

**Sex is not a four letter word.
Not because I say so, but because it's true!**

It's also only a sin when abused. Sex is a normal part of life. It's how you got on this earth. Even if your mother was artificially inseminated, someone had sex to create the person that created you! Sex happened. Sex is life, love, romance, happiness. However, stealing, murdering someone, lying, cheating, and so on...are ALWAYS sins. And yet sex has a negative attachment to it that society won't let go.

Sex, like every emotion is a part of life. Even if you are not having sex, it's a part of how you perceive others and how they perceive you. Sex in books is not about writing porn. Sex is about writing real human beings with complete characters, and readers can't connect with characters that aren't complete. If you leave out the person's sexuality, you leave out the person.

This is also related to creating all of your characters, not just your primary characters. Your secondary characters who might be friends, or enemies, have these same relationship with sex the primary character does. It's part of them. It drives them in some way.

Let's break that down -- what are some of the ways a character might relate to sex?

--They despise sex -- why? What happened in their life? Let's say they were abused by a family member as a child. How would that affect every single part of who they are and how they relate not just to sex, but to people and situations?

--They are overly sexual about everything they do. WHY? Insecurity perhaps? Created by what? WHO does this make the person?

--They are timid with others, awkward in every way. Isn't this a reflection of their sexuality? In being a woman or being a man? THAT is your sexuality. And what created that? It doesn't have to be a sexual experience. Being told that you're ugly or not good enough will do it! WHAT is their past history?

How do people reflect their characters in their sexuality?

- One night stands. That could be a character who has seen death and heartache and has no desire to be attached again. Maybe he even thinks he's no good for anyone. The sex gives him/her some sort of escape, or connection to another person that they need, even though they don't want to make a commitment. .

- A very bad character that also uses one night stands but it's clear it's about making men or women prizes for their entertainment.
- Dressing overly sexy.
- Dressing frumpy or overly conservative. You can be conservative and still show your sexuality.
- Always tugging down a shirt to cover your body.

This comes down to what I learned early in my career that I find helps me write and even plot character-driven stories. It's creating character arcs. And the reality of it is, everyone can tell a story, but your readers connect with the characters living the story. I'm talking about using sexuality to help create that connection and I am of the opinion that to exclude sexuality unless it's an intentional display of a trait in the character, is short-changing the development of your story.

So what is a character arc?

Character:

Name
Date of Birth
Place of birth
Parents
Siblings
Major life experiences
Hair
eyes
Physical
Special traits
Quirky habits
Favorite foods
Favorite TV shows and movies and music
Hobbies

You can't write a character you don't know, but you can understand them more as you write them, and I often update my arc.

Writing an actual sex scene. Sex is never JUST sex. If it is, then take the scene out. A sex scene is supposed to serve a purpose and that purpose is not to make your book have sex in it. I can't skip a sex scene and write it later. Why? Because the things that happen in that scene emotionally and developmentally are too important. If you can skip the sex scene and write it later, I would say, you are not connected to the characters.

Here are just a few ways I might use a sex scene:

- To show how evil someone is. They use sex as a weapon or they treat people like they are worthless.
- The person overcomes an emotional wall with the other character or themselves.
- Breaks down an inhibition that leads to a revelation.
- Jars the person into looking at the past and seeing where the future is going.

I'm going to read a sex scene. I'll include several sex scenes and read them and then stop at places and show you where I use the scene to develop the characters....This is from IF I WERE YOU, the series being made into a cable show at STARZ....

My chin lifts and I cut my gaze from Chris's and exit the elevator.

My heels touch the pale, perfection of glossy hardwood floors and I stop and stare at the breathtaking sight before me. Beyond the expensive leather furniture adorning a sunken living room with a massive fireplace in the left corner is a spectacular sight. There is a ceiling to floor window, a live pictorial of our city, spanning the entire length of the room.

Spellbound, I walk forward, enchanted by the twinkling night lights and the haze surrounding the distant Golden Gate Bridge. I barely remember going down the few steps to the living area, or what the furniture I pass looks like. I drop my purse on the coffee table and stop at the window, resting my hands on the cool surface.

We are above the city, untouchable, in a palace in the sky. How amazing it must be to live here, and wake up to this view every day. Lights twinkling, almost as if they are talking to each other, laughing at me as they creep open a door to the hollow place inside me I've rejected only moments before in the elevator.

I swallow hard as the song 'Broken' from the band Lifehouse fills the room because Chris doesn't know how personal it is to me. *I'm falling apart. I'm falling to pieces, barely hanging on.*

This song, this place with the words, and I am raw and exposed, as if cut and bleeding. Who was I kidding with the refusal to hide anymore? This is why I've hidden. The past begins to pulse to life within me and I am seconds from remembering why I feel this way. I refuse to process the lyrics and shove them aside. I don't want to remember. I can't go there. I squeeze my eyes shut, trying to seal those old wounds, desperate to feel anything but their presence.

Suddenly, Chris is behind me, caressing my jacket from my shoulders. His touch is a welcome sensation and when his arm slides around me, his body framing mine from behind, I am desperate to feel anything but what this song, no doubt aided by the wine, stirs inside me.

I lean into him and hard muscle absorbs me. There is a strength to Chris, a silent confidence I envy, and it calls to the woman in me.

His fingers, those talented, famous fingers, brush my hair away from my nape and his lips press to the delicate area beneath, creating goosebumps on my skin. And still, I barely block out the words to the song, and their meaning to me.

As if he senses my need for more—more something, anything, *just more* - he turns me around to face him and his fingers tangle almost roughly into my hair. The tight pull is sweet, dragging me from other feelings, giving me a new focus.

"I am not the guy you take home to mom and dad, Sara." His mouth is next to mine, his clean male scent all around me. "You need to know that right now. You need to know that won't change."

But the song does change and this time to another track on what must be a Lifehouse CD. 'Nerve Damage' begins to play. *I see through your clothes, your nerve damage shows. Trying not to feel...anything that's real.*

I laugh bitterly at the words and Chris pulls back to study me. And I am not blind to what I see in the depths of his green eyes, what I've missed until now, but sensed. He is as damaged as I am. We have too many of the wrong things in common to be more than sex, and the realization is freedom to me.

I curve my fingers on the light stubble of his jaw, the rasp on my skin welcome, and I have no idea why I admit what I have never said out loud. "My mother is dead and I hate my father so

don't worry. You're safe from family day and so am I. All I want is here and now, this piece of time. And please save the pillow talk for someone who wants it. Contrary to what you seem to think, I'm no delicate rose."

A stunned look flashes on his face an instant before I press my lips to his. The answering moan I am rewarded with is white-hot fire in my blood that he answers with a deep, sizzling stroke of his tongue. He slants his mouth over mine, deepening the connection, kissing me with a fierceness no other man ever has, but then, Chris is like no other man I've ever known.

His tongue plays wickedly with mine, and I meet him stroke for stroke, arching into him, telling him I am here and present, and I'm going nowhere. In reply to my silent declaration, his hand cups my ass and he pulls me solidly against his erection. Arching into him, I welcome the intimate connection, burn for the moment he will be inside me. My hand presses between us and I stroke the hard line of his shaft.

Chris tears his mouth from mine, pressing me hard against the window, and I know I've threatened his control. Me. Little school teacher Sara McMillan. Our eyes lock, hot flames dancing between us and some unidentifiable challenge.

Some part of me realizes the window behind me is glass, and all things glass can break. He knows this too, it's in the dark glint of his eyes, and he wants me to worry about it. He's pushing me, testing me, trying to get me to break. Because I slid beneath his composure? Because he really believes I am out of my league? And maybe I am, but not tonight. Tonight, as the song has said, I am broken and for the first time perhaps ever, I am not denying the truth of all of my cracks. I am living them.

I lift my chin and let him see my answering rebellion. His fingers curl at the top of my silk blouse and in a sharp pull, material rips and the buttons all the way down pop and clamor in all directions. I gasp, in unfamiliar territory, and burning alive with the ache I have for this man.

He turns me to the window, and my hands flatten on the glass. Wasting no time, Chris unhooks my bra, and it and my blouse, are off my shoulders in moments. He is behind me again, his thick erection fitted snugly to my backside.

"Hands over your head," he orders, pressing my palms to the glass above me, his body shadowing mine. "Stay like that."

My pulse jumps wildly and adrenaline surges. I've been ordered around during sex, but in a clinical, bend over and give me what I want kind of way I tried to convince myself was hot. It

wasn't. I hated every second, every instance, and I'd endured it. This is different though, erotic in a way I've never experienced, enticingly full of promise. My body is sensitized, pulsing with arousal. I am hot where Chris is touching me and cold where he isn't.

When he seems satisfied I'll comply with his orders, Chris slowly caresses a path down my arms, and then up and down my sides, brushing the curves of my breasts. He's in no hurry, but I am. I am literally quivering by the time his hands cover my breasts, welcoming the way he squeezes them roughly, before tugging on my nipples. I gasp with the pinching sensation he repeats over and over, creating waves of pleasure verging on pain, and the music is fading away, and so is the past. *There is pleasure in pain.* The words come back to me, and this time they resonate.

His hands are suddenly gone, and I pant in desperation, trying to pull them back.

Chris captures my hands and forces them back to the glass above me, his breath warm by my ear, his hard body framing mine. "Move them again and I'll stop what I'm doing, no matter how good it might feel."

I quiver inside at the erotic command, surprised again by how enticed I am by this game we are playing. "Just remember," I warn, still panting, still burning for his touch. "Payback is Hell."

His teeth scrape my shoulder. "Looking forward to it, baby," he rasped. "*More than you can possibly know.*"

He unzips my skirt, sliding it down my hips. "Step," he orders, and my sex clenches with the command.

Obediently, I step out of the clothing, and I am now stretched out across the window for him to do with me what he will, wearing only my panties, black thigh-highs and heels. The possibilities of exactly where this will lead are driving me wild. I have never been so turned on in my life, never so eager to be touched. It's illogical. I have a deep dislike for being ordered around, despite a past some might say indicates otherwise, except it seems, when it's by Chris. Deep down though, I know those journals call to me for reasons I prefer to ignore. Until this moment. Until Chris opened a door I'd left sealed.

"Beautiful," he murmurs, his voice gravelly, laden with evident desire. His hands curve around my hips, his palms exploring my backside, tracking the silk line of my panties down my cheeks before trailing lower until he reaches between my thighs, grabs the cloth and rips them

away. My lips part in surprise and I am panting. I arch forward and my nipples press to the cold glass, a bittersweet friction, part relief and part tease.

His palm flattens firmly onto my back, holding me in place, and *oh God*, the fingers of his other hand slide between my thighs, curving so that he cups my sex and strokes my clit at the same time.

“That’s it, baby,” he murmurs, widening my legs, teasing the sensitive, swollen flesh. “Hot and wet and ready for me. Just the way I want you.” His hand on my back caresses over my ribs and he moves to palm my breast, flicking my nipple.

I am still lost in sensory overload when his mouth presses to my neck, his breath a warm tickle, and his hands, oh his hands and fingers, are doing such delicious things to my clit and nipples that I am on the edge of something intensely wonderful and he’s not even undressed yet.

His teeth scrape my lobe and I feel it in my sex, where I want him. Where I am almost desperate to have him. “I’m going to lick you all over before this night is over, Sara,” he says in a seductive purr. “Suck your nipples until you are crazy with need, then spread you wide and lick you until you come and then, I’m going to do it all over again. I’m going to make sure you are so thoroughly fucked that being fucked has a new meaning.”

I moan with his words, with the boldness of this man, with the ease at which he can spin my world around and drive me wild. I am close to the sweet spot, moving against his hand, arching into his touch, when he shifts to my side and goes down on one knee.

He slides two fingers inside me, filling me, stretching me, as if he knew that is what I needed. A swell of need has me widening my legs, moving with the sweet rhythm of his strokes. I am panting and not quietly and I don’t care. Tension curls inside me and my orgasm comes in a hard spasm around his fingers that erupts into such pleasure my body jerks.

Chris wraps an arm around me, anchors me, and I am certain he is the only reason my knees do not give out. Time stands still as sensations ripple through my body, and Chris leads me to the other side of pleasure, his touch slowly turning more gentle. When finally my body relaxes, his tongue delicately strokes my hipbone, his cheek brushing against my skin with gentle, erotic friction that has my sex clenching all over again. I am breathless with his ability to be demanding and hard one moment, and tender the next.

“Don’t move,” he orders and pushes to his feet, framing my body with his again, his hands traveling up my back, his lips pressing to my ear. “I’m going to fuck you now, Sara, hard and

fast with you exactly as you are now, and you're going to stay right where you are and let me do it."

"About damn time," I hiss through my teeth.

A low rumble of his laughter fills the air, tingling a path from my ears and stirring sensations low in my belly. But I am not pleased when he shoves away from me, no longer touching me, almost as if he is defying me, teasing me on purpose. I am ready to turn, to take over, to make my own demands, but I believe his promise to stop whatever he is doing if I drop my hands.

Relief washes over me when I hear the rustle of clothing and the tear of paper — a condom I am certain. *Soon*. Soon he will be inside me. His hands come down on my hips and his shaft presses between my thighs. Deft fingers stroke through the wet heat of my body, preparing me when I was ready long ago.

"Please, Chris," I moan, aching for fulfillment.

"Easy, baby," he replies, and oh yes, I feel him press between my legs, thick and hard, and exactly what I need.

Still though, he holds back, teases me, sliding his erection up and down in the wet heat of my swollen flesh. He can't want the way I do or he could not do this and I silently vow to amend that, and soon.

"Payback"-

He thrusts into me, hard and deep, burying himself to the hilt and moaning with the impact. I moan with him and gasp when he lifts my hips, finding a deeper spot. There is no time to revel in the fullness of him inside me, the completeness my body needs. He thrusts again and the wild, wicked hard pump of our bodies together erupts into a frenzied dance. His hands are all over me, his cock is inside me, filling me, stretching me. *Pleasing me*. In a remote part of my mind, I think of the glass, of the two of us shoving against it. Of the possibility of it breaking, but I don't care. If I am going to die I want it to be with this man inside me.

The bloom of orgasm begins to build and I try to fight it, unwilling to give up the sweet bliss of almost there. But he is grinding into me, touching me, pushing me, and I am weak. I stiffen, unable to move the seconds before I shatter, my body clamping down on the hard length of him and shooting darts of pure white-hot bliss to every nerve ending I own.

A guttural sound escapes his lips, and he buries himself deep in the depths of my spasming sex, shaking with his own release. I want to push against him, participate in his pleasure as he has mine, but I am still trembling and weak with the final bittersweet ending to my orgasm.

For a few moments the world spins and we are more animals than people, lost in a primal act, where nothing but satisfaction exists. When finally I blink the world back into view, twinkling city lights dot the inky canvas of the night. Chris is still inside me, draped over me, his hands on the window beside mine.

He nuzzles my neck. "How about that pizza?"

I smile. "You better make that two."

"If it means you have the energy to keep fucking me like you just did, I'll buy you a damn dozen." He slides out of me and a glow of satisfaction fills me with his words.

Now over my fear of falling out of the window, I turn around and lean on the glass and watch him pull off the condom, tossing it into a trashcan by the couch. His jeans are unzipped, low on his hips but he is dressed all the way down to his boots. My glow fades. Suddenly, I am more than a little aware of my nakedness. "You never even got undressed."

He's back in front of me, wrapping his arm around me, and stroking the hair from my eyes. "Because you stole my control, Sara, and that *never* happens."

My chest tightens at the tormented quality to his voice and I think...I think, for this tiny window of time, he needs me. Maybe, I need him. I stroke his cheek with my fingers. "I was the one with my hands over my head, pressed against a glass that could crash in. Actually, I still am."

"We are," he points out. "And it's hurricane reinforced. We're good."

My hand is resting on his chest, the steady thrum of his heartbeat beneath my palm and it somehow makes me feel more alive. He makes me feel more alive. I want to do the same for him, to wash away his suddenly darker mood, as he has mine.

"You know, Chris," I say. "I do have a few boundaries."

He arches a brow, narrowing his gaze on mine. "What boundaries would you be referring to?"

"I'm not going home in a bra with my blouse gaping open. You ripped my shirt."

My reward is his sexy half-smile, the same one he'd given me outside the gallery, by the Porsche. "I didn't hear you complain at the time."

"I'd lost my blouse. I darn sure deserved it to be for a pleasurable reason."

His eyes light with naughty mischief and he nips my bottom lip. "I'll gladly buy you a new one so we can do it over again."

"I'll settle for borrowing one of yours right now. I'm not eating in high heels and pantyhose."

He wiggles and eyebrow at me. "I would really like it if you would."

"Oh no," I say and I smile and kick off my shoes for emphasis. "Not happening."

"Next time," he says with a wink, and the inference there will be a 'next time' shouldn't please me for reasons I've already determined, aside from the fact that he's going back to Paris. Without knowing why Chris is damaged, he is, and I am, and we are bad for each other. Next time isn't good for either of us unless...we need more than tonight.

Chris pushes off the window, away from me and surprises me by tugging his shirt over his head. And oh, oh yes, his abs are rippling perfection. I knew he was good looking, I knew he was athletic, but every inch of him is rock-hard and sculpted in what only genetic and regular hours in the gym can do. The intricate tattoo covering his entire right shoulder down his arm, the one I'd hungered to see more clearly, has me spellbound. The dragon is majestic, etched with such detail and skill, he could have drawn it himself.

"Do I pass inspection?" he asks softly.

I reach out to touch the design on his arm, only to have him capture my hand.

"If you touch me while you're looking at me like that, you won't get that pizza."

He steps closer and pulls his shirt over my head. I inhale his sexy scent clinging to it and me and I hug it close, wishing it were him. "I'm not sure I care about the pizza."

"I'm not letting you pass out on me." His finger slides under my chin, lifting my gaze to his. "Now we're both half-dressed." He lowers his voice, and adds, "On an equal playing field."

Equal. It is the last thing I expect from a man who'd completely dominated me minutes before. It doesn't compute. Power is taking, not giving. How can he do both? Who have I ever known who could?

"Equal would mean that I get to push you against the window and forbid you to move, while I'm mercilessly teasing you."

His eyes darken, shadows swimming with gold flecks in the sea of his green eyes. "If I thought you were ready for where that will lead, I'd let you."

Let me? He'd *let me*? "What does that even mean, Chris?"

He reaches up and strokes my bottom lip, and the touch is gentle, but there is a barely contained edge beneath his surface I'm coming to know. "There is so much I could show you, Sara, but I'm not ready for you to run away." There is a sense of inevitable regret to his words.

I react to a sense of him pulling away from me without him actually moving—it claws at me inexplicably. I grab his arm and step closer. "Who says I'll run away?"

"You will," he says.

Does he think I can't handle more than tonight? Does he not see I need more than tonight? I need the escape. "You're wrong."

He shakes his head. "No. I'm not."

I open my mouth to argue but his cell phone rings from inside his jean pocket, I think. His ring tone is a concert pianist and I'd be willing to bet my car that his father is the musician. I hate my father, I'd told him. What had gotten into me? And clearly, even with his father gone, he holds his in high regard.

Chris slides the phone from his low-hung jeans and I'm fairly certain he chooses to answer the call to end our conversation.

"Right," he says. "My usual and hold tight just a sec." He glances at me. "What kind of pizza?"

The pizza place called him? I'm confused. "Cheese."

"Make my usual an extra large," he says into the phone. "Right. Thanks." He ends the call. "Pizza is on the way."

"That's what I call service."

"It's almost closing time, and Jacob went in to get a pizza for himself and asked if I'd called."

"Like I said, that's what I call service."

"I've known the owner a good ten years and since he also owns the Chopper shop I frequent, he likes me. I send him lots of business." He reaches for my hand and leads me to the couch. "Make yourself comfortable. I'll get us drinks and plates and we can eat right here." He smiles. "Unless you're tired of looking out of the window?"

I shake my head and sit down. The brown leather is soft and a bit chilly, and I shiver. "That was a very bad joke."

He picks up a remote and the gas fireplace to my right in the corner flickers to life. "I'm good at bad jokes."

"Yes," I agree, pulling a brown throw over me. "I know. The man with the one red shoe?"

"You don't like Tom Hanks?"

"That's an old movie."

"I'm a fan of classics." He sits down next to me and grabs another remote, punching a button. A massive flat screen television lowers from the ceiling above the fireplace. He offers me the controller. "The key to my castle, at your disposal."

I am charmed and comfortable with this man in a way I don't remember being with anyone before him. I accept the remote. "And The Man with One Red Shoe is a classic?"

"Right along with Austin Powers."

"Austin Powers?" I ask. "Tell me you aren't an Austin Powers fan."

"Have you watched Austin Powers?"

"Well no," I concede, "but they look so silly."

"That's the point, sweetheart. It's an escape from reality." He pushes to his feet. "I'll grab us drinks and plates." His lips twitch. "Wine?"

"No," I say with emphasis. "I do *not* want wine."

"Corona?"

"No. Nothing with alcohol."

"That leaves you with bottled water or Gatorade."

"Water," I say. "I never drink calories I can eat. Leaves room for more pizza."

"I see," he replies, looking amused. "More pizza is always good. I'll be right back."

I sink down into the seat, and watch him walk toward the massive open kitchen overlooking the living area, and he is all long-legged, male grace and flexing muscle. He's also one big contraction. Funny, charming, seemingly without the ego he has every right to possess. But there is more there. The man who'd faced off and won with the King of Egos himself, Mark Compton. The man who'd pressed me against a window and took me with a dark passion I'd sensed came from a deep, troubled place. The man who'd told me he'd show me things but he wasn't ready for me to run. I burn to know what that means, what's beneath his surface. And for the second time tonight, I think we are two messed up people destined to destroy each other but I can't walk away. No. Can't isn't the issue. I simply don't want to

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