop Frank from retaliating once he recovered: she brought up the idea of a truce through marriage again, a sure means of ending that deplorable feud for good, and insisted on it this time.

She was the only one who knew what really happened that night and why. It had to remain that way. But Tiffany's accepting an arranged marriage could really be the salvation of two neighboring families that were too stubborn to agree to share water rights instead of fighting over them. But Rose wouldn't force her daughter to solve a generations-old problem. She could only ask her daughter to give Montana and Hunter Callahan a chance.

Thankfully, Tiffany's expression turned a little curious. "So what happens if I do call the marriage off? They're back to trying to kill each other?"

Rose cringed. "I don't know. I'm hoping these fifteen years of getting along has made them realize they never should have carried on a fight their grandparents started that has nothing to do with them."

"What did start it?"

"I'm not even sure. Something about a wedding that turned into a shooting instead."

"You mean the two families were supposed to have been joined through marriage two generations ago?"

"Apparently."

"That doesn't portend well for your idea of trying it again," Tiffany pointed out. "In fact, a marriage between the two families is more likely fated to never happen."

Rose gave her daughter a stern look. "It won't happen with that attitude. Will you at least meet this man without prejudice? Give him a chance, Tiffany. He could make you very happy."

Tiffany mulled that over for a few moments before she allowed, "Now that I know I don't have to marry him if I don't want to, I suppose I can try and look at this from a new perspective—as a two-month summer holiday in a different part of the country. When are we leaving?"

“I’m not going—well, not all the way. I’ll accompany you as far as Chicago and stay there to await the outcome of your courtship.”

Tiffany’s shoulders slumped with that news. “Why bother, if you’re not going all the way?”

“Because I want to be relatively close by in case you need me, and with the rail lines connecting all the way to Nashart now, Chicago is pretty darn close. Anna will be going with you, of course. And I’ve arranged for a retired US marshal to meet us in Chicago to escort you on the last leg of the journey, right to your father’s door.”

Rose was going to start crying in a moment if Tiffany didn’t stop looking so sad about this impending separation. “You aren’t even a little excited about this trip?” she asked hopefully.

“No,” Tiffany replied tonelessly as she stood up to leave the room.

“About seeing your father again?”

“Again?!” Tiffany swung around with a snarl. “I don’t remember him, and you and he made sure I’d have no memories of him. So I’ll be honest, Mama. If I could get this over with without laying eyes on Franklin Warren, I would.”

“Tiffany!”

“I’m not kidding, and don’t give me all those excuses about why I’ve grown up without a father. If he’d really wanted to see me, he would have found a way. But he didn’t. And as far as I’m concerned, now it’s too late.”

Rose saw the angry tears welling in Tiffany’s eyes before Tiffany bolted out of the parlor. God, what had she done to the people she loved the most?

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