



The Highwayman

Kerrigan Byrne

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They're rebels, scoundrels, and blackguards—dark, dashing men on the wrong side of the law. But for the women who love them, a hint of danger only makes the heart beat faster...

STEALING BEAUTY

Dorian Blackwell, the Blackheart of Ben More, is a ruthless villain. Scarred and hard-hearted, Dorian is one of London's wealthiest, most influential men who will stop at nothing to wreak vengeance on those who've wronged him...and will fight to the death to seize what he wants. The lovely, still innocent widow Farah Leigh Mackenzie is no exception—and soon Dorian whisks the beautiful lass away to his sanctuary in the wild Highlands...

COURTING DESIRE

But Farah is no one's puppet. She possesses a powerful secret—one that threatens her very life. When being held captive by Dorian proves to be the only way to keep Farah safe from those who would see her dead, Dorian makes Farah a scandalous proposition: marry him for protection in exchange for using her secret to help him exact revenge on his enemies. But what the Blackheart of Ben More never could have imagined is that Farah has terms of her own, igniting a tempestuous desire that consumes them both. Could it be that the woman he captured is the only one who can touch the black heart he'd long thought dead?

The Highwayman Details

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Author : Kerrigan Byrne

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From Reader Review The Highwayman for online ebook

Jill says

3.5 stars

For eight year-old, Farah and eleven year-old, Dougan Mackenzie life at Applecross Orphanage in 1855 is made bearable by their friendship, which deepens as the years pass. Life without the other seems unthinkable, and so at the tender ages of ten and thirteen they seal their love in marriage vows by handfasting.

Separated soon after, the story picks up in London, seventeen years later. Farah, now a clerk at Scotland Yard, where she is known as the widowed Mrs Mackenzie, comes face to face with Dorian Blackwell, the ruthless criminal overlord, when he is brought in for questioning. Blackwell, who controls much of the London underworld, learns that Farah Mackenzie's life is in danger. Determined to honour a vow he once made to keep her safe, Dorian kidnaps Farah away to his Scottish castle.

The Highwayman is the first book in the new series *Victorian Rebels* by Kerrigan Byrne, and though this isn't my first read of Ms Byrne, this is my first full-length novel of hers I've read. It's well-written, with a mixture of romance and mystery. The details and descriptions of London, its streets, people, Scotland Yard, and also Scotland are written with depth.

The first chapter where two children pledge themselves to each other with such sweet and innocent love, is the best part of this story for me. Farah is a sensible and strong heroine, whose love for the abused and dark Dorian remains steadfast. Dorian is a tortured and tormented hero - physically, psychologically, emotionally.

However, the story is fairly predictable. Dorian's self-flagellation at how wicked and vile he is, and not good enough for Dougan's 'Fairy' (Farah), got old quick. Farah is so forgiving, so good that her character verges on caricature. And though Dorian is written as a sympathetic hero with his horrific past, I didn't actually feel that this story was as dark and grim as it should have been. Dorian and Farah are so good. Too good. Despite Dorian's dark past and present reputation as a criminal, he does good deeds, righting the wrongs of society using his wealth and influence. He's even got a '*Robin Hood-like reputation.*' As do his men. They may be killers, thugs, extortionists and thieves, but only where the villains are concerned. There's even a whore with a heart of gold, who Farah befriends.

I know this is what romance readers look for in their romance novels. But for me it was all too sweet, too romance-y, too formulaic. Other problems I had with this, I've spoiler-tagged, as some may be spoilers. (view spoiler)

If there had been just one or two issues, I could have overlooked them. But there were a number, which I found both distracting and unnecessary. Regardless, ***The Highwayman*** is a fairly enjoyable historical, although it doesn't cover any new ground. What it does do, I think, is hit certain notes and tropes that a number of romance readers will love.

Steam: 3.5-4

ARC courtesy of St. Martin's via NetGalley

Robin (Bridge Four) says

Sale Alert 19Dec17: This was my favorite Historical Romance read of 2016 and it is available as the kindle daily deal for 1.99 on Amazon

5 Beautifully Broken Bastard Stars

OMG I LOVED THIS!!!

❖❖❖Dorian Blackwell you are the broken man of my dreams. ❖❖❖

Hard, ruthless tyrant. Abused, wounded boy. An empty heart full of promise, and a soul of shadows in need of sunlight.

Farah fell in love with a boy when she was but a wee child. They had two years together and then they were ripped apart when he was sent to a prison. Flashforward seventeen years and the real story begins.

Farah has loved that little boy she lost all her life. Enough that she pretends to the entire world she is his widow Mrs. Mackenzie. She hasn't even had much of an inkling to ever join her life to a man's again until she sees the brutal Dorian Blackwell the well-known Highwayman and crime lord in an interrogation room at Scotland Yard. Then she can't seem to get ideas of the man out of her head.

Dorian is dangerous, hard and completely an enigma to Farah. One second she thinks that maybe he wants her as much as she might think she wants him. The next she isn't sure he is safe and part of her instincts say to run from him but the rest of her says to stay with him and explore this attraction she feels towards him. One big problem though....due to the horrors he faced in prison as a boy he can't stand to touch anyone and he definitely can't imagine letting Farah touch him no matter how much he might want her.

"You can have my heart," she offered.

"You'd be a fool to give it to me," he mocked, twisting his features into something foreign and frightening.

"Then I am a fool," she insisted. "For I already have."

"I do not suffer fools!" he hissed. "You gave your heart to Dougan, before you even knew what it meant. It is not meant for me."

She seized his fist, pressing a kiss to the scarred knuckle. "But Dorian has begun to steal it, thieving highwayman that he is."

Even though this is a Historical Romance it is more about healing a man that is so broken he can't even touch anyone. It is about giving a man who has lost all hope a glimpse of what he could have if he only believed he deserved it. I thought it portrayed so well the shame that someone might feel due to years of abuse and I loved how real Dorian's anguish seemed.

Read this for Dorian if you like broken men. But also read this for Farah if you like strong women with exceptionally giving hearts.

Thanks to my girl Joanita for sending me this book. Woman you totally know my type.

Carol *Young at Heart Oldie* says

I LOVED this dark, compelling debut novel from Kerrigan Byrne, and was completely swept away by the emotional impact of the powerful and beautiful love story.

I was drawn into the story from the moment I started reading Chapter 1. Watching the friendship, the inseparable bond and the innocent young love that developed between the young orphans, Dougan Mackenzie and Farah Leigh, his "Fairy", was so touching. To protect Farah, Dougan is forced to kill a man which leads to their dramatic separation. This was so heart-breaking and I was compelled to read on, desperate to know what happened to them.

Moving forward 17 years, Farah has been living as Mrs Mackenzie, Dougan's widow, for the past 10 years, following his death in Newgate prison. She has carved out a decent life for herself working as a clerk in Scotland Yard but is still haunted by memories of the boy she had loved all those years ago. Called upon to take notes for an interrogation being undertaken by her employer, Sir Carlton Morley, Farah comes face to face with the notorious criminal mastermind, Dorian Blackwell, the Blackheart of Ben More. Despite his reputation, she finds herself strangely affected by this cold, ruthless man but has no idea how closely her life will be entwined with his.

Dorian Blackwell and Dougan had forged a strong brother-like bond while in Newgate prison where they suffered terrible abuse at the hands of their brutal jailers. All the pent up anger and his promise to the dying Dougan to wreak revenge on those responsible are the things that drove him to build his feared criminal empire. Now rich, powerful and ruthless, he is merciless in exacting swift and deadly revenge against those responsible for the terrible things they suffered. Scarred both inside and out by years of horrific abuse, Dorian can no longer bear people touching him. When he meets Dougan's "Fairy", he must fulfil his promise to keep her safe and ensure she claims her rightful inheritance, even though it means kidnapping her and persuading her that marriage to him is her only option. Perhaps Farah is the one person to see beyond the coldness and ruthlessness and awaken the gentle, vulnerable heart beneath.

If you like your heroes scarred, dark, tormented and filled with self-loathing, then you will love Dorian. I like how he never makes any excuse for who he is and what he has done and learning of the type of abuse he suffered was heart-rending. It made his feelings of self-loathing understandable.

Farah is the light to Dorian's darkness. She is not only beautiful but also gentle and kind-hearted, and this is clearly seen in her genuine efforts to help her prostitute friend Gemma escape her abusive pimp. I loved that she never deserted Dougan when he was in prison, bringing him food every day and how his stories about her brought comfort to the other prisoners. She maybe gentle but can be tough when the need arises.

Their romance is earthy and passionate with lots of sizzling sexual tension and dark, edgy love scenes which may not be to everyone's taste. I thought they fitted perfectly with Dorian's aversion to touch and his deeply conflicting feelings of raw lust and reverence for the sweet, innocent Farah.

It isn't hard to figure out the big secret Dorian has been hiding because the clues are clearly signposted. I did enjoy the fact that the reader was privy to something the heroine was not.

I loved the ex-prisoners who Dorian has given jobs to; Murdoch, "*with his sad eyes and misunderstood heart*"; Frank, "*who was lost anywhere but the kitchens*", and poor Tallow, "*who trembled more than he talked*". They were all so well-drawn. There is also the elusive and mysterious Christopher Argent, a silent and lethal killer, whose story is told in the next book, ***THE HUNTER***.

The book isn't perfect and does have its flaws. I thought that Dorian overcame his aversion to touch far too quickly, and I felt that the storyline involving the threat to Farah's safety should have been explored in more depth before the final climax, which seemed to come completely out the blue. Despite these criticisms, the book still deserves 5 Stars for the heart-stopping romance alone and, of course, I do love a heart-warming Epilogue.

I have to mention Ms Byrne's wonderful writing...so emotive and evocative. As my words alone can't do it justice, I hope these few quotes will.

If only he hadn't so many wounds. Some that no stitch could reach deep enough to repair and so they remained open and bleeding, festering until they poisoned the body with their putrid filth.

~~~

*In this quiet, unfettered moment, she knew him, truly saw him for what he was.. Abused, wounded boy. An empty heart full of promise, and a soul of shadows in need of sunlight.*

~~~

His skin burned and his heart ached. He wanted. He needed. He craved.

~~~

*All she knew was that she came alive beneath Dorian Blackwell's inscrutable gaze. He watched her with an intensity she'd never before seen, and she wanted to fill his insatiable mind with images he'd not likely forget.*

~~~

Farah counted the admittedly obscene amount of desserts. Perhaps they should have left out the cocoa sponge cake, or the little cream-and-fruit-stuffed cornucopias with chocolate sauce. She absolutely couldn't have chosen between the almond cakes with the sherry reduction or the coriander Shrewsbury puffs or ... the

treacle and vanilla crème brûlée. Oh, dear, perhaps she and Walters had gotten a little carried away this afternoon.

MY VERDICT: A MUST READ!

REVIEW RATING: 5/5 STARS

Victorian Rebel series (Click on the book covers for more details):

This review is also posted on my Rakes and Rascals Blog:

<https://rakesandrascals.wordpress.com...>

? Sh3lly - Grumpy Name-Changing Wanderer ? says

Welp, everyone loved this but me. (Seriously, I just went and read through my friend's reviews and ONLY ONE PERSON gave it the same rating as me.)

DNF at 27%. I don't get the appeal. Dorian is a jerk. Why keep his identity from Farah when they supposedly had such an EPIC young love romance? Does he have a psychological disorder? That would make more sense than just, *oh, I'm such a tortured hero that I had to erase my past and now I can't let her know it's me because drama llama and stuff.*

There is no good reason except as a plot device and that kind of thing doesn't work for me.

He should be gloriously happy to have found her! And to let her break down and sob over him and not say he's alive?! That is toxic. Run Farah, run!

But of course we know they are going to end up in the perfect relationship, magic peen and vag coming together to heal each other under a rainbow. I just can't.

Failed buddy read with the MacHalo group. They all loved it. It's just me.

Rachel Reads Ravenously says

2.5 stars

This is a book that's very much beloved and lots of people have recommended it to me. And while historical romance isn't my top choice when picking up a romance, I do enjoy the genre. This book, just.....

The plot was okay, and I really enjoyed the beginning, but near the middle to the end I felt very disconnected from the characters. I literally did not care if they ended up together or not. When I should have been feeling empathetic or heartbroken, I felt mostly blah. I felt like a sociopath, I felt nothing.

I want to read more in the series because there are conflicting reviews, but otherwise this one fell kind of flat for me.

Follow me on ♥ Facebook ♥ Blog ♥ Instagram ♥ Twitter ♥

Jessica's Totally Over The Top Book Obsession says

5 Dougan's Fairy Stars

*****Major Spoilers all over this review*****

OMG I loved this book so much! The Highwayman is my first Kerrigan Byrne read and it punched me right in the feels. I fell in love from page one with Farah and Dougan. Meeting as small children in an orphanage 11 year old Dougan and 8 year old Farah stole my heart with their sweet, innocent love. Dougan was the bastard child of Laird Mackenzie. When his mom died, he was tossed in the orphanage, where he was mistreated, starved, and beat. Dougan was all alone in the world, with no love or kindness, until little Farah came along and tended his switch wounded hands. From those first moments together they were soul mates. Farah won Dougan's heart and became his Fairy.

“I was thinking,” he said some time later as she paused for a drowsy yawn. “Since ye doona have any family to love anymore, ye could love me...” Instead of meeting her gaze, he studied the way the pristine white of her petticoat bandage made his hand look that much grubbier. “That is, if ye wanted.” -Dougan

“Of course I’ll love you, Dougan Mackenzie,” she said easily. “Who else is going to?” “Nobody,” he said earnestly. “Will you try to love me, too?” she asked in a small voice. He considered it. “I’ll try, Fairy, but I havena done it before.” “I’ll teach you that, as well,” she promised. “Right after I teach

you to read. Love is quite like reading, I expect. Once you know how, you can't ever imagine not doing it."-Farah and Dougan

Little Farah was so sweet and caring. She would save parts of her meals to share with Dougan so he wouldn't be hungry, and taught him to read. They had a beautiful and pure love. They had two great years together forging a bond that would stand the test of time. Then when Dougan was 13 and Farah was 10 she told him she was suppose to marry her Daddy's lawyer when she grows up, so Dougan took his little Fairy to a church and married her in a Scottish hand fasting. Just the two of them in the church saying vows, and the vows Dougan used were so damn cute! The next night Their world was tore apart when a priest tried to molest Farah and Dougan killed him and was sent to prison.

"I'll tell you this," he began darkly, his eye swirling with all the intensity of last night's storm. "There are immense differences between the Count of Monte Cristo and the Blackheart of Ben More. Edmond Dantes was given his treasure. He never had to stoop to the things I did in order to take it. In prison, he was only whipped on his anniversary. He was isolated in his own cell, which Alexandre Dumas never imagined would be preferable to what we had to endure. He was never stabbed, raped, publicly flogged, humiliated, beaten within an inch of his life, or taken ill and left for dead." With every word, Farah's eyes widened and she again found herself cringing back, but he didn't allow her to retreat, bending until his compelling face was mere inches from hers. "And that is just what the gaolers did to me."-Dorian

"It was my fault. My fault all of this befell him. Didn't he tell you why he was incarcerated in the first place?" "He killed a priest." "For me!" She whirled around, shocked at how close he still stood. "He killed that priest for me. He was subjected to all the suffering and indignities you just described and more because he was only trying to protect me. You don't understand how much I regret that every day of my life! I think about it all the time. I hate myself for it!"-Farah and Dorian

At this point the story jumped 17 years ahead. We readers find out that Farah ran away from the orphanage right after Dougan was arrested. Farah has taken Dougan's last name. She was told that Dougan died in prison 10 years ago . She lived as his widow, working at the Scotland Yard. It's while at work that Farah meets Dorian the blackheart of Ben More the infamous criminal and highwayman. A few days after they met Dorian kidnapped Farah telling her that he and Dougan were like brothers in prison. He tells her they are getting married, because he was honoring a death bed wish of Dougan to protect and care for Dougan's Fairy. No he didn't ask, he told her lol. Farah was no push over though she let him know that he had to give her a child. Which was the one thing she really wanted. Dorian (view spoiler) was a scarred, tortured hero. He couldn't stand for anyone to touch him. Having been raped and beat repeatedly while in prison Dorian was cold, bitter, and hard. He had fought, killed and destroyed for everything he had, but as much as he tried to fight it Farah was his one weakness.

"My soul recognized your soul—and was reborn. I knew there was something behind those eyes, beneath those gloves, that would give back to me what I've been missing all these years."-Farah

"You can have my heart," she offered. "You'd be a fool to give it to me," he mocked, twisting his features into something foreign and frightening. "Then I am a fool," she insisted. "For I already have." "I do not suffer fools!" he hissed. "You gave your heart to Dougan, before you even knew what it

meant. It is not meant for me.” She seized his fist, pressing a kiss to the scarred knuckle. “But Dorian has begun to steal it, thieving highwayman that he is.” “Then take it back!” He wrenched his fist from her grasp, pulling her off balance and forcing her to catch herself on the grass with her outstretched hands, soiling them with the mud beneath. “In my hands it will become corrupted. Poisoned. I’ll blacken it until you hate me almost as much as you hate yourself for giving it to me.” He thrust a finger at her to silence her reply. “Every part of my life has been bleak, brutal, and bloody—except you. I’ll not add your ruin to my many sins.”-Farah and Dorian

I loved Farah she was a total sweetheart, but she still had some sass to her. She was strong willed and didn't back down when facing fear. Farah was very understanding and supportive. She didn't judge Dorian for the bad things he did in life, and she didn't try to change him. All she wanted was his love and for him to let her love him in return. Dorian was everything I want in a damaged hero. He was a bad boy, that did bad things, but had good in him too. I loved that he didn't instantly turn from a hardened criminal that can't stand to be touched into a sweet lover. He was in such pain. He had scars and not just on his body, but on his soul as well. He had fears, anger, rage, and he lashed out. It made Dorian and Farah's relationship feel real. It made their love all that more enjoyable when the ice walls around his heart melted for Farah. The sexual tension in this book was so high. Dorian fought his lust for Farah because of his past, but he wanted her with an animalistic hunger.

“I’m like this all the bloody time around you. I hate it. Do you know that? I have no control. I just want to fuck and fuck and fuck until nothing matters anymore. Until we can no longer move our limbs or lift our heads to eat.” He flexed his still-hard cock inside of her. “This is supposed to go away after I come. But it doesn’t. Not with you, wife. My passion is this insatiable perversion.”-Dorian

And the sex in this book omg the sex was so good. There was some light bondage as Dorian didn't want to be touched so he would tie Farah's hand. It was so hot, and raw. He would lose himself in her. I have to say that I totally misted up a bit when Farah found out Dorian's secret(view spoiler). I thought it was so sweet when Farah was finally able to touch her husband. The epilogue was perfect too. It gave a nice peek into the future and a heartwarming HEA for Dorian and his Fairy. I loved everything about this book and I can't wait to read more books by this author!

“What a fool I’ve been.” His hand lifted to cup her jaw, his thumb hovering over the bruise swelling around the small split there. “I thought you were safer without me. That, for once, I was doing the noble thing. It took almost losing you—God, Farah, I’ve never been so afraid.” His jaw clenched and his own eyes seemed to glitter with raw, agonizing emotion. “I thought I could live without you. But there is no life without you. Only existence. And that is a greater hell than what awaits me after death.” Farah’s breath was stolen by a small hiccup. “Well.” She sniffed. “If you’re feeling noble in the future, just—stop. You’re rather terrible at it.”-Dorian and Farah

Choko says

***** 4 *****

A buddy read with the Historical Romance Ladies @ the MacHalos:-)

Well, this is not the typical Historical Romance of the last 15 years. I am going to date myself here, but being a lifetime reader of the genre, it is impossible not to notice that there are waves of popular takes on it and

they ab and flow with the mysterious preferences of the generations of women who read them.

I have noticed that the last 3-4 years, in both Contemporary and Historical Romance, the trend for darker, edgier, or as they called it during the highs of both the Gothic and the Noire waves, high melodrama, has once again taken prominent place in the popular scene. Absolutely nothing wrong with it, just how it is. It is actually a sign of mostly untroubled social theater in reality, which makes us readers prone to looking for heavier entertainment, since we can emotionally balance it with our everyday lives. The worst the socioeconomic environment in the world, the bigger need for lighter escapism in our books and movies we become attracted to...

So, this is another example of a melodrama HR style:-) And it works great! The story started with two orphans finding in each other a person of their own to love and care for. The story is very gentle and beautiful, until disaster strikes and the boy is put in prison. The last scene of the first chapter is absolutely heartwrenching and the next chapter begins years later... The girl Farah, close to thirty years old now, lives as a widow in London and works for Scotland Yard as a clerk. She is content, her life can even be seen as interesting, but she yearns for a family of her own. There is her boss at work who is showing interest, but her heart is not engaged.. Then the biggest villain in town looks at her in the interrogation room and emotions she thought impossible to arouse in her awaken with a vengeance.

Dorian B. is without a heart. He doesn't want or need a woman to share his life, but when he sees Farah he knows she is his! He knows he will hurt her, damage her and blacken her soul just by association, but he doesn't care - she belongs to him and only him! And once he decides that, he changes her life irrevocably, the blaggard that he is...

Despite the melodrama, the angst, the exceedingly broken hero, or antihero more accurately, and the saintly leading lady, the very, very unlikely story works and the final product is a very compelling story with quite a bit of passion, as OTT as it was:-) But if you are going to go over the top you have to go all the way, right?! Dorian and his experience in the prison scares his soul and is brutal! His following idiosyncrasies are too much, but make perfect sense in the context of the story, so although he acts like a complete asshole idiot most of the time, which makes us wonder about the sanity of the woman who keeps on loving and wanting him despite all, the path to healing justifies the final result. It is a romance with an edge and if you are looking for such a read, this is perfect!!! There are triggers for those who have issues with even hints of past rape, but it is only eluded to... Overall, it is a good story of lost and found love with the required HEA we all want from our HR?

I wish you all Happy Reading and many more wonderful books to come!

Jilly says

I'm about to write in what will look like secret code if you haven't read what I'm talking about.

So, if you loved Z in BDB, **AND** you love HR, this book *may* be for you. Dorian is Z-light. A tortured hero filled with self-loathing and the inability to touch or be touched because of past sexual, physical, and mental abuse. He can't even bear to touch his own private parts. This would be a real problem for men, as I understand it. They seem to have a hard time NOT touching themselves. It's like, right there.

I'd like to do some further exploration of this photo. For science.

This book started out with two kids in an orphanage who love each other and do a cute little "marriage ceremony". It is innocent and sweet. Then, we are fast-forwarded to 17 years later. We meet the grown-up girl, Farah, who is working at Scotland Yard as a clerk and is a widow. She comes into contact with the notorious criminal, Dorian, and ends up being kidnapped by him.

This starts their twisty little romance. There are many things that both of them are hiding, but the main problem is Dorian's past that makes it impossible for him to have a healthy relationship. He's all angsty and broody throughout the book.

He can't even lick himself to ease the pain..

So, here's the thing: Dorian is a bad guy. Like, really really bad, but he never really does anything that bad in the book. He also does all of these good things to help others and is known as a kind of Robin Hood. So, it was a little hard to see him as this ruthless killer that he was supposed to be. And, considering he can't actually touch Farah, it makes him seem a little less dangerous. All she has to do is touch him and he loses his shit. Seems like a pretty big weakness. Don't get me wrong, I liked him and her. But, I never felt like it was that dark. I could have handled darker.

The book was still really good. I just could have used a bit more darkness, and maybe for the resolutions not to come so easily.

Okay, I'll stop now.
Just one more

Dorsey aka ♥? Wrath Lover Reviews ♥? says

5 Stars!!

I'm not a normally a Historical romance reader, but, I had to give this one a try after spotting the fantastic cover on Jen's 2015 favorites collage and since it was a favorite it must have been a great read right?....Jen's pick did not disappoint!!!!

Dorian and Farah meet in the Orphanage they were living in as children, they both endured hardship and loss at early ages, and clung to one another for support until tragically they were ripped apart. Many years later they are reunited and the journey to their HEA was heart breaking, turbulent, and romantic, I fell in love at

the first chapter and couldn't put it down!!! I'm definitely looking forward to reading the rest of the series.

Daniella says

5-GLORIOUS-LET-ME-BE-YOUR-FAIRY-STARS

I LOVE THIS SO MUCH.

And you know what? I'll just leave it at that. That's how much I love this book. For me, no amount of words could ever do justice to it.

If you haven't read this yet, **READ IT** .

Stacey is Sassy says

Join a Blackheart to a Fairy and you may get a Faye.

The Highwayman gave me tingles and I felt book magic with the turn of each page. I was drawn in, living and breathing this book. Hubby and kids had to fend for themselves, phones had to be answered by someone else and food was only eaten to keep up my energy. I was looking into the lives of people that seemed real. I wanted to walk into Scotland Yard and be a character witness. I wanted to be at the dress makers to see how a gown was fitted. I wanted to stand against predators who attacked the less fortunate. It was an emotional read for me that left me on a high. Not many books suck me in as much, or as well as this one did. I was drawn to the characters and wanted to see them make it through.

We meet a very young Farah and Dougan who live in an orphanage. Farah sees that Dougan is in pain and helps him. They form a bond, give each other support and swear to love each other for eternity. This is a very young love that is tested from the beginning. Eventually they are separated but neither will forget and keep their memories locked tight in their hearts.

Life goes on. Farah works in Scotland Yard and is faced with some very unsavoury characters. One of them is Dorian, a criminal mastermind who runs the bad side of town with an iron fist. Farah's boss is on an endless mission to bring him to justice with very little success. After many years being separated from her love, Farah thinks about moving on with her boss Morley, who shows an interest in her. After meeting Farah, Dorian has a different idea.

I don't want to go into much detail as it will definitely take away from the experience if you decide to try it. I will say that this story was full of intrigue and I never felt it dragged. Besides the main characters, I loved Murdoch, Frank and Gemma. Morley was an interesting character as well and by the end I respected him. He could have easily made things worse, but he kept his dignity and that left me disappointed he wouldn't find a HEA (yet???)

This was my first Kerrigan Byrne story and it will definitely not be my last. One of the best historical romances I've ever read.

To buy The Highwayman from Amazon - <http://amzn.to/1P3qOu3>

Lana ❀❀Dirty Girl Romance❀❀ says

5 STARS

In this quiet, unfettered moment, she knew him, truly saw him for what he was. Hard, ruthless tyrant. Abused, wounded boy. An empty heart full of promise, and a soul of shadows in need of sunlight."

Ermahgerd.

My heart. MY HEART!!!!

ERMAHGERD.

First of all, I am seriously kicking myself for taking this long to start this series. Like SERIOUSLY kicking my ass. What the heck was I thinking? I was crazy! Nuts. Loony bins, I tells ya! Because this book? It was everything. All of the things! ALL OF THEM.

It combines my obsession with anti-heroes and sexy historical romance, and weaves it all together into a story that's truly spellbinding. I couldn't bring myself to set it down for even a second. I was immediately hooked from the prologue, and as I kept reading, I grew more and more addicted to the words of Kerrigan Byrne.

Dorian Blackwell. The Blackheart of Ben More. The deadliest, coldest, and most lethal king of the London underground. His name is whispered in the shadows and renowned in fear. He's scarred, both in body and soul, and knows only revenge.

Be.

Still.

My.

Ovaries.

Alright. So maybe I sound slightly deranged, but work with me here. There's a lot more depth to the man, and when you get to the heart of him, you'll see exactly what I mean.

Farah Leigh Mackenzie. Beautiful, sweet, and a woman with a spine of steel. My god but I loved her. The things she's survived and the secrets she's kept would have made a lower woman than her wither away. But she persevered and lost none of her steel core. This is a woman that gives as hard as she gets and she's not about to back down to a man that's kidnapped her and essentially propositioned her into a marriage of...convenience?

Enter my other favorite trope.

But I digress yet again.

What you need to take away from my incessant rambling is this; I LOVED THIS BOOK. LOVED it. The romance was swoon worthy, the story was deliciously addicting, the characters full of depth, mystery and secrets. I devoured it like a starving lunatic and couldn't get enough.

I immediately jumped right into book two. I can't recommend this book enough for any lovers of steamy historical romance. Period.

READ THIS BOOK.

Find me on:

WhiskeyintheJar/Kyrarker says

I received this book for free in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review.

From the moment Farah wipes the blood from Dougan's hands they are bound to one another, two outcasts in an orphanage. On a fateful night, Dougan violently protects Farah and they are separated, cast out into their fates. It is not until seventeen years later that Farah learns what befell her childhood friend. Dorian Blackwell, the Blackheart of Ben More, villainous fiend and king of the underworld kidnaps Farah and claims he is there to protect Dougan's "Fairy". Leaving most unsaid but what is heartbreakingly clear in the painful spaces between words, Dorian recounts his experience in jail with Dougan to Farah, how they banded together to try and survive and how Dougan would tell stories about Farah to the other boys. Dorian plans to make good on the deathbed promise he made to Dougan about eventually finding Farah and making sure she was safe. What Dougan didn't know was that Farah had her own painful past she was running from and Dorian feels he must restore Farah to her rightful place in society. There are lies, half-truths, dangers, and love but most importantly, a feeling that destiny won't be denied.

This is the first book by Kerrigan Byrne I have read; it will definitely not be my last. The Highwayman took me by surprise with its sweeping emotional romantic story. Byrne's writing had a way about it that I felt like I was walking the streets of London with Farah and Dorian, everything is described but not overly in a way that bogs you down with details; she was a master of making you feel through showing, not telling. The overall details of the story with the characters and their actions leans toward a darker tone but there is lightness to the story that springs from our main character's relationship for balance. Dorian and Farah have a certain spark between them that is at turns playful, light, deep, emotional, burning, and heavy. Their contentment to be around one another colors their dialogue at times with a lightheartedness that makes their growing love believable and investing to read.

Farah's journey from the orphanage to her position at the Police Headquarters was taken with Dougan in mind with every step. Farah very easily could have been written as a saintly martyr but instead she is shown to be while inherently goodhearted, also a steel-spined survivor; she's believable. Dorian's background and dark attitude could have easily been written to make him a Beauty and the Beast caricature but instead he is given depth of emotion. He is single-minded in his pursuit of taking care of Farah but with a yearning,

stubborn streak, and desperate desires of a man still locked in an abused boy's mindset of protection mode; he's believable. When together, the author doesn't come out and tell us they want each, instead it's felt by the reader in every glance Dorian gives Farah that isn't seen and every touch Farah reaches out to give that is never felt by Dorian. There's anger, desire, hurt, hunger, lies, and love all swirling between Farah and Dorian; together they're believable.

Dorian and Farah are clearly the center piece of the story, as they should be and the structure of the story supported that with the beginning setting up Dougan and Farrah's relationship, the middle introducing Farrah to Dorian and creating their relationship, and the second half delving into the mystery and intrigue while bonding our couple more. If I were to express any complaints, which trust me are minor, it would be that Dougan's childhood origins were a bit murky and that Farrah's endangerment from her father's lawyer Warrington could have been fleshed out more in regards to how I didn't really feel the danger from Warrington as he was too much to the peripheral of the story. Byrne's secondary characters did an amazing job of adding to the story and world she created for her characters. Dorian's house full of men who were all forged in the fire together from prison, again, could have come off as bears with hearts of gold caricatures but instead are given just enough individual thoughts and emotions to make them memorable with adding to the story instead of feeling tagged on after thoughts or show stealers. Even while putting me through the wringer with Farrah and Dorian, Byrne was still able to squeeze some heartbreak out of me for Dorian's man Walters and Farrah's friend Gemma (honestly, I dare anyone not to shed at least a few internal tears over their quiet moment in the kitchen at the end). This feeling of connection to minor characters was another reason why I felt Byrne knocked this one out of the park.

Byrne's writing style reminded me a little bit of Amanda Quick's historicals, the sentences and character's actions can come off at times light and loving but you will suddenly find yourself wrecked by the hidden emotional depth and the overall story somewhat reminded me of an updated 21st century "A Rose in Winter" by Kathleen Woodiwiss. There are a couple hotter, rougher moments in this but ultimately, the story is dominated by the searing emotion between our couple. If you are a historical romance fan, then this is a must read for you. The second in the series looks to be about Dorian's friend and assassin Christopher Argent and based on the glimpses we get of Argent in this book, I'm pre-ordering.

Nenia ? Queen of Literary Trash, Protector of Out-of-Print Gems, Khaleesi of Bodice Rippers, Mother of Smut, the Unrepentant, Breaker of Convention ? Campbell says

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This book has a 4.0 average rating with the people on my friends list, and if you're friends with me, you know how high a value I place on your opinions. You guys had nothing but good things to say about THE HIGHWAYMAN with your talk of tortured heroes and dark romance. Music to my twisted ears. Plus, Elizabeth Hoyt's DUKE OF SIN is one of the recommended books for HIGHWAY, which I absolutely *loved*. How could this possibly not work out?

This book is about Farah Leigh Mackenzie and Dorian Blackwell. Farah is an orphan, and a widow. She

married her childhood friend in secret, only to see him carried off to certain death for avenging her honor. Dorian Blackwell knew her childhood friend, Dougan, in prison, and claims that he is now dead. He kidnaps her, macks on her in the bathtub, and then - while she's naked - proposes marriage.

cue eyeroll here

There were some things about this book that I liked. I liked the *idea* behind this book. I love stories where the hero and heroine have a dark connection. I also thought that the climax of this book, which took place during that court scene, was incredibly well done and oh-so-dramatic.

I thought Farah was a Mary Sue. She's so kind and pretty and good, and everyone loves her instantly (except for those evil people who hate her, and that's how you know they're evil). She "cures" the hero of all his trauma with her magical virgin vag, which had me rolling my eyes in earnest. I appreciate that she had enough knowledge of the act to make things work, but I didn't understand why she had to be a virgin. Virginal widow tropes are kind of a peeve of mine...

Dorian, I was torn about. In the beginning of the story, he has a lot of promise as an antihero. But the author doesn't commit to his character. She wants him to be dark and terrifying and rapey, but also weak and sympathetic and damaged. I suppose it is possible to combine those two different sets of personality types, but it is not done well here. I also didn't like that the hero takes his pain out on Farah, even committing sexual overtures that border on rape when he's angry. Yeah, no.

Also, the sex didn't work for me in this book. Something about the writing style got on my nerves. It kind of reminded me of the 90s romances, where bodice rippers from the 70s and 80s started to become "gentler." So heroes became less rapey - at least overtly - and sex scenes got very floral and gag-inducingly tender. It was similar here, except Byrne wasn't afraid to drop the f-bomb.

THE HIGHWAYMAN didn't work for me, and I'm not sure if it's just a matter of this book hitting a couple of my pet peeves and not working, or if it was just overhyped and my expectations were just too high. *You* may love it. I just got a copy of THE HIGHLANDER, also by this author, from Netgalley, so I'm hoping that I'll enjoy the third book in this series more than the first one.

1.5 stars.

Maria♦*Steamy Reads Blog*♦ says

3.5 stars

I've had this book on my TBR for a long long long time. I finally got around to reading it :) It was nice for a change of pace. But words like nectar and womb still make me cringe a wee bit :D lol
