



Something about the Boss... (Texas Cattleman's Club: The Missing Mogul Book 4)

By Yvonne Lindsay

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From USA TODAY bestselling author Yvonne Lindsay comes a Texas Cattleman's Club tale of big business, seduction and betrayal.

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The trouble is Sophie's had a red-hot yearning for Zach from the moment they met. So when she decides to seduce him to uncover his secrets, perhaps she's kidding herself about her reasons. Because the soul-searing passion she discovers in his arms has Sophie praying that her mistrust is unfounded.

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Bibliography

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Editorial Review

About the Author

New Zealand born, to Dutch immigrant parents, Yvonne Lindsay became an avid romance reader at the age of 13. Now, married to her 'blind date' and with two children, she remains a firm believer in the power of romance. Yvonne feels privileged to bring to her readers the stories of her heart. In her spare time, when not writing, she can be found reading a book, reliving the power of love in all walks of life. She can be contacted via her website www.yvonnelindsay.com

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Sophie flew into the office five minutes later than usual. It drove her crazy to be late, for any reason. She'd woken way past her usual time and had had to forgo her morning coffee and bagel in an attempt to make up for it. With a vague wave at their receptionist and the skeleton staff already working at their stations in the open-plan office behind reception, Sophie went through to the executive office suite, smoothing her short blond bob with one hand.

She flung a glance at Zach's office door—it was open. Darn. He was already here. Despite her best efforts, Zach Lassiter had beaten her into the office, again. Not good. Not when she was doing her best to keep everything running on an even keel, and certainly not when she needed to do some snooping in his office. He was hiding something, she just knew it.

She dropped her shoulder bag on the corner of her desk. The bag didn't quite make it, though, and it slid off the surface to fall silently onto the thick carpeting, its contents spilling at her feet.

"Damn!" The curse slipped from her lips and even now, though she hadn't lived under her mother's roof in more than four years, she felt the quiet reproof of her mother's gaze for dropping her standards so. They might have been poor, but her mother had always expected her to act like a lady.

She scrambled to put everything back where it belonged—a place for everything and everything in its place; it had been her mantra for longer than she could remember. Her hand hovered over the photo she carried with her everywhere and she straightened with it still in her hand. They'd been so young, so innocent. Victims of circumstance.

Silently she renewed her vow to find her half-sister; Sophie owed it to them both. And she was getting closer. The latest report from the private investigator she'd hired to find her sister had listed a new possibility to explore. Thinking about it had kept her awake half the night, hence her sleeping past her alarm this morning.

A noise from behind her, from the kitchenette that she kept well stocked, sent a prickle of awareness tiptoeing between her shoulder blades.

"Cute kids."

Zach gave one of his lazy, killer smiles that always managed to send a bolt of longing straight to her gut, as he handed her a coffee. Sophie fought to quell the tremor that threatened to make her hand shake as she accepted the mug. She'd tried to shore up her defenses against her crazy attraction to him, but even after

eighteen months she still failed miserably. Working in the same office space with him had been taxing enough, but now working directly for him—well, that was a whole new kettle of fish altogether.

"I'm supposed to be the one bringing you coffee," she said quietly. "Sorry I'm late."

"No problem. I was getting myself one. Is that you?" he asked gesturing to the photo in her hand.

It was the kind of snapshot that most kids had taken at some stage in their lives. Siblings, oldest behind, youngest in front. Gap-toothed smiles fixed on their freckled faces, hair pulled back into identical pigtails, bangs straight across their eyebrows. Oldest staring dead ahead, youngest—still baby-faced at age four—with eyes unfocused, distracted by whatever it was that day. Sophie certainly couldn't recall although she remembered well the sensation of her sister's bony shoulder beneath her hand, the steady warmth of Susannah's body standing close to hers, almost leaning into her in that way she did when she wasn't entirely comfortable with a situation.

"Yes, me and my younger sister."

"Are you guys close?"

"Not anymore," she hedged.

Suzie's father, Sophie's much-adored stepdad, had died suddenly shortly after that photo had been taken. With their mother struggling to make ends meet, Suzie had gone to live with her father's sister. Financially independent and also recently widowed, Suzie's aunt had an open heart and open arms for her brother's only child. Contact between the two families had been severed almost immediately—deemed to be in the best interests of the girls at the time. It had been more than twenty years since they'd seen each other and Sophie still felt the emptiness inside, even though she'd long since learned how to mask it.

She thumbed the well-worn edge of the photo before tucking the picture back in her bag. She was doing what she could to reestablish contact with her sister. She had to be satisfied with that. She gave herself a mental shake and locked her handbag away in the bottom drawer of her desk. Even though this was downtown Royal, Texas, Sophie didn't take chances. It wasn't her way.

Clearly taking the hint that the subject of her sister was closed, Zach turned his attention to work.

"What's on your agenda today?"

Sophie briefly outlined what she had planned in her other boss's absence before asking, "Is there something else you need me to work on instead? None of this is urgent right now, especially with Alex still out of the office."

Out of the office. She gave an inward sigh. Some euphemism for missing. It had been over a month since her boss had simply disappeared off the face of the earth. Each morning she still hoped that she'd come in and find him in his office, his energetic personality filling the room, but each morning she was disappointed. The police were now involved in the hunt for Alex Santiago and his disappearance looked more sinister by the day.

"Any news from Sheriff Battle?" Zach asked.

She shook her head. Sophie had racked her brain trying to think of anything that could have been a clue to why Alex had gone, and where. But nothing had been out of the usual. The guy had disappeared the same way as he'd arrived in Royal, although with a great deal less fanfare. He was the kind of man who *made* things happen—things didn't happen *to* him. Which made his disappearance all the more puzzling. Surely someone had to know something. Someone, somewhere was keeping secrets, and Sophie had a worried feeling it might be Zach.

The muscles around his mouth tightened slightly, his only tell that something was bothering him. If anyone knew anything about Alex, it should have been Zach, as the two men had become firm friends in the time they'd worked together and shared office space. She watched him carefully. Zach Lassiter had a reputation for keeping his cards close to his chest and only letting you know what he thought you should know, when he thought you needed to know it.

The man was locked tighter than the vault at Fort Knox. Goodness only knew he'd remained impervious to the subtle and not-so-subtle questioning from local men and women alike. All anyone knew about him was that just under two years ago he'd arrived here in Royal with his own investment company and a knack for turning high-risk investment opportunities into sure fortunes. When Alex Santiago had arrived a couple of months later and set up his venture capital business, they'd created the perfect successful partnership.

It hadn't taken a whole lot of research to find out that Zach Lassiter had been married, not when his ex still called him almost every day, although Sophie had been unable to find any photos online that included Anna Lassiter. It also hadn't taken a lot of poking to discover that Zach's knack for turning high-risk investment opportunities into gold had started several years ago with an investment firm in Midland.

But the man himself? What made him tick, what drove him? There was nothing. Dark good looks and urbane charm aside, he could be hiding anything beneath that smooth, sophisticated exterior. It was whether that "anything" involved Alex's disappearance that Sophie wanted to find out.

"What? Have I got something on my face?" Zach asked, reminding Sophie she was staring.

Color flooded her cheeks and she ducked her head. "No, sorry, I was just distracted for a minute."

The phone on Sophie's desk chimed discreetly. Zach's line. He usually took his own calls, but since he was here with her, Sophie reached for the handset.

"Zach Lassiter's office, this is Sophie speaking."

"I can't reach Zach on his phone. Is he there? Put me through to him," the woman's querulous voice demanded, belatedly adding, "Please."

"One moment please, I'll see if he's free to take your call." Recognizing the voice, and putting the woman on hold, Sophie said, "It's your ex-wife. You're not answering your cell phone. Do you want to take it?"

"Of course." He patted the breast pocket of his jacket. "I must have left my cell in the car again." He fished his keys out of his pocket and handed them to Sophie. "When you have a free moment, could you get it for me?"

"Sure," she said, taking the keys and trying desperately to ignore the buzz of attraction that warmed her skin as his fingertips brushed her palm.

She watched as he walked back to his office and heard the deep murmur of his voice through his closed door as he picked up the call. Not for the first time she wondered about the relationship Zach had with Anna Lassiter. She could count on one finger the number of people she knew who were still on speaking terms with their exes, let alone *daily* speaking terms. As far as she could ascertain, he and Anna had been divorced for nearly two years. She shook her head. He had to still be in love with the woman. Why else would he devote so much time to her?

Sophie fought to quell the pang of envy that struck deep in her chest. What would it be like to be the object of Zach's devotion? His closed demeanor aside, the man was sex on legs. Or maybe it was that very aloofness that made him so appealing to her. She took a sip of her rapidly cooling coffee. No, it was more visceral than that. To use a more colloquial expression, the man was prime beef. It was no hardship to imagine the lean, hard-muscled lines of his body beneath the tailored suits he wore.

A tiny thrill coursed down the length of her spine, setting a tingle up in her lower back. Lord, she had it bad. Just thinking about him was enough to send her pulse up a few notches and a flush of awareness to heat all those secret parts of her body that were hidden by her office clothes.

Combine a killer physique with a handsomely chiseled face, expensively cropped jet-black hair, green eyes that looked straight through you and a mind as sharp as a tack, and he became a very appealing package. From the first day he'd walked through the front door of the professional suite and taken up the spare office next to Alex's, Sophie had been mesmerized by him. He carried himself with an air of confidence that made it clear that he was there to succeed at whatever he turned his hand to. And succeed he did. His investment advice had made his client list an exceptionally large and equally wealthy one. Some even said he had a Midas touch and, if his address on the outskirts of town was any indicator, he certainly knew how to put his money to good use.

She also knew that you didn't get anywhere without hard work and dedication and if she didn't apply some of that to the list of things she had to do today, she'd have to answer to Alex when he came back. If he came back, whispered a small voice in the back of her head.

Zach hung up from the call and just for a moment allowed himself the indulgence of resting his head in his hands. He was worried about Anna. She'd always been high-strung, but right now she was acting as if she was stretched to the breaking point. He had to do something, and do it soon. Her parents still insisted there was nothing wrong with her, keeping their heads in the sand regarding any potential mental imbalance.

Their refusal to admit to her instability wasn't doing her any favors. She needed help—professional help—and it was up to him to find it for her. Drawing in a deep breath, Zach straightened and booted up his laptop, opening a search window. Before long he had a list of people and places to contact. He'd do more research tonight.

Zach pressed his fingertips against his closed eyelids. He felt so damned responsible. He should never have married Anna, never bowed down to her father's—his boss's—unstintingly direct pressure to court his only child.

Sure, Zach had been attracted to her. She was blonde and beautiful and had an air of delicacy about her that had appealed to the caveman inside him in a way he'd never experienced before. But he'd been all wrong for her. She'd needed someone less driven, more devoted. Certainly someone less earthy. It hadn't taken long for the fragility to wear thin, for him to feel trapped. Then, just when they'd begun separation proceedings, she'd discovered she was pregnant and it had become far too late to walk away. He'd tried to do his best by

her—after all, he'd vowed to her before man and God that he'd stand by her through all that life could throw at them.

But life had thrown them a complete curveball with the death of their baby son. And while Zach had learned to hide his pain beneath a shell of self-preservation, Anna's guilt over the car wreck that had taken ten-month-old Blake's life had seen her spiral deeper and deeper into depression.

"Zach? Is everything all right?"

He hadn't even heard Sophie come into his office. He snapped to attention. "Sure, everything's fine. Just a bit tired is all."

"I found your phone. You'd left it connected to your hands-free kit."

She slid it across the desk toward him, the screen letting him know exactly how many calls he'd missed from Anna. He sighed. Tonight he would definitely make some decisions. It was past time.

"Thanks, I appreciate it."

He lifted his gaze and met Sophie's. She was a sight for sore eyes, with her cute blond bob and those warm, whiskey-brown eyes of hers. Today had been the first time he'd seen her approach anything outside of her usual unflappable mien, when she'd arrived a few minutes late. He kind of liked seeing her a little off-kilter. It made her seem more human, more approachable.

She always looked immaculate—her clothes well cut but not flashy—and he'd long envied Alex her calm, capable efficiency. As Alex's executive assistant, she kept the place running like clockwork, keeping an overview of not only all the pies Alex had his thumb in but every aspect of every pie. You had to admire a mind that could compartmentalize and draw information out on command the way hers did. In Alex's absence, the cracks would surely have started to show by now without her talents.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Marilyn Apperson:

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