



### **Kirkus Reviews**

Light-hearted fare is the coin of the realm when Lady Lucinda Davenport kidnaps and seduces a duke, only to fall in love with him. Under her spell, the duke becomes a willing and inventive partner of remarkable stamina who delivers the goods again and again. Their over-the-top exploits make for a lusty, light-weight romp!

### **Nicole Sorkin (Pacific Book Review)**

Desperate Desires succeeds on many levels. The dialogue is riveting, entertaining, and downright provocative. The characters are well developed, the storyline superb, and the descriptions of the time period create wonderful mental images. A great mix of romance and psychological thriller, it transports one to 17th century London with all its splendor, beauty and hardships. The title is most appropriate given the obsessive love they had for one another. And the love scenes are steamy and hot!

### **Paige Lovitt (For Reader Views)**

Desperate Desires perfectly blends erotica, romance and humor. I found the whole eccentric cast of characters to be endearing. The sensual scenes are beautifully written and extremely erotic. I highly recommend "Desperate Desires" to readers who enjoy erotic romances.

# *Desperate Desires*

*A Sweet and Spicy Novella*

The cunningly audacious Lady Lucinda Davenport is by no means a conventional woman. Smart and fiercely determined, she's more comfortable adding numbers than she'll ever be socializing with highfalutin members of the ton. When desperate straits force her into action to save her home and lands, she finds herself faced with only one option. Summoning every ounce of her courage, she sets in motion a wild and raunchy scheme that would set the ton on fire if they ever caught wind of her actions.

Lucien Brandford, fourth Duke of Carlsborough, is a dangerous man. Wealthy beyond imagination and handsome to a fault, the Duke is sought after by nearly every woman of the ton. Single, widowed, or married, ladies vie for his attention with cutthroat precision. But the Duke has no tolerance for the machinations of his title and fortune-hungry peers. He seeks his pleasure from women who require no commitment.

That attitude ensnares the Duke in Lady Lucinda's plan. Caught unawares, Lucien finds himself at the mercy of a bold and luscious woman whom he cannot decide if he wants to strangle or bed.

The sensual dance that follows between captor and captive as they engage in a volatile battle for control, culminates in a seismic eruption—both psychological and sensual. As tempers flare and sparks fly, an intense and erotic interlude of passion ensues.

The temperamental lovers soon discover what all the world knows: that in order to possess the love of a lifetime, they must submit to one another to conquer their own Desperate Desires.

Sensually spiced with a heavy dose of passion, this romantic bestseller comes complete with a memorable cast of characters. You won't want to put this one down!

(54K words)

...Sweet...

*and*

...Spicy...

# *Desperate Desires*

*by*

*Terri Wolffe*

## Desperate Desires

This is a work of fiction. The events and characters portrayed are imaginary. Their resemblance, if any, to real-life counterparts is entirely coincidental.

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## Dedication

This book is lovingly dedicated to the late, great and legendary singer, Teena Marie, whose extraordinary lyrical voice and talent was loved by millions of fans all over the world. Her music, I adored as a child and that velvety voice of hers stays with me even now into adulthood.

Teena, here's to hoping that somehow, you're still crooning magical notes and entertaining throngs of appreciative fans.

*Call it déjà vu...*

*I can feel it for sure...*

*I've been here before...*

~ Song: *Déjà Vu*

from the album

*Wild and Peaceful*

by Teena Marie

# *Desperate Desires*

*by*

*Terri Wolffe*

# Chapter One

*London, England 1796*

The night air held a crisp chill befitting late September. Ribald laughter from passersby assaulted her ears as well-heeled gentlemen escorted doxies and light skirts into clubs for secret assignations.

“It shan’t be much longer, Georgie.” Lucinda fought to keep her own impatience in check. Though her words were few and softly spoken, the sternness behind them warned the huge man sitting across from her to still himself. Her eyes lingered on him before turning to gaze again outside the carriage. Nearly three hours now, and still no sight of the one they awaited. Even the horses were beginning to get restless. Regardless of everyone’s discomfort, patience was a must. Too much abided on the plan’s outcome, thus it had to be accomplished without flaw.

*How long could a gentleman remain inside a house of ill repute anyway?* she wondered. The dreadful answer, *all night*, mocked her. She shuddered and momentarily closed her eyes. If the gentleman in question remained closeted for the entire night, there was no way their plan would work. Not in broad daylight when the streets of London came alive teeming with wealthy patrons en route to elegant shops and coffee houses, as well as ordinary men and women plying their trades with their special brand of amusements.

*Gad*, but she hated having to come to Town. For all of its finer points, Lucinda dreaded the cramped spaces, the press of unwashed people and most of all, the unbearable putrid smell of raw sewage and waste. Why anyone would choose to live amongst such noisy and unsanitary throngs was beyond her. Country life was better by far.

Thank goodness their plain black carriage drew no attention, since there was no stately crest or other identifying emblem to indicate who the coach belonged to. Several other carriages lined the cobblestone street, each at a respectful distance from the infamous brothel, as devoted coachmen waited to spirit their respective lords home from a night of debauchery.

Oil-burning street lamps lit the darkness of Covent Garden's King Street, highlighting the faces of the men who exited the handsome, discreet-looking establishment. Lucinda carefully examined each one as they walked to private carriages or to available hackneys.

Two gentlemen stumbled forth, each slapping the other on the back, likely applauding their prowess at the gaming tables or either their stamina in the ladies' boudoirs. No doubt they were drunk on expensive bottles of wine, the cost of which Lucinda knew could keep her entire household warm for a full winter. Neither one was their intended quarry.

To pass the time, Lucinda leaned back and revisited the steps of her nefarious plan, examining it for any loose ends. If members of the *ton* had even an inkling of the scandalous acts she was about to commit, the gossip alone would ruin her. But what choice did she have, given that it was up to her to save their lands from being snatched away by greedy men who lay in wait plotting her downfall? Nay, if her family was to survive, she had no other option.

If not for dire straights, never would she stoop to enacting the scheme which was about to unfold. *But did you have to pick a Duke?* The question stood ready at the back of Lucinda's mind, and for the umpteenth time she berated herself while acknowledging that it was far too late to change strategies. The thought of *anything* going awry caused her pulse to quicken. She squeezed her gloved hands to calm her unruly nerves.

As another man made his way from the building, Lucinda leaned forward watching him like a hawk. He was not dressed in typical ducal finery; he wore plain but quality black breeches, a startling white ruffled shirt, a black waistcoat and black Hessian boots that shone brightly in the night. But it was the way he carried himself, regal and confident, as if he owned the world, that established him as the target. Lucinda used the cane on the seat beside her to urgently rap three times on the carriage roof.

"Georgie, put the string down now. It's time to play the game we practiced. But first, you must wait until I give the signal. Agreed?" Nodding, Georgie threw away the string he had been playfully creating windmills with and started rocking excitedly.

“Be still, Georgie.” Lucinda spoke sharply. Enormous in size, any rocking on his part would bring attention to their carriage.

The left-side carriage door was snatched opened as her maidservant, Ginny, scrambled inside. She was disguised in men’s clothing as their jarvey.<sup>1</sup>

“He’s the gent, isn’t he, my Lady?” Ginny’s voice was laced with excitement. Or was it fear? Lucinda couldn’t tell.

“Yes, it’s him. Come, put this on and lie down. And keep a sharp eye on Georgie, too. Make sure he doesn’t move an inch.” Lucinda assisted Ginny with her veil and quickly covered her with a thick lap blanket before turning to Georgie. She patted his check reassuringly and pulled the heavy, black velvet curtain in place around him, effectively shielding him from view. Hurrying, Lucinda pulled her own veil over her face. Clutching her small pelisse, she grit her teeth and stepped smartly from the carriage.

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Lucien Douglas Aldwine Brandford, IV Duke of Carlsborough, was one of the richest men in all of England. Handsome to a fault, his availability made him one of the most sought-after bachelors within the *ton* as nearly every available female (from debutante to thrice-over widow) desired to be his Duchess.

It was precisely for this reason that Lucien avoided most of the *ton*’s social affairs. He had no tolerance for conniving, title-hungry mamas, grandmeres, aunts and daughters. Even now, the Duke was without a mistress and had been so for the past year when he had rid himself of his last paramour because of her increasing dramatics. The desire for no entanglements was also why the Duke was, of late, a prized guest of The Templar Gentlemen’s Club. Lady Belchamp, as the madam patroness preferred to be called, expertly ran the elite gaming house that doubled as a house of pleasure.

As was his current custom, Lucien frequented the Gentlemen’s Club most Thursday evenings when he traveled to his ducal town house in London. For some inexplicable reason, on

this evening, Lucien had only visited the gaming rooms where he'd lost and then won a tidy sum. A restlessness had settled upon the Duke and he hadn't been inclined to visit the upper chambers where some of London's finest courtesans waited to grant a paying gentleman's every carnal request. For most gentlemen of his ilk, immersing themselves after a spell of gambling in the warm, wet and sweet-smelling flesh of a beautiful willing and buxom lady, was indeed the highlight of the evening.

As Lucien walked to his ducal carriage, where his coachman and footmen awaited him, he patted his waistcoat feeling the reassuring weight of his pistol when he heard a soft voice call to him no more than a stone's throw away.

"Your Grace?"

Lucien whipped around, his hand slipping reflexively inside his waistcoat. London was a city of vice and Covent Garden's theatre district was as well known for its late night muggings as it was for its brothels and street walkers.

A well-attired woman with a shapely, hour-glass figure, garbed in all black from head to toe, stood nearby. Her hand was lifted in a hesitant gesture.

"Lucien... *We need you...*"

The Duke's hand fell away from his pistol as familiar memories rushed through his brain. He knew of only one woman who had whispered his name with such care. But that woman was lost to him. *We need you...*

"Who are you?" The Duke's tone was authoritative, that of a wealthy aristocrat used to issuing commands that brooked no argument.

"Please... 'Tis Lady Catherine..."

As the Duke approached the veiled woman, she turned and walked toward an old-fashioned but very large carriage. Not knowing what to expect, Lucien followed cautiously. The carriage door swung open and the woman in black stood beckoning him to hurry.

“Come, Your Grace. The Duchess has need of you.” The woman then disappeared inside.

Ignoring the warning signals suddenly flaring through his senses, Lucien hurried to the waiting carriage. He paused at its entrance examining the sturdy, heavily built coach. The Duke heard her say, “She’s been injured, Your Grace.”

His heart now in his mouth, Lucien entered the carriage. Though it was bathed in darkness, the Duke’s foremost thought was to see to the comfort of the only woman he had ever loved. *The only woman he could never have.*

The veiled woman had moved to sit where Catherine lay prostrate upon the leather seat. A slither of light from the street allowed Lucien to see that she was softly stroking Catherine’s shoulder.

“What’s happened to her?” Concern edged the Duke’s voice. Inside the spacious carriage, he bent over the figure he thought to be Catherine, preparing to lift the veil from her face. In the blink of an eye, darkness sprang to life as a figure lunged from behind a curtain which Lucien hadn’t paid attention to. Before the Duke could reach for his pistol, the same curtain was thrown over him by the largest man he had ever seen. Lucien was immersed in darkness.

At six feet two inches, the Duke was a formidable figure. He was thick and heavy with solid muscles. Still, locked in the vice of this man’s clutches, the Duke was smothered like a child. The man gripped him so tightly the Duke couldn’t move an inch despite his attempts to free himself. The large hand clamped over his mouth nearly covered his entire face. And the huge thigh that pinned his legs felt like a log. The giant man must have weighed a solid twenty-nine stones.

Lucinda turned her attention to her maidservant, who had scurried to the corner of the coach. Her eyes as wide as saucers, she held one hand against her open mouth, the other pressed hard against her stomach.

Lucinda prodded her into action—for the girl was suddenly acting as if she really was quite ill—by snapping her fingers in rapid succession. “Be gone! And drive the horses slowly. We

don't want to give anyone cause to remember our carriage." Lucinda practically shoved Ginny through the door.

The Duke heard the door slam shut followed by the slow clopping sound of shod hooves on the cobblestone pavement as the coach pulled away from the curb. Rage engulfed him, flaring through him like burning ashes. Yet, he had never felt so powerless.

The hands that gripped him cut off his air supply and the Duke struggled to gasp for breath.

Quickly averting disaster, Lucinda rushed to his aid. "Wait, Georgie. Let him breathe. Here, spread your fingers like this while I fix it so that he doesn't suffocate." Egads! *What if they'd accidentally killed him?* Lucinda couldn't bring herself to think of the consequences. Individual cells at Newgate would await them all.

She quickly lit one of the two lanterns hanging inside the carriage. Where before it had been relatively dark, now a soft incandescent glow filled the coach.

Lucien heard a knife snap open near his face and tried to turn his head away from the sound.

"My apologies, Your Grace. If you'll just hold still, please. I promise you will come to no harm."

The Duke felt the woman pull the curtain away from his face and he could feel the knife near his nose as she carefully sliced two holes into it. One at his nostrils and another cut near his mouth, made it easier for him to breathe.

"Who are you?" Lucien gasped as soon as he could speak. His frustration mounting, he demanded of his captor, "What do you want?"

The woman ignored the Duke as if he hadn't spoken, which further enraged him.

Sensing the volatile state of the Duke's emotions, Lucinda said, "If he moves or speaks again, Georgie, squeeze him just the way I showed you."

In a dangerous voice, the Duke said, “Madam, either you’re playing a treacherous game, or you’ve completely got the wrong man. Whichever one it is, I assure you that you and your companions will pay dearly for this affront.” The Duke tried unsuccessfully to jerk away from the giant. And instantly regretted it. The big man began to shake him back and forth as if he were a rag doll.

Unable to help herself, or maybe because her nerves were stretched too tight, a small derisive chortle escaped Lucinda at the sight of the great Duke of Carlsborough being shaken like a leaf.

“Wait, Georgie! Stop!” Lucinda reached across to place her hand on Georgie’s arm to make him cease his movements. Unfortunately, at least for the Duke, Georgie had confused their rehearsed “squeeze” movement with the “shake and shimmy” one.

Feeling as if his brain was rattling around in his skull, the Duke was far from amused. He felt as though his every bone had nearly been crushed.

With acid lining his voice, Lucien said, “Good Lud! Where’d you find this giant ani...”

The hand that seconds ago had carefully made allowance for him to breathe, promptly grasped his nose and twisted savagely. Lucien grunted. And ceased his sentence about the four hundred pound man.

“There will be no name calling, Your Grace. My friend is a gentle giant. However, one wrong word and that can change instantaneously. You will not offend him, do you understand? Nod your head if you do, Your Grace.”

Lucien made no movement. Instead he noted the displeasure in her voice. Her quick defense of her giant friend revealed a weakness for him to exploit.

Without warning, the Duke felt the tip of the blade press against his Adam’s apple.

“Do you understand, Your Grace?”

When Lucien nodded imperceptibly, Lucinda said, "I know this is quite out of the ordinary. Again, I apologize for the inconvenience to your person. Nevertheless, we are desperately in need your services, Your Grace."

"How could a trio of thieves the likes of you possibly require my services?" No answer came from the woman who was rummaging on the seat next to him. She then moved to the floor of the carriage for he could feel her near his feet.

"Is all well with Lady Catherine?" Lucien tried again to make her address him.

The rummaging ceased. "Yes, Your Grace. Lady Catherine is fine. Forgive me for evoking her name as a ploy. We needed it to lure you to the carriage."

And a fine job they'd done of it too, the Duke thought sourly. He was terribly annoyed with himself for having been so completely duped by this trio of ill-suited ruffians. Lucien heard keys jangling nearby.

"Slide him down, Georgie. Push him further this way."

Lucien noticed an underlying gentleness in her tone whenever she spoke to the giant. He wondered if the big man was her husband or perhaps her protector. The man hadn't spoken a word, but clearly he was used to taking orders. At least from her. Lucien's legs were swiftly spread apart and before he knew it, leg irons were locked around his boots. Still, the giant's grasp was so tight, he couldn't move a muscle.

"The leg irons do not hurt, do they, Your Grace? I have left enough space for you to wiggle your feet but not enough for you to get free of the irons."

Dismayed, Lucien asked, "You expect compliments?" Disbelief flooded the Duke's voice. "Madam, I will see you hanged for your treachery."

As she rose from the floor of the carriage to sit next to him, Lucinda said, "You're a surly cur aren't you, Your Grace? Well, I grow bored with your vacuous threats." She couldn't resist further taunting the Duke. "I've heard it said, Your Grace, that your mere presence can cause a

woman's heart to go aflutter. Now that I've met your acquaintance, I suspect the ladies who spread that particular *on dit* were only jesting."

Though he was undone at the moment, the Duke of Carlsborough did not suffer fools gladly. His reputation as a man not to be trifled with preceded him. It was rumored that the Duke had shot and killed many a man in duels and in the course of his travels. And he was known to deal harshly with anyone who attempted to cheat him in business. His savvy with pistols and swords was well known throughout the *ton*. And yet, his rumored aloofness and obvious lack of charm (he seemed horribly lacking in charm to Lucinda) didn't stop the ladies from pursuing him.

For Lucien, his current predicament was made all the more egregious at having been waylaid by the likes of these three miscreants. And yet, from the woman's speech, she appeared to be well educated. He wondered who she was. Likely, she was the mistress of one of his enemies or the illegitimate daughter of some nobleman of the peerage.

"You have no idea of just how surly I can be, Madam. You are crazed if you expect chivalry in light of my current circumstance." Who *was* this unabashed wench?

With the Duke secured by iron shackles and Georgie's relentless grip, Lucinda continued to needle him. "I doubt you even know what *chivalry* means. In fact, Your Grace, you are a prime example of why one should never believe everything one hears. If asked, I will most eagerly disavow your reputation as a lothario. You, sir, are more likely to cause a woman's heart to fail before you'll ever cause it to go aflutter."

"So speaks an ill-informed scullery maid," retorted the Duke.

Lucinda ignored the Duke as she fearlessly patted his chest, feeling for the pistol she knew he carried within his waistcoat. She felt the imprint of it and said to him, "Please, Your Grace, no sudden moves. It would be most unfortunate if I, scullery maid that you say I am, inadvertently slew you before I accomplished my mission." She reached under the curtain to withdraw the weapon from his waistcoat, sliding it carefully into the space Georgie created for her.

Even though the giant's grip had loosened slightly, the Duke was still unable to move, locked as he was in the man's bear of a hug.

"A fine weapon it is, too, Your Grace. However, you won't be needing it for the time being. You may have it back upon your return."

"Where are you taking me?" the Duke asked. But again, the woman ignored him. She slipped away and Lucien heard a box open and close before a key turned in a lock. She slid back next to him and lifted the curtain to take hold of one of his hands.

Even as the Duke tried to twist away, Georgie was tightening his grip. Had the giant wanted to, Lucien knew he could easily have snapped every bone in his body.

Lucinda tugged the Duke's hand downward to lock it inside the custom-made wrist restraint and proceeded to shackle his other hand. Both the Duke's hands were now bound to the leather seat of the coach.

"Georgie, clasp your hand around His Grace's neck. Just like this."

"You're joking!" the Duke howled as feminine hands encircled his neck.

When the huge hand that had been covering his face slid to encase his neck, Lucien went quite still. The giant could easily snap his neck and the Duke marveled again at the size of him. And yet, for all his evident strength, Lucien noticed that the man's touch was gentle. As if he had been taught painstakingly to be aware of his own strength.

Meanwhile, to add insult to injury, the offensive woman was now strapping his chest to the wall of the seat by fastening together two leather straps protruding from the back of the seats.

For the first time since entering the carriage, the Duke became aware another scent beside the hint of jasmine which the woman wore. The rich smell of bergamot oil enveloped the coach. Never had the Duke known a private carriage to have restraints. While it wasn't of the latest style, he could tell the coach was well maintained for it was comfortable, its springs did not creak, and its undercarriage was solid, which lent a ride that was surprisingly smooth. Still, the

customized design had to be a new feature, he thought. Curious despite his anger, Lucien asked, “What manner of coach is this? Do you transport prisoners?” When the woman refused to answer him, he fumed silently.

“One last touch, Your Grace, and then Georgie will release you.”

The coach hit a bump in the road and Lucinda was jolted against the Duke. Her ample chest pressed into him before she could pull herself away.

“Hold the curtain in front of his face like so, Georgie.” Lucinda slid both her hands behind the curtain to tie a silk cloth tightly around the Duke’s eyes, completely blinding him.

With the Duke now sightless and their immobile prisoner, Lucinda was elated...and ready to celebrate. She tossed the curtain aside, scrambled over to Georgie, and threw her arms around his neck.

“We did it, Georgie! We did it! And you were wonderful! Absolutely wonderful!” She placed a loud smack of a kiss on his forehead and began to affectionately rumple his hair.

*Good Lud!* Was she tickling the giant? Playing in the man’s hair? With the curtain no longer covering his face, Lucien turned his face toward the sound of her excited voice.

The man, Georgie, started rocking wildly back and forth on the seat. Lucien could feel the entire coach sway from his movements.

“Pardon me for not joining the festive celebration. I seem to be at a momentary disadvantage.” The Duke, along with his acrimonious sarcasm, was summarily ignored.

Lucinda slid to the opposite side of the coach so that she faced her captive. “Here, Georgie, look what I’ve brought just for you.”

A wax bag crumpled and Lucien could smell licorice. Beside him, the giant started clapping his hands. But still, he remained silent.

It was then that Lucien wondered if the man was a deaf mute, deformed in some way due to his massive size. The Duke heard the giant tear into the licorice as he rocked (albeit less wildly) from side to side.

As for Lucinda, the sweet essence of victory covered her as she slid further onto her seat. She leaned her head back, closed her eyes and took a deep relaxing breath. As if a great battle had come to an abrupt end, her adrenaline quickly ebbed. She was close to feeling drained, particularly in lieu of all the planning and preparations that had been made over the past few weeks. But she was also happy. Her mounting problems were soon to be over.

**Desperate Desires is available via ebook on Amazon.com and Barnes and Noble**