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Joan Johnston

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THE INNOCENT

Too tall and entirely too outspoken, Miss Eliza Sheringham grew up thumbing her nose at polite English society. So when Captain Lord Marcus Wharton, called Beau for his stunning good looks set his rakish sights on her, Eliza thought nothing of rejecting his advances. Until a stolen kiss swept her into the arms of a man too dangerous to love. . . .

THE BEAU

Called to battle, Marcus left behind the woman who had captured his heart--and the scandal ignited by their kiss. His brother's disappearance made him Duke of Blackthorne, guardian of twin nieces who were rumored to be his own daughters. Badly scared in battle, the Beau had become the Beast of Blackthorne, a wounded animal destined to spend his life hiding in a shadowy wing of Blackthorne Abbey.

THE BEAST

When Eliza Sheringham showed up on his doorstep proposing herself as governess for the incorrigible twins, the Beast demanded marriage as the price of the job. He knew she could never love him. Surely his looks would drive her away--now that he hungered for her more than life itself....

After the Kiss Details

Date : Published February 10th 1997 by Dell

ISBN : 9780440222019

Author : Joan Johnston

Format : Paperback 384 pages

Genre : Romance, Historical Romance, Historical

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From Reader Review After the Kiss for online ebook

Kasey Riley says

Five star ending...

I enjoyed this book but Beau was not that good of a person. I find it difficult to get into a story when one of the lead characters is so shallow. Time passes and he matures, but... The second half was more to my liking and the epilogue was perfect. If it was possible, would give this book 4.5 stars because it is better than just 4. Good job!

Tracy Hall says

Good

Missed the excellent mark by just a fraction. It had way too many typos for a best selling author. Shame

Melinda J says

Want to read the rest of the series.

Jessi says

All I could remember about this book was that I had read it. Yeah, I had probably blocked it. Way too much beginning and a way too swift end made for a story that started off great but did not end well. Eliza Sheringham is in love with her cousin. But when her other cousin tries to rape her, she has to run away from home. Eliza is on her way to a party when she meets the "Beau of Blackthorne" who is traveling with his twin nieces who rumor has as being his daughters. The two travel to the party together. While Eliza still believes herself to be in love with her cousin, she is majorly attracted to the Beau and the two end up entangled in a scandal. The Beau refuses to marry her and her cousin steps up to the plate, just as she realizes she's not really in love with him. The cousin and the Beau go off to fight in the war, the cousin dies and the Beau comes back hideously deformed. His brother (who was a duke) is purported to have died so he is now in charge of the nieces and Eliza gets herself hired as their nanny. Then, in the last fifty or so pages, his brother returns alive, Eliza makes the Beau realize that he's not really a beast and the twins find out that their father loves them after all. If it had been a longer exposition, would have been a better book. Too bad.

Antica says

I have mixed feelings about this book; as a romance I did not like it nor did the main characters appeal to me that much. The first half of this book was a bit meh to me; there wasn't much that really stood out to me as a

plot; and it is pretty bad when me as a reader cared more about Alastair's charecter and his relationship with his daughters than Marcus's relationship with Eliza. I've always heard that secondary charecters might save the book for some authors and this is the first time that I see this. Alastair as as a second charecter was more interesting to me than anything else in this book which will make me want to read the book that the author dedicated to his charecter and I think that I will enjoy that book more than this one because I was so interested in what he is going through than what Marcus or Eliza's stories for that matter.

The second half of the book was a bit better because it took on the Beauty and the Beast theme which I enjoy very much where Marcus is heavily scared and literally calls himself a Beast. But unfortunately it wasn't done very well in which he constantly called himself that it got a bit old for me. Also Alastair's disappearance caused me more distress than any other event in the book.

The romance between the two main characters didn't improve but in fact got worst; Marcus had her marry him if she wanted to take care of his nieces and was constantly raping her; which is something I cannot forgive even when the reader shows that he does care about her internally but I was over that by the time it happened even when those feelings were always there.

Eliza's character did come on strong for a few scene but she would just collapse a few pages later.

If not for the side story and the secondary characters along with the hint of the beauty and the beast theme I would have hated the book; I give it a 2 out of 5 just because of the elements that I did like

Diah Didi says

Baguuuus... Karna ceritanya dibagi dua bagian, before and after the kiss, jd berasa kuat karna tau sejarah hubungan antara Eliza dan Marcus.

Entah kenapa suka banget sama karakter Marcus yang kesannya kesepian (entah kenapa mendadak jadi inget Sebastian di Lord of Scoundrels-nya Loretta Chase) dan gloomy, well, he had a very good reason to act that way though. Tapi kasian, kasian... :'(

Suka juga ada karakter Becky dan Reggie. Jadi pengen meluk mereka semua. :D

Suka banget betapa Eliza bisa bikin Marcus berubah banget. Dan perubahan yang dibuat Eliza, sempet bikin Marcus syok banget dan agak gak siap dengan penerimaan Eliza.

Love it!

Edie says

After the Kiss

What a thoroughly engrossing book. Strangers when they meet, their hearts are about to become old friends. Read this in fits and starts in but three days. Looking for the next one joyously. Relished the complete reality of all relationships and their development within the plot. Johnston's intimate, often humorous, knowledge and use of sibling, extended family and close friendships of non-relatives as well as the husband-wife-lover dynamic lends me the credibility and empathy to wish the book went on and on.

Hopefulpuffin says

This was a disappointment ONLY because of all the stellar reviews and the fact that beauty & the beast is my all-time favorite trope.

I think the rollicking beginning went on too long and the problems fixed themselves too quickly. Everything got resolved in next to no time and the big scandal dogging Eliza really wasn't all that scandalous.

And yes, there were definitely some non-consensual sex scenes. It's hard to term it rape as I would if it was a contemporary romance because for the time period, I don't think it was possible to rape one's wife.

I don't think I'll read others in this series but I have other Johnston's on my TBR pile.

Flora says

First half was too long, second half sometimes appeared hastily duct-taped. Also fairly icky. I attribute some of this to different times (e.g. Whitney, My Love, and comments from Nora Roberts regarding how now, years later, she regrets using similar plot devices in her early books). But still very off-putting.

Cute twins.

Hit a bit hard over the head by Beauty and the Best and several other sentiments. Basically the whole thing was a bit overwrought for my tastes, though I'll try a few other books to get a better idea of the writing style.

My Kindle version was shoddily copy edited. Perhaps the proofreader was less than thrilled, too.

PT says

This is my first Joan Johnston and it was fairly good. I love scarred hero and this one tugged at my heartstrings. Plus, the twins were a cute addition. I like books with kids.

DebbieLisa says

I had a hard time deciding whether to give this book 4 stars or not, a very hard time. Overall, I really enjoyed the book, I found both Eliza and Marcus to be likable characters, the twins were charming and the story was good without being overly complicated and bogged down with too many plot twists and turns. I liked the book a lot actually. What I didn't like were the few scenes with forced (upon) sex between Eliza and Marcus. Marcus is angry and bitter over his lot after returning from the war, he is physically scarred and as well as emotionally. There is tremendous guilt over his personal losses among which are the possible death of his brother, his self imposed estrangement from the twins, the guilt over his best friends death and his guilt over not having stepped up to and done the right thing by Eliza when he had the chance. He uses Eliza's dire circumstances and her love for the twins to force her into accepting a marriage that he wants on his terms

only. His terms: Eliza is his at night but she is forbidden to see him or interact with him during the day. Marcus is so angry and twisted by this time that he is unable to be gentle with Eliza, unable to believe she might love him for who he is, unable to sort out his feelings for her without letting pure lust rule his actions. I had a hard time with the "love" scenes, they were uncomfortable and quite honestly, nothing short of rape. I know the book was written in 1991 and this kind of love scene in romance novels was more common then but frankly, there is nothing sexy or enticing about it.

Fani *loves angst* says

What impressed me in this book is that it managed to engage all sorts of feelings: it started as light and humorous, it turned into sober and sweet in the middle only to end up in anguish. I haven't read another book like that till now.

The hero and heroine meet under humorous circumstances, when the heroine stumbles upon the hero and his twin nieces as she tries to escape her guardian's advances and visit her cousin with whom she's in love in London. She is extremely tall and odd looking while he is considered the best looking man in the ton, aptly named 'The Beau'. He decides to escort her during her visit in London and of course they get to know each other better. However, when they arrive in London and meet her cousin the mood shifts; it turns sober as the feelings get more serious. She is attracted to the Beau as he is to her, but neither of them is ready to accept that attraction or act on it. And the heroine still believes her future lies with her cousin until a passionate kiss changes the future of everyone involved.

The second part is dark and deeply emotional with the hero coming back from Waterloo scarred and turned into a Beast rather than Beau. A beast, who now lives isolated from anyone in regret and sorrow. However, he has his nieces to think about and after they got rid of the last 7 or 8 governesses, he has to come up with a more permanent solution: a wife for him who'll act as close as a stepmother to them. After all, they did seem to get along famously with Miss Eliza Sheringham more than a year ago, not to mention how well he got along with her. But knowing she would never agree to marry him after the way he treated her, he resorts to blackmail. And so, their marriage begins. But Eliza is not a woman to leave open wounds festering. She tries to drive her husband out of his misery and solitude but it seems to be a losing battle as the situation between them deteriorates day by day.

This book was a rollercoaster of emotions: from lighthearted banter to sweet, tender encounters until the angsty, emotional scenes in the end, I couldn't put it down; I read it in almost a day. Highly recommended.

Julie says

I read a few reviews of " After the Kiss " by Joan Johnston before I started it myself. I was prepared for the shift in mood the novel took midway through. I was also prepared for the " forced seduction " some of these older titles featured. However, there was one scene that went well beyond that IMO, and prepared or not, it was hard to imagine forgiveness being that easy. That part does mark a turning point in the book though. Eliza and Marcus meet under unusual circumstances. Marcus is a notorious rake and Eliza is the innocent cousin of his best friend. But, Marcus compromises Eliza, then refuses to do the honorable thing. However, war changes everything. Marcus is disfigured and bitter. He is filled with regrets. Eliza agrees to marry Marcus out of financial desperation. But, Marcus will have to deal with his demons before he can

really be the husband Eliza deserves.

It's a good story, but it does have a very dark side to it. Take out or tone down that one scene and I would give it a B.

Debbie Dodd says

I enjoyed.

GuisBell says

Vayaaaaa pobre Eliza!!!! ha tenido la misma, no un poco menos de suerte, de lo que tuvo Charlotte con el protagonista, que también desciende de la familia de las tortugas por lo lento en darse cuenta que tiene el amor al alcance de las manos. Espero que el protagonista masculino del siguiente libro sea rápido de entendederas :P
