



## The Duchess Deal

*Tessa Dare*

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*When girl meets Duke, their marriage breaks all the rules...*

Since his return from war, the Duke of Ashbury's to-do list has been short and anything but sweet: brooding, glowering, menacing London ne'er-do-wells by night. Now there's a new item on the list. He needs an heir—which means he needs a wife. When Emma Gladstone, a vicar's daughter turned seamstress, appears in his library wearing a wedding gown, he decides on the spot that she'll do.

His terms are simple:

- *They will be husband and wife by night only.*
- *No lights, no kissing.*
- *No questions about his battle scars.*
- *Last, and most importantly... Once she's pregnant with his heir, they need never share a bed again.*

But Emma is no pushover. She has a few rules of her own:

- *They will have dinner together every evening.*
- *With conversation.*
- *And unlimited teasing.*
- *Last, and most importantly... Once she's seen the man beneath the scars, he can't stop her from falling in love...*

## The Duchess Deal Details

Date : Published August 22nd 2017 by Avon

ISBN :

Author : Tessa Dare

Format : Kindle Edition 389 pages

Genre : Romance, Historical Romance, Historical, Historical Fiction, Adult, Fiction, Regency

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# From Reader Review The Duchess Deal for online ebook

Lana ❀❀Dirty Girl Romance❀❀ says

5 STARS

*Emma Gladstone had learned a few hard lessons by the age of two-and-twenty. Charming princes weren't always what they seemed. Shining armor went out of fashion with the Crusades. And if fairy godmothers existed, hers was running several years late. Most of the time, a girl needed to rescue herself.*

Is it possible for my swoons to have swoons? Because I'm pretty sure they all mated together in a swooning frenzy and had swoon babies. I mean all of the swoons! ALL OF THEM!!!! This book was everything. EVERYTHING. It was romance perfection. I think my goosebumps had swoons, for goodness sake. No really. I'm not exaggerating even a little. This book was a little peace of romantic heaven. It was everything I love about a great romance; great banter, humor, sizzling steam, and two main characters that you can't but help and fall head over heels for.

Emma Gladstone

*Complexion: cream. Lips: rose petals. Lashes: sable. Backbone: steel.*

I. Loved. Her. Here's a woman that didn't live an easy life. Not even close. And yet she never loses her fire, her sparkle, her incredibly gentle heart. When she faces down a broody duke in order to receive payment for a dress she made for his ex fiancé, the last thing she expects is a proposition of her own. The man is impossibly stubborn, grumpy, with a penchant to blasphemy in the most creative of fashions, and perhaps slightly deranged...

*Are you—" There seemed no way to say it but to say it. "Your Grace, are you trying to get me into your bed?"*

*"Yes. Nightly. I said as much, not a minute ago. Are you listening at all?"*

*"Listening, yes," she muttered to herself. "Comprehending, no."*

*"I'll have my solicitor draw up the papers." He returned to his place behind the desk. "We can do it on Monday."*

*"Your Grace, I don't—"*

*"Tuesday, then."*

*"Your Grace, I cannot—"*

*"Well, I'm afraid my schedule is quite booked for the rest of the week." He flipped through the pages of an agenda. "Brooding, drinking, indoor badminton tournament . . ."*

The Duke of Ashbury has returned from the war, a scarred, shell of a man he once was. A monster he no longer recognizes in the mirror. But a duke needs an heir, and to get an heir, he needs a wife, and to get a wife, well...he needs a miracle. When the beautiful Emma comes charging into his house, he believes she holds the answers to everything he desires. But what he doesn't expect is for the witty beauty to tilt his world

on its axis.

*she tucked a stray wisp of dark hair behind her ear. Then she licked her fingertip and turned the page. His knees buckled. In his mind, he scrambled to piece that half second into a lasting memory. The crook of her slender finger. The red pout of her lips. That fleeting, erotic glimpse of pink. She did it again. Ash gripped the doorjamb so hard, his knuckles lost sensation.*

*He wanted her to read the whole cursed book while he watched. He wanted the book to have a thousand pages.*

The chemistry between these two was instant and fiery. I couldn't get enough of it. Their banter, their daily push and pull of Emma attempting to break through his walls and Ash retreating further behind them. I loved it so hard. I loved Emma's backbone and take charge attitude. She was no wilting wallflower but there was also this endearing softness to her. It wasn't long before everything about her began to tear down the walls that Ash has built around himself and questions everything he once thought. I loved watching that wall of his break down slowly. I loved the way that Emma slowly but surely healed his heart even though she couldn't heal his scars. I love that he was the most perfectly imperfect hero. There was something so completely endearing about the man. GAH.

*You are wet, and you are cold. You don't like being cold. Therefore, I despise you being cold. I would go about murdering raindrops and setting fire to the clouds, but that would take slightly more than an hour. Perhaps even two. So we're here, and you will cease complaining about it."*

This book is why I read romance. I can't believe this is my first Tessa Dare book and I plan on rectifying this immediately. I loved every chapter, every page, every word. If you're a fan of swoony and steamy historical romance with incredibly vivid and multi-layered characters, this is simply not to be missed!

*ARC courtesy of publisher in exchange for an honest review*

**Find me on:**

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**Geri Reads says**

**This is on sale for TODAY only at \$1.99! --> <http://amzn.to/2D1XO46>**

This was one of swoooooooooooniest book I've read this year. The only other books that can compare in terms of the swoon factor was the Devil in Spring by Lisa Kleypas and The Day of the Duchess by Sarah MacLean. All three are historicals and all three worked like a charm.

War had taught him two things. First, life was fleeting. Second, duty wasn't.

The hero, the Duke of Ashbury became a recluse and withdrew from society due to the injuries he sustained in the war. His face and his body was so scarred that people turned away from him, and even started calling himself a monster because of the way he looks. Because he a duke, one of his duties was to provide an heir. Something that he was adamant of doing or else his whole estate would be inherited by a cousin who is an irresponsible bloke. He didn't want the people depending on him to have the misfortune of getting a spendthrift for a lord so he had the motivation to really find a wife and have an heir.

Emma Gladstone is the seamstress tasked to create the wedding gown for the Duke of Ashbury's mistress until the wedding was called off. Unfortunately, she wasn't paid. Desperate to get money to pay for her rent, Emma went to the Duke to ask for payment.

“I have an unfortunate habit of looking for the best in people, and it makes me blind to their flaws.”

This is where their story begins, and man, what a story it is. What started off as a marriage of convenience turned into one of the most romantic and life-affirming stories I've read this year. Their meet-cute was one of the most hilarious I've read in a long time. It's full of lighthearted and funny moments, and the romance is just, ah-mah-zing. I was swooning from beginning to end. Tessa Dare is known for her clever, witty banter and this book is brimming with it.

“If you say so, my treasure.”

“I daresay I do, you little baggage.”

Emma is fantastic heroine. Her backstory was really sad and it made her into a person she is. I love how she's not cowed at all by Ashbury's appearance and temper. In fact, she revels in it. I enjoyed how she was able to coax her scarred husband out of his shell and made him a better person.

At first, I thought the Duke of Ashbury was going to be just this brooding temperamental one-dimensional character at first. I mean, I love me some grumpy, brooding hero but Ash is so much more than that. His sarcasm, his wit and deadpan humor added so much to what could have been a dreary and bitter character. He does have a chip on his shoulder, something that his character had to deal with throughout the book. But this hero was seriously funny.

“And you claim to be feeling this way. Floatish. Singsong-ish. About me.”

She sighed. “Yes.”

“That’s absurd.”

“I know, but I can’t seem to stop it.”

There were some subplots in this book that might feel unnecessary but I thought that they were perfect because they add so much not only to the characters, especially the Duke, but also to the place where the story is set. And these subplots did a great job at setting up future storylines in the series, which is always a win for me.

The Duchess Deal is a book that you read in one sitting. Once you open it, good luck to your chores or doing anything else because all you'd want to do is read straight through. I had a biggest smile on my face reading this book. It's romantic and full of characters that you can embrace and root for. So well done!

"If you leave, I will follow. Do you hear me? I will follow and find you and cart you home."

*ARC provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review.*

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### **Khanh, first of her name, mother of bunnies says**

*"If it's a wife you want," she said, "surely you could find many women—many well-bred ladies—who would be willing to marry you."*

*"Yes, but I'd have to find them. This saves me so much effort."*

*She threw him a sidelong glance. "Can you not hear yourself? Do you truly not know how insulting that sounds?"*

*"I should think it sounds beneficent. I'm offering you a title and fortune. All you have to do is lie back in the dark, then spend nine months swelling up like a tick. What could possibly deter any woman from accepting?"*

My panties are so wet right now. Lol. I can't even tell you how dumb this book is.

Sometimes, Tessa Dare's books can be charming and adorable, unfortunately, this book was not one of them. The jokes were not funny. The characters are gratingly bad. The "quirks" in the book that were probably meant to be cute had me shaking my head in disbelief. The entire book, start to finish, was just **outrageously bad**.

The main male is a caricature of Dr. House, and - dare I say it, our beloved Darcy. Take his \*swoon\* marriage proposal to a woman he has barely known for five minutes.

*"I know what you're thinking, Miss Gladstone."*

*She doubted it.*

*"You're incredulous. How could a woman of your standing possibly ascend to such a rank? I can't deny you'll find yourself outclassed and un-befriended among the ladies of the peerage,*

*but you will no doubt be consoled with the material advantages. A lavish home, generous lines of credit at all the best shops, a large settlement in the event of my death. You may pay calls, go shopping. Engage in some charitable work, if you must. Your days will be yours to do whatever you wish.” His voice darkened. “Your nights, however, will belong to me.”*

Darcy did it better, fam.

A grouchy, scarred (physically AND mentally, ooh!) not that the cover shows anything but perfection, but hey, details shmetails. He's a duke who is so physically repellent that his socialite ex-fiancée dumped his ass. He spends the book lamenting on how everyone leaves him and loathes his appearance, even his household employees - which is kind of weird considering he has like 100000000000 servants in his house when our lady, Emma, is introduced to the staff. Again, details shmetails.

This book doesn't make any damn sense. It's the whole marriage-of-convenience trope, which can be cute when it's done right, but the fact that this fucker is a FILTHY RICH DUKE doesn't make it believable. His utterly emotionless reaction to things, presumably a cute lil' quirk when it was written, makes it so fucking dumb, lol. Speaking of cute lil' quirks, Ashby has this thing where he swears in Shakespearean even when confronted with a bunch of fucking cutthroats in a dark alley.

*A savage growl rose in Ash’s throat. “Like the devil you will.” Brandishing his walking stick like a sword, he sliced the air in a wide arc, forcing the footpads back. “Touch her and you will pay with your lives, you diseased, maggoty curs.”*

Throughout the book, he is obsessed with getting an heir, and there are so many references to impregnating her. It just gets irritating.

Now, the female main character, Emma. The down-on-her-luck seamstress who gets to marry a duke. One of her reasons for marrying someone she barely knows is to help a pregnant girl whom she barely knows. She picks up an annoying smelly ill-tempered cat off the street just for the sake of bringing something she knows into a new marriage.

*The cat was the most foul, filthy, repulsive creature Ashbury had seen in his life, outside of the rare occasions when he regarded himself in a mirror. It was no more than a collection of bones encased in smudge-colored fur, and doubtless crawling with fleas.*

*His bride clutched the beast with both hands, holding it in front her like some sort of spinster bouquet.*

Oh, and as if this book didn't need more quirky characters, there is a random Indian butler, a lady's maid who speaks far above her station, and many, many new friends with questionable animals. This book is like a **Regency manic pixie dream girl fantasy**.

*A bleating sound came from somewhere toward the rear of the house.  
“Oh, that’s Marigold.” Penny lifted the teapot. “Never mind her.”*

*“Marigold?”*

*“The goat,” Nicola explained.*

*“She’s sick in love with Angus, and she’s most displeased about being quarantined. She has the*

*sniffles, you see."*

*"You have two goats, then?"*

*"Oh, no. Angus is a Highland calf. I shouldn't encourage them, but they're herd creatures. They each need a companion."*

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## **Michelle says**

"The Duchess Deal" is sweet, tender and laugh out loud funny! Tessa Dare's writing is excellent-- the first few paragraphs hooked me, and every line after kept me tangled in her web. I could barely put the book down! Now the plot might be a bit on the already-been-there-done-that, yet the sarcasm and wit pouring off the pages made it seem new and exciting with every turn. Underneath the humor is a beautiful story of two hurt people who find love in each other.

Ash and Emma were so easy to love and cheer for. The "wounded/tortured hero" is not my favorite plot line, as usually I find them too sulky or whiny. This book did not conform to that, and while Ash did sulk-- he did so with flair and wit. Emma is a strong heroine, she stood up for what she wanted and didn't let Ash get away with anything. I highly admired the sheer lack of time she spent sitting around feeling sorry for herself.

It was so sweet how they fell in love: naturally, despite both of them fighting it. Ash-- because he knew no one could love someone that looked like him, and Emma-- because she had already tried love and it didn't work out so well. Their vulnerability was endearing and emotional. I like that both parties had hardships to overcome-- and yet they both remained funny and likeable, albeit flawed, characters that don't weigh you down with a lot of angst. While so many romances are balancing acts of two people taking turns being irrational--every action, these two make, seem realistic and relatable. To top it all off, they have amazing chemistry, and lots of hot and steamy sex. Well-written, consensual sex!

Aside from the main characters, I also enjoyed the secondary characters like the butler, Khan and Trevor, the sidekick (yes, there's even a Batman element to boot!). There are also Emma's three eccentric friends: Penelope, Nicola and Alexandra who are clearly sequel-bait, and I look forward to their stories.

The story line flowed nicely and the dialogue was excellent-- the barbs true, and the humor is hysterical most of the time. The first time the couple played badminton was really cute, especially when she's trying out endearments on him. I was at work while I read that scene and I was giggling like a school-girl, my co-workers won't make me hear the end of it! I had to resume reading the book at home which turned out to be a good idea, since I can't stop myself from laughing, crying or sighing (sometimes, all at the same time) with every page. Last, but not least: I love that the whole thing is an homage to language. Between the "unicorn vomit", "pelt of a snow beast rumored to menace the Himalayas", and the Shakespearean cursing - I could not stop laughing!

Tessa Dare totally took me by surprise! Charm, cleverness, and insight permeate her writing. I think I found another romance author to follow. If you enjoy witty dialogue, humor, and rich characters, you will love this book!

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## Maria♦\*Steamy Reads Blog\*♦ says

➡I'm really not that big on historical romances. And then suddenly... this is my third one this month!

➡If it has an arranged marriage trope, I'll read it. Because, honestly?

➡It was a fast and entertaining enough read with a grumpy asshole duke of a hero and a poor seamstress of a heroine. He needs a heir and she needs the money.

➡So I guess, in a way it was a Beauty and the Beast re-telling and, while I didn't find it as humorous as some people did, I still enjoyed it and would recommend it to anyone who loves sweet and funny historical romances. I was also pleased with the fact that this book was rather steamy and didn't shy away from naming certain body parts.

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## NMmomof4 says

### 4.5 Stars

**Overall Opinion:** This was a great beauty and the beast type story. The Duke is scarred externally and internally (by his ex), and the h is the feisty seamstress-to-duchess that fixes him! The banter and wit was awesome, and probably one of my favorite things about it. My absolute favorite was the H! He was too funny and not as grumpy and horrible to deal with as he was made out to be, and I loved that Emma simply became his weakness and his strength all in one. The sexy times were pretty hot considering it's a HR too! My only complaint is I wanted MORE! The epilogue wasn't as in depth as I would've liked, but again, I'm a greedy reader. I would recommend this to anyone, especially those that are on the fence about HR and need that great book to get into the genre ?

**Brief Summary of the Storyline:** This is Emma and Ash's story. Emma is desperate and calls on the Duke Ash for payment for her labor sewing his ex-fiancé's wedding gown. Ash is also desperate in that he needs a wife to produce an heir to pass his title on to. They make an agreement and go into a marriage of convenience. There are rules that get broken, feelings that are unintentionally developed, some sexy times, and some laugh-out-loud moments...and they get a HEA ending.

**POV:** This alternated between focusing mainly on Emma and Ash in 3rd person narrative.

**Overall Pace of Story:** Good. I never skimmed and I thought it flowed well.

**Instalove:** No, they take a while to develop stronger feelings.

**H rating:** 5 stars. Ash. I loved him! He cracked me up with his sarcastic humor! I was heartbroken for him

and what happened with his ex, but I think he made such a great match with Emma.

**h rating:** 4.5 stars. Emma. I really liked her! She was a great combination of tough and sweet, and just what the Duke needed.

**Sadness level:** Low, no tissues needed

**Push/Pull:** Yes (view spoiler)

**Heat level:** Hot. They have some hot tension, chemistry, and scenes -- but not so much it takes away from the story.

**Descriptive sex:** Yes

**OW/OM drama:** Yes (view spoiler)

**Sex scene with OW or OM:** No

**Cheating:** No

**Separation:** No

**Possible Triggers:** Yes (view spoiler)

**Closure:** This had pretty good closure, but I wanted more! I would've loved a farther and more in-depth glimpse into their future. I would still call it a HEA ending though.

**How I got it:** I paid the \$5.99 on Amazon for it (on the high end of what I like to spend, but happy that it ended up being worth it!)

**Safety:** This one should be Safe for most safety gang readers (view spoiler)

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## Bubu says

**The Duchess Deal** is a veritable clusterfuck. As much as it pains me - being this author's fan - I can't find any other description that underlines my shock.

This is now the third book in the last few months that I was looking forward to and that left me with the question if that's really all the authors could come up with. Over the time, I've learned to curb my excitement

and don't expect a five-star read every time a book is published. What I expect is good entertainment.

**The Duchess Deal** is quickly summarised. War scarred hero is in want of a wife. When Emma, a seamstress, demands payment for a wedding gown that the prospective bride didn't need as she called off the wedding, Ash finds himself with the perfect candidate to bear his children and continue his line.

Obviously, there's more to it. Obviously, there's more to Ash's obnoxiousness than his hideous scars. Obviously, Emma will see the beauty behind his obnoxiousness. Obviously, Emma herself is an emotionally scarred woman. Obviously, we will see that love conquers all. And obviously, there are some very sweet and tender moments.

But the *how* had me nearly DNF this book.

My standards in regards to historical accuracy are extremely low when it comes to Tessa Dare. I love how the further her books progress, the less she takes the genre itself seriously, constantly mocking the tropes. Ash is a fine example. I can't count the number of times where Ash - in his self-deprecating manner - pokes fun at himself.

There was something off right from the beginning. Dare's trademark of tenderness mixed with humour felt forced. The same can be said about Ash and Emma. I love Dare's heroines, their daring nature an endearing feature I always enjoy. But Emma's lust for a man she barely knows, who isn't particularly nice to her at the beginning, had me confused. I wish she'd been more prickly, to be honest, more distant. And that says something.

It does get better the further the story progresses, and as I already mentioned, there are some sweet and tender moments. However, all I could think was 'too late, too late, too late.' The build-up was simply too choppy. In essence, Tessa Dare, lost me in the first third part of the book and I could never pick up the pieces again.

Now, to the 'historical accuracy'. Look, I know TD isn't someone who dwells too much on it, and she's the only author I can think of where I let it slide. Duke marrying a seamstress? Who cares? I'll read it. It's Tessa Dare, after all.

But one scene in particular had me fuming. Right after the wedding, the maid shows Emma her rooms and she's so *unbelievably familiar* with Emma that I had to read the scene twice, in case I had missed something. Also, the familiarity of the secondary characters, who will presumably get their own books á la *Spindle Cove*, was off-putting. There was not the tiniest hint of 19th century behaviour at all. And it did remind me of how *Spindle Cove* played - at the very least - within the various social statuses, even if it only barely scratched it.

But mostly I didn't feel the chemistry between Ash and Emma. I could have put all my whiny, moany pickings aside, if there had been a better build-up. The only saving grace was their banter. But that's not enough to carry a whole book.

It took me five (!) days to finish this book. Five days. A Tessa Dare book is usually devoured within a day.

And so my book slump continues

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## Robin (Bridge Four) says

### Sale Alert: Kindle Monthly Deal Aug 2018 at Amazon for 1.99

This was A-dor-ABLE. First I love Emma she is my kind of girl. She had me on page 2 when this was used to describe her.

*“Emma Gladstone had learned a few hard lessons by the age of two-and-twenty. Charming princes weren’t always what they seemed. Shining armor went out of fashion with the Crusades. And if fairy godmothers existed, hers was running several years late. **Most of the time, a girl needed to rescue herself.**”*

Beauty and the Beast is one of my favorite tropes. Couple that to a man scarred horribly by the war who has become completely broken inside and Emma a girl completely capable of saving herself and literally Tessa Dare would have had to just write her chore list and bawdy limericks to not make this book at least a 4 star read for me.

Ash is just as his name suggests, he is the ruminant of a man he used to be. Mostly he spends his time hiding in his palatial home and pestering the servants. But he needs an heir and so he also needs a wife to be able to beget that heir \*wink, wink\*. When Emma shows up in the gown made for his former fiancé it seems like fate that a bride just drops into his lap and so Ash leaps on the opportunity to solve at least the first of his problems, finding a wife.

Ash and Emma are fantastic together. She never lets him bully her and he isn’t sure what to do with a woman used to working and willing to take him on as her new project it seems. Emma might not like the idea that she is mainly there so he can make an heir but it is far more comfortable than the life she was living even if she doesn’t want to just be for child bearing.

*“A broodmare. Hm. I’m not certain I mind that comparison. If you’re a broodmare, that would make me the stud.”*

*“And there,” she said, “is the injustice of the world in a nutshell.”*

I always enjoy Tessa Dare’s novels. Her humor sings to me and there is always something quirky about her characters. One of my favorite parts besides the slow build the love between Ash and Emma was how well they played together. Emma doesn’t want to call him Duke, Ashbury or Ash and so she has come up with a list of different nicknames to address him by. Turtledove, duckling, sweetmeat, fawn, Wienerbrod etc etc...

Even the servants are in on trying to get Ash to fall for Emma and they will go to a few extremes to make it happen as well. I thoroughly enjoyed the plots that were hatched in the name of love.

Since this is the first books of a series there is always the introduction of those I think future stories will be about. Emma has found a quirky circle of women not really on the inside of society to befriend her. It was fun getting to know them a little as well and have a misadventure or two with them along the way.

*“If Emma didn’t keep his attention focused on her, he would see Alexandra, and this already uncomfortable scene would enter . . . **well, not quite the ninth circle of Hell, but Dante’s lesser known invention: the sixth octagon of awkward.**”*

I'm not sure that I liked this quite as much as the first in the Castle's Everafter series but super close.

Exactly what I needed for a lot of smiles, some steamy sex scenes and a good feeling when I was done.

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## Anne says

**“Lady Penny is a vegetarian,” Miss Teague said. “I’m afraid I don’t understand.” “She doesn’t eat meat,” Emma said. He paused. “I still don’t understand.”** <--I feel you, dude.

So, our hero is recently back from the war.

*What war, Anne?*

I don't know. It's a romance - stop quizzing me!

Anyway.

While he was there, Ash (Duke of Ashbury) had a *teeny* run-in with some cannon fire...

In other words, he is a *for-real* scarred hero. Chunks of this guy are just missing.

Poof! Gone!

War is hell, right? So, it's a good thing his fiancée was there to welcome him back from the arms of death with her unconditional love.

Or...not.

So, due to this chick being a petty bitch, he now thinks he needs a wife who is willing (read: desperate) to lower herself and do the dirty deed with him (lights off!) until he secures an heir.

**Because he's a MONSTER! Doomed to walk alone for all eternity!**

Alright. Ash is a tad dramatic in that department.

In his defense, the last woman he cared about vomited when she saw him. I suppose that would be enough to make anyone think they were unlovable and hideous.

So when he convinces the seamstress who sewed the (now useless) wedding dress for his (now ex) fiancée to marry him, he assumes her reaction to his sexual advances will look a little something like this:

However, because Emma *isn't* a petty bitch, she sees Ash for the intelligent, funny, sexy man that he truly is...underneath a whole lotta self-conscious snark. To *her*, the sexytimes are not at all an unwelcome chore that she has to simply *endure*.

In fact, when she looks at Ash? Growr!

Emma = Awesome Human Being

Loved her! She's got a great sense of humor, and the kind of can-do attitude that comes with being a survivor of her own battles.

Plus, she has a *\*cough\** adorable cat.

There's a lot more to the story, including a cute vigilante (yes, *CUTE VIGILANTE*) sub-plot that just made my day.

Ok. Now I'm not one who seeks out romances with psychologically *tortured* heroes. And I also don't actively look for romances with heroes who look all fucked up. Not so much because I care what they look like - sexy comes in all shapes & sizes. But I just don't like all the depressing emotional stuff that seems to go along with those 'scarred hero' stories. I'm in it for the fluff, and depressing monologues tend to kill my lady boner.

But this was cute, charming, and funny. Sure, he was afraid to show her what he looked like naked, but it never got so **dark** that it made me want to pity him. I couldn't be attracted to someone I pity, whether it's mentally, emotionally, or physically. And Ash was funny enough that I never really felt sorry for him. Yeah, he's got a bunch of burn scars and there are hunks of his hide missing, but...*shrugs* that's not the end of the world. And by the end of the book, he could see that, too.

This was definitely a cute romance.

**Recommended!**

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## Jennifer Kyle says

My first 5 Star of the year...

Beauty and the Beast type scenario...One Star

Lovable heroine... One Star

Broody sweet hero... One Star

Clever witty humor ... One Star

Fantastic fiery chemistry... One Star

*"Sometimes life takes an unexpected turn."*

---

**Maddie says**

**4 Stars ????**

**Ready. Steady. Go.**

**Just loved the Author's dedication:**

**????**

**Thanks, Dad. This book's for you**

**Please don't read chapters**

**7, 9, 11, 17, 19, 21, or 28**

**???**

**Well now I was totally interested why her dad should not read those specific chapters!**

**LMAO, ???**

Emma Gladstone had learned a few hard lessons by the age of two-and-twenty.

if fairy godmothers existed, hers was running several years late.

Most of the time, a girl needed to rescue herself

????

**Emma:**

?Complexion: cream.

?Lips: rose petals.

?Lashes: sable.

?Backbone: steel

????

Ash hesitated, quill poised in midair. He couldn't believe he was actually going to commit the words to paper. But much as he dreaded it, it must be done.

**He wrote: I need a wife.**

**He supposed he ought to state his requirements: a woman of childbearing age and**

respectable lineage, in urgent need of money, willing to share a bed with a scarred horror of a man.

In short, someone desperate

????

Khan appeared in the doorway. “Your Grace, I regret the interruption, but there’s a young woman to see you. She’s wearing a wedding gown.”

Ash looked at the butler. He looked down at the words he’d just written. Then he looked at the butler again.

“Well, that’s uncanny.” “By all means, show her in.”

**Ash:**

?“The Duke of Ashbury is the Monster of Mayfair.”

?bitterness that tempted him to lash out at anything near.

?took perverse pleasure in being a pain in the arse.

?If he was going to look like a monster, he might as well enjoy the role

?Children screamed at the sight of him. ?Dogs howled as they would at a fiend.

**Problems:**

?First, she was a virgin.

?Second, she was a vicar’s daughter.

?Third, she was a virgin vicar’s daughter. ?And fourth, he was the scarred, ill-tempered—if fantastically wealthy—wretch who’d strong-armed her into in a marriage of convenience with no courtship whatsoever.

**Rules:**

?There will be no affection involved. In fact, every precaution will be taken against it.”

?“Only one act is required on your part. You must permit me to visit your bed. I’m well aware of my distasteful appearance.

?All encounters will be as dignified as possible.

?No lights, no kissing. And of course, once you are pregnant with my heir, we will be done.”

????

At this, Emma was stunned. No kissing? No lights? On account of his “distasteful appearance”

????



**I will recommend to lovers of HR Romance, also loving a scarred hero! A heroine who is quite hard headed but who is able to heal the hero's perception of himself, well and if your looking for a HOT HR to read, all in CAPITAL'S this one will be for you!!!**

**Especially according to me:  
chapters 11 & 17!  
???**

What I loved most about this, it reminded me of beauty and the beast, and lesson in this read you don't need to be beautiful or hide behind scars, for people to love you!

That is what I am willing to share, go read the book!!

???

**To the author**

Beautiful HR, well done  
???

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**Navessa says**

**“I like to know the names of the people I despise. I keep them in a little book and pore over it from time to time, whilst sipping brandy and indulging in throaty, ominous laughter.”**

HAHAHAHA. So here for this male lead and his dry, whip-sharp sense of humor. I laughed my way through this entire book.

Tessa Dare is quickly becoming my go-to historical romance author. Her novels are always so full of humor and chemistry and feminism. In this one, there's even a line that ties in to current events:

*“She was warned. Given every explanation. Nevertheless, she persisted.”*

Girl power. Yes, queen.

I follow her on Twitter, and I love how unapologetic she is about her political beliefs, how she often engages in discourse on representation and diversity in literature. In *The Duchess Deal*, I can tell that she stands by what she says on there, how she strives to include more diversity in her own works.

Popular historical fiction, in my experience, is decidedly lacking in characters of color, and that really needs to change. Regency London was much more of a melting pot than a lot of these novels would have you

believe. I hope Dare continues to include more and more people of color and LGBTQ+ rep in future novels, and not just as side characters.

A thing you should also know about this book: it had a lot of common historical romance tropes and themes in it. Which I love. Which is why my ratings for these books should be taken with a grain of salt.

That said, if you like your HRs filled with chemistry, redemption arcs, and non-stop laugh out loud moments, give this one a try.

**Blog | Facebook | Twitter | Instagram | Pinterest**

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## **Astrid - The Bookish Sweet Tooth says**

SUPER-STEAL DEAL - <http://amzn.to/2mb1Pft> - \$ 1.99!

★★★ ALL OF THE STARS ★★★

Review @ Vanilla & Spice Books

Ladies (and gents) - this made the list of my 2017 favorites. I knew after the first couple of pages that this book would be special but the more I advanced the more it became obvious what a wonderful story Tessa Dare has created with *The Duchess Deal*.

For once I'll forgo the summary because the blurb says it all...

Emma is a spirited young woman with a huge capacity for love and compassion. When she arrives at the Duke's house all she wants is to be paid for her labor that went into the creation of the wedding gown for Ash's former fiancée. She is facing a man covered in burn scars who proposes to marry her because he needs an heir.

***He had to be joking. "You can't be asking me to marry you."***

***He sighed with annoyance. "I am a duke. I'm not asking you to marry me. I am offering to marry you. It's a different thing entirely."***

Ash can't stomach the hunt for a bride - he can't even stomach his own face and body in the mirror. When the young seamstress enters his house he knows she is the solution to his problems. He doesn't want this cousin to inherit the title and all that it entails so he needs an heir of his own. It is supposed to be a marriage of convenience and as soon as Emma is with child she is to live in a house in the country. Neither of them anticipated how their mutual attraction would change the course of their lives.

These two characters were made for each other. Both of them have ulterior motives for the marriage, both of them try to stay detached. And of course both of them fail. Emma is a wonderful heroine who does what she thinks is right. She isn't intimidated by the duke which Ash finds rather curious and his admiration for the young woman grows.

Emma finds beauty in everything, and especially in the bitter, cynical young duke. I loved how she accepted

him, how there was never a question that she desired him for the man he was with all his flaws, physical and character-related. With her selfless, kind and sweet mind I was completely charmed by her. Her sass, the endearments she found for Ash were comical.

*“Would you like more sauce, sweeting?”*

*His fingers strangled the stem of his wineglass. She could practically hear the grapes calling for help. She hoped that was a good sign. “If you don’t cease that nonsense,” he said, “you will regret it.”*

*“Is that so, my heart?”*

*“What about ‘precious’?” she suggested.*

*“No.”*

*“‘Angel’?”*

*“God, no.”*

*“‘Muffin’?”*

*In response to that, he hit the shuttlecock so hard, it sailed all the way to the back wall and thwacked one of his ancestors right in the powdered wig. She cheered. “Well done, my precious angel muffin.”*

*“This stops,” he said. “Now.”*

Ash...can I say that he is probably one of my all-time favorite HR characters ever? The retorts he volleys back at Emma had me laughing out loud so many times, I stopped counting at some point. Life wasn't kind to him until the sweet little seamstress entered his life. He suffered horrific injuries during war and the scars make women and children run from him terrified so it's only natural that he keeps people at arms' length. But when Emma comes into his life she shows him that he is desirable and good and soon he knows that if he lets her go his life will become darker again. He wants to protect her and hold her close.

*“You are wet, and you are cold. You don’t like being cold. Therefore, I despise you being cold. I would go about murdering raindrops and setting fire to the clouds, but that would take slightly more than an hour. Perhaps even two. So we’re here, and you will cease complaining about it.”*

Emma tries so hard to make him believe her that he is more than his scars and it was incredibly sweet to see the ice wall around his heart thaw. His indignation, arrogance and snark but also his big heart, deep hurt and vulnerability make him one of my most favorite and swooniest heroes in Historical Romance.

*“You’re here,” he repeated, taking her hand and drawing it against his chest, right above his*

*pounding heartbeat. "In my heart. Somehow you crashed your way into it when I wasn't looking. The same way you barged into my library, I suppose. But you're here now, inside. Emma, you're the very life of me."*

One thing I need to mention that was incorrect (and I do that because of my Viennese ancestry) - Wienerbrød isn't an Austrian pastry, it's Danish. However, that's no biggie, I just wanted to mention it for the sake of authenticity.

Tessa Dare really brought these characters to life. I could feel the whole range of emotions these two went through in every word and it's a testament to this author's writing abilities. I have read some of Ms. Dare's books before but I think this is my favorite so far. The smart banter was one of my highlights. There is a whole range of potential future heroines, all of them with their own quirks and I am already salivating for the next book in this series!

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### **Chelsea (chelseadolling reads) says**

Y'all. Smutathon has turned me into historical romance trash and I have ZERO REGRETS. Tessa Dare is my new queen (duchess???????) don't @ me

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### **Jilly says**

Over 30 of my friends wrote reviews on this book, and many others just rated it, so I'm a little late. The thing that struck me strongest was how strong everyone felt about this book. There were tons of 5-stars and then 1-stars. How funny that a funny little HR would inspire so much controversy.

So, here's the deal:

The duke, Ash, is one of those scarred and broken heroes. And, he is soooo snarky that I immediately wanted to marry him. Well, except that he's scarred and broken and I'm pretty shallow. Still, get him some plastic surgery, and we'll talk because I seriously loved his humor.

When she bursts into his office:

*"Miss Gladstone, you don't seem to understand how this whole intruding on a duke's solitude business works. You should be intimidated, if not terrified. Yet there's an appalling lack of hand-wringing in your demeanor, and no trembling whatsoever."*

When he's considering offering to marry her and learns she was a preacher's kid:

*He's always dreamed of debauching a vicar's daughter.*

When she asks him how she is going to make her a duchess:

*"Surely... surely you don't mean through marriage."*

*"No, I intend to use my vast influence in the House of Lords to overturn the laws of primogeniture, then persuade the Prince Regent to create a new title and duchy. That accomplished, I will convince him to name a vicar's daughter from Herfordshire a duchess in her own right. Of course I mean through marriage, Miss Gladstone."*

Okay, maybe the scarred face thing isn't so bad.

But, the great thing is that our heroine, Emma, can take it AND dish it out:

*She smiled. "Do you know, I suspected you were a good man, deep down. Even if very, very, very deep down. In a fathomless cavern. Underneath a volcano."*

She also insists on bringing a cat with her when she moves in. But, since she didn't have a cat, she had to pick up a very disagreeable stray on her way in. This cat ended up making me laugh my head off at his evilness. I hate cats, but have a soft spot for evil ones. I already consider them a spawn of the devil, so if they act like their true nature, I can't help but respect that.

See, the dogs have been trying to tell us for years. The truth has been out there all along.

I loved this book, obviously. It was funny and sweet and had just enough seasoning of smut. If you are into the scarred hero trope, and you are one of the other people who live under the rock with me and haven't read it yet, you need to give it a shot.

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