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JOHANNA LINDSEY

The background of the cover features a woman in a blue, backless gown with a large white bow at the waist, standing on a balcony and looking out over a historical city street. The street is filled with buildings, a yellow carriage, and people. The scene is set against a blue sky with white clouds.

*A Malory
Novel*

NO CHOICE BUT SEDUCTION

JOHANNA
LINDSEY

No Choice
But
Seduction



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No Choice.
But
Seduction

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Prologue



*L*EAVING HOME TO VISIT HIS FAMILY.

Boyd Anderson found something distinctly annoying about that phrase. Yet it was true. In the last eight years, every time he sailed to Bridgeport, Connecticut, in the hopes of catching one of his four older brothers at home for a visit, too, not one of them had ever been there. He'd had to sail elsewhere to find them.

Captains all of them, Boyd's brothers sailed around the world, but they all used to come home eagerly because their only sister, Georgina, would be there waiting for them. But Georgina had married an Englishman, Lord James Malory, and now she lived across the ocean from Connecticut, and that's where Boyd had to sail if he wanted to see her. Which was one good reason why Boyd had been thinking about settling down in London himself.

He hadn't made a firm decision yet, but he was definitely leaning toward it for a number of reasons, but mainly because the Anderson clan now went to London where their sister lived more often than they returned home. And Georgina wasn't the only Anderson who had married into the Malory clan. Boyd's older



brother Warren had amazed the family by doing the same thing when he married Lady Amy Malory. While Warren still sailed for at least half of each year, taking his family with him, he spent the other half in London so his children could get to know their many, *many* cousins, aunts and uncles, great-aunts and great-uncles, and their grandparents.

Putting down roots would be a major change in Boyd's life. It would mean giving up the sea for good after having sailed since he was eighteen. Thirty-four now, he'd made his home on his ship, *The Oceanus*, for fifteen years! No one knew better than he did how much he'd prefer a home that didn't rock.

He'd been considering leaving the sea for other reasons also. Seeing Georgina and his brother Warren both happily married to members of the Malory clan, Boyd had more and more been craving that kind of happiness for himself. That was not to say he wanted to settle down with a Malory woman, even if there were any left of a marriageable age. Hell no. That would mean facing a solid wall of Malory opposition, which he'd rather not do. But he wanted a wife. He was ready. If his association with the Malory clan had taught him anything, it was that marriage could be a wonderful thing. He just hadn't found the right woman yet.

He was also heartily tired of short, unmemorable relationships with women. His brother Drew might be happy to have a sweet-heart in every port, but Drew was a carefree charmer who easily formed those little attachments and thus had women to return to—all over the world!

It wasn't that easy for Boyd. He didn't like making promises he wouldn't keep, nor did he make decisions quickly, at least not important ones such as picking the future Mrs. Boyd Anderson. And he didn't like spreading his affections among many women. Was he simply a romantic? He didn't know, he just knew that romancing a variety of women didn't satisfy him the way it seemed to sat-



isfy Drew. What Boyd really wanted was to have just one woman by his side for the rest of his life.

He knew why he hadn't even come close to finding her yet. Traveling as much as he did, he had to keep his dalliances short and fairly impersonal. He needed to spend more time with a woman he was attracted to, really get to know her. But when did a sailor ever get to spend more than a few days in any one port? If he settled in London, he'd have all the time he needed to find that one special woman meant just for him. She was out there. He knew she was. He just needed to be in one place long enough to find her and woo her.

Boyd looked out over the busy docks and the town of Bridgeport beyond and felt a pang of sadness. This might be the last time he was ever here. The big house the Andersons had grown up in had been empty since Georgina had left. There were friends and neighbors here whom he'd known all his life and would miss, but family was where the heart was, and Georgina had been the heart of his family since their parents had died.

Boyd's captain, Tyrus Reynolds, joined him at the rail. Boyd didn't captain his own ship and never had. His family thought he was too free-spirited to want to take on that sort of command, even though he'd always sailed with his ship. He'd never disabused them of that notion, even though it was not correct.

"If you weren't in such a hurry to get to England," Tyrus grumbled, "we could have at least detoured a bit to one of the Southern ports for a cargo of cotton instead of taking on passengers here."

Boyd grinned down at the older man he called a friend as well as captain. Boyd was a bit under six feet himself, but Tyrus was much shorter and had a crusty temperament.

"You don't consider a load of passengers a good cargo?" Boyd asked.

Tyrus snorted. "When I have to entertain them for the whole



trip? *And* deal with their complaints! Rum and cotton don't complain."

"But we're looking at about the same profit, if all of the cabins are filled. And it's certainly not the first time we've taken on passengers. You're just out of sorts because you're remembering the last time when that hefty grandmother kept trying to seduce you."

Tyrus groaned. "Don't remind me. I never mentioned it to you, but she actually snuck into my cabin and right into my bed. Scared the bejesus out of me, waking up to her snuggled to my side."

Boyd burst out laughing. "I hope you didn't take advantage of her."

Tyrus's snort was much more meaningful this time. Boyd glanced away so Tyrus wouldn't see his grin. Damn, he wished he could have seen that, but just imagining it made him want to laugh again.

Boyd's eyes, caught by the bright lavender and pink colors on the dock below, stayed on the tall woman wearing a lavender skirt and a pink blouse. The sleeves of the blouse were rolled up. It was midsummer and definitely a warm day. With the back of one arm, the woman wiped her brow, knocking her bonnet off her head. She had black hair, but he'd already seen that in the long braid she wore down her back. He wished she would turn around instead of just giving him a view of her back, not that that side of her was unattractive. The bonnet merely fell to her shoulder, caught by the bonnet ribbons tied around her neck, but she didn't bother to lift it back to her head because she was engrossed in what she was doing.

He was amazed. She was feeding the seagulls and every other bird in the area that noticed her tossing out food from the basket on her arm. There was nothing wrong with that. He fed birds and other wild animals himself on occasion. But she was doing it on a busy dock!



A flock of birds was surrounding her, and more kept coming. She was becoming a nuisance. People were having to walk far around her flock. Some stopped briefly to watch her, fortunately, without blocking his own view. One dockhand tried to shoo off the birds to clear his path, but they merely moved closer to their benefactor. The dockhand said something to her. She turned and smiled at him. And Boyd was dumbstruck by the front view of her.

She wasn't just pretty. To his eyes she was exquisite. Young, probably in her early twenties. Skin lightly tanned from the summer sun, black bangs curved toward her temples, a narrow, beautiful face, and dimples when she smiled. And she was buxom. God, curves like that usually only showed up in his more pleasant dreams!

"Close your mouth, lad, you're drooling," Tyrus said.

"We may have to delay our departure."

Tyrus had followed his gaze. "The devil we will, and besides, I do believe she's one of our passengers. At least I saw her on deck earlier. I'll go check with Johnson if you like. He signed on the passengers for this trip."

"Please do," Boyd said without taking his eyes off her. "If he says yes, I may have to kiss him."

"I'll make sure I don't mention that to him," Tyrus said, laughing as he moved off.

Boyd continued to watch the young woman, savoring the view. How ironic that he'd just been thinking about finding a wife and there stood a perfect candidate. Was it fate? And damn, she had some remarkably luscious curves.

He was going to meet her. If she wasn't a passenger, then he'd just stay behind and let *The Oceanus* sail without him. If she was a passenger, he had a feeling it was going to be the most pleasant journey of his life. But he didn't go down to the dock just yet. Along with the excitement he was feeling came a little nervous-



ness. What if she was only sweet on the eyes? What if she had a bad temperament? God, that would be too cruel. But it couldn't be. Anyone who would take the time to feed wild birds had to have some compassion in her. And compassion usually went hand in hand with kindness and a pleasant disposition. Of course it did, he assured himself. Damn, this better not be the one time it didn't!

She stopped tossing food to the birds. He, too, heard the sound that had drawn her attention elsewhere. From his position on the ship, he could see an injured bird lying on top of a high stack of crates. He'd noticed it there earlier, but hadn't realized it was injured or he would have gone down to collect it and see if Philips, the ship's doctor, could help it before they sailed.

Boyd liked animals, too, and always tried to help those in need. As a child, he'd brought home every stray animal he found, much to his mother's exasperation. Apparently this young woman was of a like mind, since she was now searching for the bird that was making the plaintive noises. Boyd figured the bird was making a racket because it was trying to get down to the food she was spreading around and couldn't. He doubted the young woman could see the bird from where she was on the dock, but she was circling the crates, looking for it, and finally she glanced up.

Boyd hurried down to the docks. He knew she was going to try to climb up those crates to reach the bird, which would be dangerous. The crates were stacked five high, which was at least twice her height, and instead of being tied down as they should have been, they were stacked in a pyramid, with the larger ones at the bottom so the stack would be less likely to topple over.

Boyd arrived too late. She'd already climbed up to the third crate, her toes perched on the edge, and had reached the bird. She was trying now to coax it into the basket.

Boyd held his tongue, afraid that if he said anything, it would distract her and she'd fall. For the same reason, he didn't try to



climb up and yank her down. But he wasn't about to let her get hurt. He wasn't leaving until she was safely on the ground again.

The bird, lured by the food in the basket, finally toppled into it. The young woman had managed to get up there with the basket hooked to her arm, but now that the basket had a live occupant, it wasn't going to be as easy getting down. She must have realized that as she glanced down at her feet.

"Don't move," Boyd called out. "Give me a moment and I'll take that basket for you, then help you down."

She turned her head and looked down at him. "Thank you!" she called back, dazzling him with her smile. "I had no idea this was going to be much more difficult than it first appeared."

He used a small, empty barrel as a stepping-stone to reach the top of the first crate. He didn't need to go any higher to take the basket from her, and he merely jumped back down to set it aside. But she didn't wait for his assistance. She was lowering herself to the second crate when her hold slipped and she tumbled backward. Boyd moved quickly and caught her in his arms.

Her eyes were wide with shock. So were his. What an unexpected boon. He couldn't seem to move. He looked down into her dark emerald-green eyes, and her face. . . . God, his eyes had deceived him. She was much prettier up close. And holding her cradled in his arms like that, with the fingers of one hand touching one of her breasts and his arm wrapped around her derriere, his body responded, and all he could think about was kissing her.

Unnerved that he could desire a woman so intensely and so quickly, he set her down instantly. Away from him.

She straightened her lavender skirt before she glanced back at him. "Thank you so much. That was—alarming."

"You are most welcome."

With a friendly nod she introduced herself. "I'm Katey Tyler."

"Boyd Anderson. I own *The Oceanus*."



"Do you? Well, I own one of the cabins on it, at least until we reach England." She grinned.

God, there were those adorable dimples again. His body wouldn't calm down. He was surprised he was even capable of conversation—if he could call it that. What the devil had induced him to mention that he owned the ship? He never did that! It smacked of bragging—or trying too hard to impress.

"Is Katey short for Catherine?" he got out.

"No, my mother liked to keep things simple. She knew she was going to call me Katey, so she figured why not just skip the Catherine part and name me that."

He smiled. She looked like a Katey somehow. Sleeves rolled up, hair braided instead of tightly bound in a severe coiffure, climbing dockside crates! Boyd had a very, very strong feeling that he'd found his future wife.

"I'll take the bird," Boyd offered. "Our doctor can tend to it."

"What a perfect idea! I think it's broken its right wing. I was going to look for an older child who would like to care for it."

Boyd's smile deepened. She was beautiful *and* she had a kind heart. "I can't tell you how delighted I am, Katey Tyler, that you're going to be sailing with us."

She blinked at him uncertainly. "Well—thank you. You can't imagine how much I've been looking forward to this—oh!"

All of a sudden she ran off. Boyd turned around and saw her running toward a child who had wandered over to the edge of the dock. Only a few years old, the child was precariously leaning over, looking down at the water, and was in danger of falling in. Child in hand now, Katey was looking all around her, probably for the child's parents, then she marched off into the crowd.

Boyd started to follow her, but decided against it. She might think he was being too forward. She'd seemed startled when he'd



expressed his pleasure at sailing with her. Had he been too direct, perhaps even improper? Well, he wasn't exactly used to the ways of courting. But he was sure he could be as charming as his brother Drew if he put his mind to it.

After taking a thorough ribbing from Philips about his having to waste his doctoring skills on a tasty snack, Boyd returned to the deck. The gangplank hadn't been lifted yet; the last few supplies were still being loaded. And Katey Tyler was on board.

His eyes, then his feet, went right to her. She was standing at the rail near the plank, gazing at the town as he had earlier done. He stopped right behind her.

"We meet again."

He'd startled her, possibly with the husky tone of his voice. She turned around so swiftly, she brushed against him. No, he'd been standing too close, smelling the lilac scent of her hair, so she couldn't have avoided the collision. But she was blushing now as she tried to move away and couldn't with the rail behind her. Loath to lose the contact, Boyd was a bit slow in stepping back to give her room.

"You don't hail from Bridgeport, do you?" he said.

"How did you know?"

"Because I'm from Bridgeport. Believe me, if you had lived here, I would have been coming home much more often."

His words and his smile might have been a bit too bold because she was obviously flustered. She glanced down, then started to turn back toward the dock, but something else caught her attention.

"Who would have thought they'd be so troublesome," a carrot-haired young woman said as she came up to them, holding a toddler in each hand. "We're going to have to hover over them if we bring them up to the deck again."



Katey bent down and picked up one of the children and set it on her hip, ruffling its hair. Boyd couldn't tell if the tot was a boy or a girl.

"That's not a bad idea, Grace. They are a bit too inquisitive at this age," Katey said.

"Well, here, give her back. I'll get them settled belowdecks before we sail."

"Yours?" Boyd asked as soon as the other woman walked off with the two children.

He was joking, but Katey glanced at him with a frown on her pretty face. Then her eyes widened and she said, "Yes! Actually, I didn't think to mention it, but I'm married and on my way to join my husband in England. I should go and help my maid. Those two darlings can be a handful."

She rushed off. Boyd was left standing there poleaxed, no doubt about it.

Tyrus came up to him, clapping a hand on his shoulder. "Ain't that always the way? The good ones are already taken."

Boyd shook his head and groaned. It was going to be a long voyage.

Chapter 1



London, England, 1826

THE NOTE WAS DELIVERED by a scruffy child who didn't know he had the wrong house. The mistake wasn't his fault. He hadn't been told there were many different Malory houses in London. He'd come to the first one he'd been directed to, pleased that it hadn't taken long to earn the few coppers in his pocket. And just as he'd been told to do, he'd run off before Henry could question him.

Henry and Artie, two crusty old sea dogs, had shared the job of butler at James Malory's house ever since James had retired from his life at sea and they'd both retired with him. But recently James had gone back to sea, briefly, to rescue his brother-in-law Drew Anderson, who'd got himself into a coil when according to one of his crewmen who'd managed to escape, pirates had stolen his ship right out of London harbor! With him on it! Henry and Artie had tossed a coin to see who would sail with James for the rescue. Henry had lost.

Henry tossed the note without reading it onto the mountain-