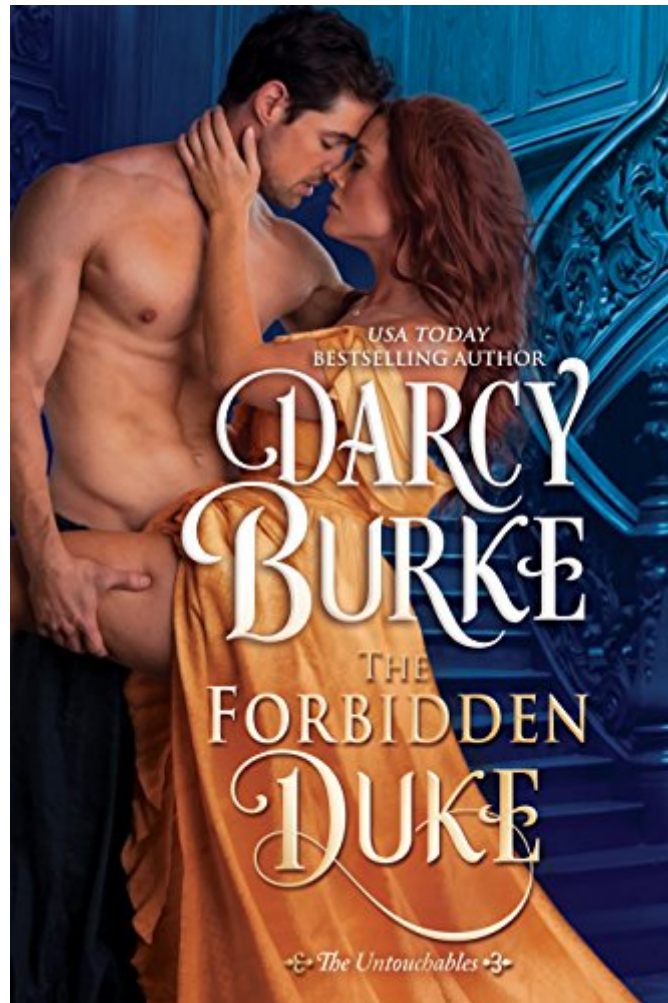


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The Forbidden Duke (The Untouchables Book 1)



Synopsis

Spinster Miss Eleanor Lockhart is suddenly homeless and employment is her only option. Ruined after succumbing to a scoundrel's excessive charm nearly a decade ago, she's lucky to obtain a position as a paid companion and committed to behaving with the utmost propriety. She definitely shouldn't be in the arms of a man capable of utterly destroying what little remains of her reputation... Titus St. John, Duke of Kendal, is known as the Forbidden Duke, a mysterious, intimidating figure who enters Society just once each year at his stepmother's ball. A decade ago, he was a devil-may-care rake until his idle roguery brought about the ruin of Eleanor Lockhart and his resulting self-imposed isolation. Now she's back, and she needs his help. But by saving her, he may just ruin her life all over again.

Book Information

File Size: 2529 KB

Print Length: 246 pages

Simultaneous Device Usage: Unlimited

Publisher: Darcy Burke (March 15, 2016)

Publication Date: March 15, 2016

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B01CN5G28I

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #4,545 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #89 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Romance > Historical Romance > Regency #92 in Books > Romance > Historical > Regency

Customer Reviews

One social faux pas leads to a life as a social pariah for one. Guilt leads to a life of solitude for another. Miss Eleanor, Nora, Lockhart has accepted her banishment to her father's home, minimal contact with her beloved sister, and few friends. What she isn't prepared for is the announcement that she will no longer have a home. With her father making bad investments he is

forced to move to a cottage on his sister's estate, a cottage too small for Nora. Living with her sister will be forbidden by her husband, the vicar. Returning to the aunt who sponsored her debutante season is out of the question as she was vehemently told to never return. Her only option appears to be as a lady's companion; as long as her past doesn't get in the way. Titus St. John, fifth Duke of Kendal, lived a life as a rake of the first order until one night changed the life of a young debutante. Feeling partly responsible Titus has spent the last several years going from a rake about town to only making one social appearance each year – at his stepmother's annual ball where he dances one dance with a female who is in need of a boost in society then he takes his leave. This social avoidance has earned him the nickname "The Forbidden Duke"; a position he embraces fully until fate brings the past roaring back. Hired at her first interview Nora is determined to do her job while hoping no one remembers her. Alas, fate is not so kind; although no remarks are made directly there are many twittering and laughing behind their fans. Knowing his reputation for the first dance at his stepmother's ball Nora is surprised when Titus asks her to dance; is this at his stepmother's request or a decision all his own?

St. Ives England - 1811 Miss Eleanor (Nora) Lockhart has learned that her father has lost a great deal of money in a bad investment and can no longer afford to support her. Nine years earlier, Nora returned from her second season in London with no prospects of a husband, in addition to leaving behind a scandal where she was caught kissing a gentleman. Since then she has lived a very quiet life with no prospects of a husband. Knowing she would not be welcome to live with her sister and husband, she decides to seek a position as a companion. Titus St. John, fifth Duke of Kendal, is a man who prefers his own company. Titus was age 5 when his mother died and his father remarried a woman who has become a good mother to him. Now that his father has passed away, his stepmother has remarried and is now Lady Satterfield. She has decided to hire a companion. When Nora is interviewed for the position, she is hired immediately. Lady Satterfield is very kind to Nora and includes her in with the friends that she entertains. In fact, she is so taken with Nora that she decides to sponsor her and give her a season. At age 27, Nora hopes that she is not too old to attract a husband. When Nora is introduced to Titus as Lady Satterfield's new companion, he remembers what happened in the past and how young rogues like himself were responsible for trying to steal a kiss from young ladies. Feeling bad for his past behavior he leads a very strict and quiet life taking his responsibilities of being a Duke very seriously. He does not tolerate the silly absurdity of society and avoids it. People know he prefers his privacy and they give it to him. Thus, he has acquired the nickname of The Forbidden Duke.

Let me begin this review by saying that I HATE the way young women were treated during the Regency Era. It's completely unfathomable that men were allowed to do whatever (and whomever) they pleased and no one would bat an eye. However, heaven forbid a woman be caught so much as kissing someone before marriage - and she is not only shunned by society, but considered "ruined" therefore losing any chance at making a good marriage. And just how is that fair? But alas, that is exactly what happened to Eleanor during her first season. She trusted someone who in the end - ruined her and left her to suffer the consequences. Now, she finds herself back in London about to take on another season - although admittedly not in the way she first expected. What she thought would be employment as a companion to a charming woman, turned into that woman wanting to right an old wrong - so she sponsors her for a season instead - an act of kindness that leads to unexpected results. For the most part I adored these characters. Titus' step-mother (Lady Satterfield) was a truly endearing character - not only because she was willing to give Eleanor a second chance, but also because it seemed she always had the best interest of others at heart. Even when she realized that Eleanor had attracted the attention of her wealthy step-son, she wasn't condescending about it like some other's would have been. It was sweet watching the romance bloom between Eleanor and Titus, even while he struggles to keep secret his part in her ruination years ago and she attracts the attention of several other potential suitors. I do have to say that watching Eleanor transform was probably one of the most refreshing things.

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