



The Wayward Bride

Anna Bradley

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In only six weeks, Isla Ramsey is due to marry Henry Northrup, the sixth Earl of Sydney. But she remains haunted by memories of the dashing Hugh Courtney, the Marquess Pierce. The handsome aristocrat had hinted at forever and then tossed her aside, leaving Isla with few viable options. Now, as she awaits her new fiancé's arrival from London, she rides her horse past Hugh's estate at Hazelwood every day, pining for a man who was never truly hers.

Hugh Courtney may have left Isla's life, but he can't erase her from his thoughts. When he rescues her from a sudden snowstorm, they are forced to take shelter together at his private estate. In such close quarters there is no escaping each other. Yet no man wants a reckless wife—or a woman promised to another. As fate draws Isla further into his world, Hugh vows to keep her out of his bedchamber. However, some vows are meant to be broken.

The Wayward Bride Details

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From Reader Review The Wayward Bride for online ebook

Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says

Though the blurb doesn't mention it, The Wayward Bride is about not one but TWO separate romances, and gay romance lovers rejoice, because we got ourselves a lovely (and unexpected!) love story.

Anna Bradley is one of my favorite historical romance authors, and this book showed me again why I love her. **Though this book is billed as the first in a new series, it's absolutely tied to The Somerset Sisters series, and I'd recommend readers read that series first.** It *can* be read as a stand-alone, but I think the other books give more context.

I'm an avowed queer romance lover, but as Anna Bradley has never written a gay romance and the book blurb doesn't mention anything of the sort, I was 100% percent not expecting to find a second romance in this story that involved two men. And I was *living for it*. **In fact, the romance between Sydney and Lucas far outshone the romance between Isla and Hugh.**

I loved, loved, loved the M/M romance, and I think Anna Bradley should venture into the genre fully. It was low steam in contrast to the M/F sections of the book, but the emotions were so powerful. I adored the taciturn Lucas, and I really enjoyed the dynamic between the two.

I also enjoyed Isla and Hugh together, though Isla did a few things that were TSTL that annoyed me. I think they got in their own way too much, but I felt the romance and their chemistry in the end, even if it took them awhile to get their acts together.

A very enjoyable romance that I read in less than a day, Anna Bradley shows her range and skill in The Wayward Bride.

Copy provided in exchange for an honest review

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Lisa C says

I couldn't put this book down, and when I was finished I wanted to read it all over again.

This book could have easily been called "broken betrothals" as there are several in this story. How Ms Bradley weaves this story through them all is incredibly entertaining. You feel for the characters, as well as feel what the characters are feeling. Looking forward to the next book in the series.

Andrea says

4.5 stars

Love is many things, but easy isn't one of them

This was a lovely continuation of the story of three siblings that started in *More or less a temptress*. I guess it could stand on its own, but I would definitely say it makes more sense if you know where the siblings, and Isla in particular, are coming from. I do think if you'd read this without having met Isla, she would make less sense.

And speaking of, I still can't decide whether or not I really like her. That's what it always came back to while I was figuring out my rating. On the one hand, she made some impulsive, stupid, and reckless decisions, often risking her life without a second thought. When you know more about her, though, it does make sense. As we discovered in *"More or less a temptress"* (and are reminded of here, too (view spoiler)). But of course, the scandal catches up with them and Isla is forced, once more, to flee and start over. It made her weary and she still carries the scars with her, and it does explain her irrational behavior to a point. It still annoyed me here and there, but on the whole, I definitely liked that she knew what she wanted and fought for it. Trying to forget the fiancé she thought abandoned her in the middle of a big scandal, she is determined to find happiness in a marriage of convenience with a good friend and move on with her life. But when a stupid decision has her almost dying outside her first fiancé's estate, she is forced to spend time with him again. And the feelings she thought were buried keep bubbling up until the truth finally comes out...

Today would be the day she'd forget about about him.

Meanwhile, Isla's second fiancé also has a serious accident and is rescued by a handsome stranger with strangely captivating grey eyes....

"Everyone likes you, it seems. Does the sun also break through the clouds every time you go outdoors?" There was a brief, surprised silence, but then Lord Sidney let out a hearty laugh. "See, Dean? I knew you could be entertaining if you tried. But you're quite right, you know. The sun does shine through the clouds when I appear, and flowers burst into full bloom in my wake. Birds sing, virgins swoon, and angels weep. It's all rather tedious, really." Lucas shook his head at this, but there was no smothering his smile.

But I digress.

This book had a lot going for it. It had not one, but two romances, one of which was a m/m romance. I would have loved it even more if the two guys had gotten the same page time for their romance as the heterosexual couple. As it was, their romance was all heated glances and kisses, but things faded to black before they landed on the bed. Both romances were strong and well-developed, and I don't know for which couple I cheered harder or cried more over. All four leads know what they want and fight for it, without there being too much drama to keep them apart. And I LOVED this. It's so rare these days to find a historical romance where I love (almost) all the leads! Here, we had three adorable, nice, kind, Good Guys, whose main characteristic was their kindness! I loved that. They deserved their happy ending! But there was a LOT going on, and I do feel like the ending wrapped things up a little too neatly. But still. There was very little irrational drama, likeable people, and two very good romances, all in one. I could have kept reading for a good while without complaining (or lived without a few subplots). I highly enjoyed spending time with these people!

Trigger warnings:

At the beginning of the book, Isla is engaged to one guy while still in love with the other (to whom she used to be engaged to). This marriage was to be a marriage of convenience to save her from scandal, but she does sleep with her first fiancé while engaged to the second (view spoiler), and likewise the second fiancé falls in love, and sleeps with, someone else while engaged to Isla. To make things more complicated, Isla's second

fiancé is also engaged (another marriage of convenience: (view spoiler)). Yep. There's a lot going on, but the characters were well enough developed to make sense of their behavior to me.

I received an ARC from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review

Marie says

Isla Ramsey hasn't had a great love life. After a bad experience she thought her feelings would not get involved in her next relationship. Then she meets Hugh, Lord Pierce and falls in love. Due to a misunderstanding, she becomes betrothed to Lord Sydney, a dear friend of hers. She rides by Lord Pierce's house everyday in hopes she will fall out of love with him. She rides by one day and is caught in a blizzard and saved by Hugh. While at his house, they admit to their love, but she is betrothed. When guests arrive, there is another shock. Will they be able to resolve their problems and get their happily ever after? I loved this book. This is the start of a new series, but we first meet Isla in *More of Less a Temptress*. I loved Lord Sydney and hope there's a story about him. I received this book from Net Galley and Kensington Books for a honest review. The opinions expressed are my own.

Book says

Wow, this book is another feather in this author's cap! I honestly didn't think I would love Isla, Hugh and Sydney so much but I absolutely adored them in this book. I enjoyed both the stories that run parallel to each other. As I began reading this book, I was seriously worried that there was going to be someone with a broken heart but the author pleasantly surprised me. For readers that are interested this is a MF and MM romance. The romance is sexy and love scenes sweet and hot at the same time. This is book one in the *Besotted Scots* series. I highly recommend this author and if you have never read books from this author, I would highly recommend starting with *The Somerset Sisters* series as it has Hyacinth and Lachlan's story.

* I received this ARC from NetGalley and the publisher for an honest review*

Cynthia says

I received an advanced review copy of this book.

There is so much more story-wise to this novel than the book blurb implies which presents a bit of a challenge for writing a review without spoilers.

Isla Ramsey is a character that was introduced to readers in earlier books. She is intriguing and I looked forward to reading her story. She always came across as a strong character. I was a bit surprised she would pine so strongly for Hugh Courtney that she would ride past his estate every day, even when bad weather threatened. I would think she would tire of doing this and eventually move on. I would like to imagine that given enough time she would.

Hugh rescues her from a snowstorm that hit while she was out on her daily ride by his estate. He takes her to his home because it's closer than riding out in the storm to her home. They're forced to spend time in each

other's company while they grapple with their feelings and the fact that they can't be together.

I enjoyed the primary story between Isla and Hugh, but I loved the secondary storyline and the characters. The secondary story line drew my attention more. I feel the secondary story could have gotten more page time but that would have taken even more away from the primary story.

The novel is well-written and I enjoyed it very much. I am looking forward to her next book in the series.

Jennifer says

I received this book through the First Reads giveaway program.

A fun Regency historical romance that actually offers two love stories. I enjoyed watching both unfold. Refreshing to see the lovely M/M side story. It was just as captivating as that of the storyline's main couple.

Synergy Quest says

4.5 stars - I've become a fast fan of Ms. Anna Bradley's. The Wayward Bride is Lady Isla and Lord Hugh's story. If you read the previous book you're ready to jump right into this one. Even if you didn't, you can still enjoy this read, you'll just need a moment to connect the dots. The story is filled with commitments made, regretted, and broken and a host of brothers, sisters-in-law, and friends who add depth and texture to the story and our understanding of the characters. It's a great read and leaves us with two HEAs.

Note: There is a M/M relationship that I didn't see coming, but wasn't bothered by. It's not the dominate storyline. However, the two storylines are woven together and dependent upon one another. So, if reading an M/M love story isn't your cuppa, you may want to give this one a pass.

I received an ARC of this book, from the publisher, via NetGalley, in exchange for a fair and honest review.

Niki says

After a failed season and heartbreak after Hugh Courtney, Marquess Pierce, spoke to her of forever and then told her never to contact him again, Isla Ramsey is nursing a broken heart. Now betrothed to her dear friend Lord Sydney, she has taken to riding out each day to exorcise her inner demons with a hard gallop and torture herself by riding past the gates of Lord Pierce's estate, which happens to be right next to her brother Finn's country estate. When Isla rides out in a burgeoning storm, she becomes lost and her spooked horse throws her, and she is rescued by Lord Pierce. They are both frozen by the time they emerge from the woods and he takes her to his estate for shelter since it's closer than her brother's home.

Hugh still can't seem to rid himself of his desire for Isla, despite the fact that she chose another man over him and is now betrothed. Hugh vows to keep his heart safe from her this time and return her to Huntington lodge as soon as possible and go back to carving out the space in his heart that's still occupied by her. One day turns into several when the storm leaves ice behind, preventing Isla's safe travels home, leaving them both snowed in with the one person each is trying to forget. At first Hugh determines to simply ignore her presence, but when he still can't stop thinking of her, he determines to spend as much time with her as possible, thinking she'll surely annoy him the more he gets to know her and he'll be able to fall out of love with her. Naturally, this plan backfires on Hugh as he only falls more in love with Isla the more he's around her. Other outside elements of Hugh's family are also working against him and Isla and they may have to settle for only a brief taste of a love that can never truly be theirs.

Meanwhile, Isla's betrothed, Henry Northrup, the Earl of Sydney, has been injured in a carriage accident caused by the same storm on his way to visit Isla. He is rescued by the very gruff Lucas, a man who wholly disdains the aristocracy and sparks fly.

Hugh is delightfully awkward and surprisingly vulnerable beneath his stiff and proper gentleman's exterior. Isla is headstrong and vibrant, but under the surface she's also scared and vulnerable and scarred by her past. There were so many secrets and misunderstandings between these two it honestly was nerve racking to read as I tore through the pages to find out how all the obstacles would be removed. I surprised myself with how much I wound up rooting for Lucas and Sydney to work out as well; their slightly less tense situation wound up being a nice respite from the bleakness of Hugh's and Isla's situation. Ms. Bradley also leaves us with a loose thread for one of her secondary characters that leaves me eagerly anticipating the next installment in the series.

This was a great effort and I would highly recommend it. I received a complimentary ARC via NetGalley. Thank you! All thoughts and opinions are my own.

Ermione Pickwick says

So, Anna Bradley's novels are those that I know I will love. And, in fact, I absolutely adored this novel! For many reasons - the romance, the story itself, the hero who's madly in love, but above all, I loved that there are two love stories developping at the same time, and one is homosexual, and the author treats it the same way she treats the main story. And it was so sweet.

A huge praise to Anna Bradley for her talent and for her plot choices!

I received an ARC of this novel. Thanks for the opportunity!

Iza says

Well, well, well... I guess this is another case of "everybody adored it but me" !

Let's be clear : I do love this author. I discovered Anna Bradley last year and am planning to read every book of hers.

My reflections about this novel are as follow :

- Why give it another series's title while it's the continuation of The Somerset sisters ? Oh, you can read it as a standalone all right, but I didn't understand the need for a "new" series.

- There is not one but two romances in this book. First, let's see Isla and Hugh. It's that romance that made me give the book 3 stars instead of more. I had a hard time liking them at the beginning, but I have to say they got better along the book - fortunately. The "I act stupidly because the plot of the book requires it" part and the "I know what the situation was because I trust the gossip and I'm not listening to you" part really grated my nerves. The later explanation was a big light for my taste but even if I don't really like it, I can admit and understand it. And as I said, they both got better as the story proceeded.

- Now Sydney and Lucas : they were the light of this novel ! I loved the both of them ! Different personalities (Sydney is so very charming), same attraction, *they* made me give the book 3 stars instead of less, I would even give it 4 stars just because of them. But a few questions arose : Why aren't they mentioned in the blurb ? I mean, at all ? Why are there sex scenes between heterosexuals but not homosexuals ? Was it in order to not frighten the "traditional" readers away ? (I wouldn't have been !). Was the author uncomfortable writing them ? Does it come from the writer or the editor ? It felt weird, especially them not being mentioned in the blurb. If there is a problem with homosexuality, why write the story at all and publish it ? Am I seeing too much in this ?...

Anna Bradley is an author I absolutely adored right from the start. But her latest two books have not been as good as I expected and this particular book left me wondering. Anyway, Hugh and Lucas are the best !

Krystal says

Let me begin this novel by pointing out the fact that while there are multiple romances mentioned, there is a secondary main romance written into this story and well, it may not be everyone's cup of tea. The secondary romance (which to be honest I happened to adore just a bit more than the main romance) is a homosexual relationship - which may be why it was not written into the blurb. I feel like it's a bit dishonest in a way, but I can see how it also may have been considered a spoiler as well.

So let's focus on the different romances, and why they worked (or didn't work). To begin with let's focus on the ones that were mentioned, but that didn't feature heavily within the story.

Henry and Isla were betrothed in order to protect both their reputations. Yes, Isla would benefit in the immediate sense, but Henry was hiding a secret of his own. I adored their friendship and the way they understood each other. And while it was obvious that their marriage would have some obvious complications, it would have been interesting to see how they managed.

Hugh and Julianna are also betrothed, and again, by no want or desire of their own. Their betrothal comes from the fact that Hugh's sister and her husband are both dead, and Julianna's father has custody of Hugh's niece Grace. It is her father that pushes the marriage on them as a condition for allowing them to have Grace in their lives. I will admit that while I thought this particular pairing didn't have enough time to "shine", I will admit to being curious about Julianna and the Duke she has supposedly come to an understanding with. For all her words, and her release of Hugh from their betrothal, her actions once she closed the door make me think there is a lot more to her story than what she said.

Now we can move on to the main romances. The first being the one between Hugh and Isla. Theirs is the kind of romance that frankly, is overdone and annoying. They had passion. They had chemistry. And they could have found their HAE a lot sooner if Hugh had only allowed Isla the chance to explain. Yes, I understand he was hurt and angry, but I'm so tired of these romances where people who are supposedly so in love with another person can just casually toss them aside without ever getting their side of the story, only to declare themselves later. I did enjoy watching these two as they were forced together and tried everything to get over their attachment to the other, but I wish they had just been open and honest with each other from the start.

Finally we come to the romance between Henry and Lucas. The unexpected romance that managed to steal the show. Henry is nearly always smiling and able to look for the positive. He brings the best out in everyone. Lucas is more of the steadfast, serious type. As they call themselves they are the earl and the farmer. Their relationship is definitely not the kind you expect to see in a historical novel. And honestly, their romance is definitely thought of in more "modern" ways than I would have thought would have been acceptable given the time period. In fact, I would definitely be interested in reading more about them - how they managed to overcome the obstacles that would have no doubt been thrust upon them just for being in love with each other.

I think when you look at this story as a whole, the different romance work to enhance the experience. Overall, this is a well written novel that while it touches on characters from prior series' (some more so than others) this story will appeal to those who enjoy historical romance. I would read more from this author!

DISCLAIMER: I received a complimentary copy of this novel in exchange for my honest review. This has not affected my review in any way. All thoughts and opinions expressed in this review are 100% my own.

Patricia says

In the first few chapters, you get an inkling of how the tale will end, but -oh, what an exciting, surprise-filled ride it is to get there. Love it. I received an ARC of this book.

Cat C says

Catnip-laden, engrossing historical

I won a copy of this in a Goodreads giveaway and it has not affected my review.

I. Loved. This. Book. It took me a few chapters to orient myself since there is a decent amount of exposition because the hero and heroine had already fallen in love in the background of another book, More or Less a Temptress.

But let me tell you that a few chapters in, it becomes clear that we have not one but TWO forced proximity romance storylines. If that's not enough to send you running here are some of the other things that may interest you:

An adorable Newfoundland dog

One of the stories is class differences and M/M

The other is second chance and "I don't want to like you but I can't stop thinking about you"

All the seeming love triangles actually resolve satisfactorily

There are so many feels but everyone gets an HEA (and everyone is really happy for the m/m couple which just makes my heart so happy)

Some quick content notes, 1 there is a sexual assault backstory that is not described and 2 there is a carriage accident that IS described with some gory injuries

Highly, highly recommend! Squee!

Romantic Intentions Quarterly says

We first met the impetuous Isla Ramsey and the very correct Marquess of Pierce in *More or Less a Temptress*, the third novel in Anna Bradley's *Somerset Sisters* trilogy. Here she begins a new but related series, *Besotted Scots* (and WHY has no one ever come up with that series title before? Genius!), and Isla is at its center, as she recovers from both scandal and heartbreak, now betrothed to her best friend.

That best friend is the eminently likable Earl of Sydney, but while he loves Isla dearly, it is another kind of affection he craves. And he finds it in his handsome, surly rescuer, farmer Lucas Dean, after a carriage accident nearly costs Sydney is life.

Willful misunderstandings and couples speaking and cross-purposes often frustrate me in a book, especially when it feels as though they are only there to act as a catalyst to angst and feel otherwise entirely out of character. That frustration is entirely absent here, as the assorted tangles of emotions, betrayals and mooted marriages of convenience are entirely justified, as are the tempestuous conversations among our four protagonists that so enjoyably address them. From the straight-laced Pierce's muddled mind, going off the deep end due to jealousy and (he believes) unrequited adoration, to the fiery Isla's constant need to run away, to Sydney's dawning realization of having met his match, and to Lucas's resentments and insecurities hiding behind his gruffness, this book is filled with points of view that you really want to know, and that you come to completely understand.

Intriguingly seeding possibilities for future *Besotted Scots* novels – obviously, we have to meet the woman who broke Ciaran's heart that one time – and bringing back glimpses of some favorite *Somerset* characters, *The Wayward Bride* is a most excellent addition to Bradley's uncommonly addictive Regency world. --
Rachel Hyland
