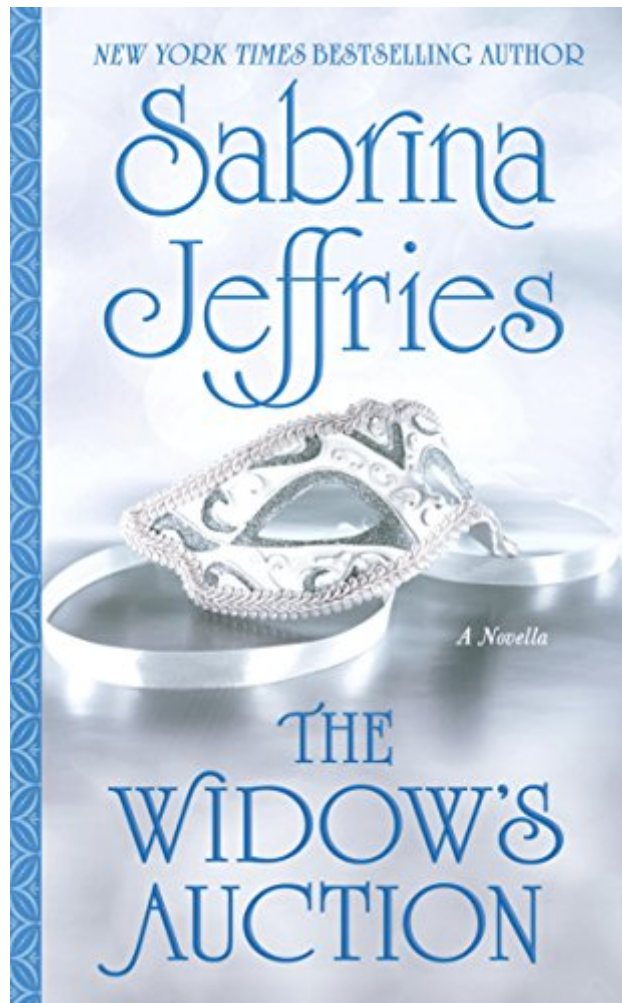


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The Widow's Auction: A Novella (Kindle Single)



Synopsis

From Sabrina Jeffriesâ "New York Times bestselling author of *The Study of Seduction* and *The Art of Sinning*â comes a sumptuous tale of a woman whose affection comes at a price... Though Isobel Lamberton, the widowed Lady Kingsley, is confounded by her dealings with the obstinate Justin Antony, Lord Warbrooke, his commanding presence sparks something deep within her. But such romantic thoughts are for naught. For Justinâs political aspirations always come first. And Isobelâs own secret past could damage both of them permanently.Â So when Isobelâs friend talks her into participating in a scandalous auction of masked widows at a gentlemanâs club, she reluctantly agrees...and soon begins to relish being an object of desire. But none desire her more than Justin, who recognizes the outspoken Isobel in disguise and sets out to teach her a lesson worth far more than money...Praise for Sabrina Jeffries:"Jeffries's talent is clear, and readers will delight in the multidimensional characters, fast-paced plot, and heaps of emotional passion and sensuality."â Publishers Weekly"With every book, Jeffries grows into an even more accomplished writer."â RT Book Reviews

The Widowâs Auction first appeared in *Fantasy*

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Customer Reviews

"She and Lord Warbrooke together? The very idea was absurd, impossible...Entrancing."FINAL

DECISION: I thoroughly enjoyed this novella. The story is very compact and tight and thus it works well. I enjoyed the characters interaction which covers a lot of ground for such a short story.

THE STORY: Isobel, Lady Kingsley is a widow who has dedicated herself to charitable causes. Her nemesis is Justin, Lord Warbrooke. The two strike sparks off of one another as they take opposite sides. Isobel, however, also has several secrets. One of them is that she found the marriage bed unsatisfying with her deceased husband. Convinced by her dear friend to participate in the notorious Widow's Auction, Isobel hopes to find some passion. Isobel is shocked when Lord Warbrooke purchases her favors for the night. Although masked, Isobel worries about Justin discovering her identity. Then as the two discover something special together, Isobel knows that her secrets prevent any chance of happiness between them. What she doesn't know is that Justin already knows who she is.

OPINION: This is a short novella so it doesn't have the complexity or depth of a full length work. Despite that, however, this story really worked for me. I liked Isobel and Justin who clearly have an attraction to one another from the beginning. The majority of the story is spent on how they discover the real person beyond the one they thought they knew. For a story about purchasing a night of sex, these two quickly enter a personal emotional intimacy with one another which culminates in sex rather than just being about sex. (Not that the sex isn't hot as well). I also liked Justin a great deal because he always treats Isobel with respect.

This isn't my first Sabrina Jeffries rodeo. That honor belongs to STORMSWEPT, a rerelease penned under her Deborah Martin name. When I was given an advance copy of this to review on Netgalley, I looked forward to the chance of seeing how her style had evolved. STORMSWEPT was written in the 90s, and while the heroine was likable, none of the male leads were at all. I'd hoped THE WIDOW'S AUCTION would be different, but as with the first one I found myself saying, "I liked parts of this book, but..."

THE WIDOW'S AUCTION is about a widow - surprise - named Isobel Lamberton. She's leader of a board of directors, basically, who all make decisions about what happens to her late husband's school. She and this man, Justin Antony, find themselves viciously at odds, so obviously she loathes him. At the same time, Isobel's friend persuades her that she ought to join a WIDOW'S AUCTION because she "just needs to get laid." Or whatever the 19th century equivalent of that phrase is. So Isobel goes to a fancy gentlemen's club, with a mask and revealing gown, and has men bid on who will get to spend the night with her. I will give you three guesses to figure out who wins.

THE WIDOW'S AUCTION does have some things in its favor. The heroine points out the irony of men being able to sleep with whomever they like, whereas women's value is only in their innocence. Her backstory was interesting, as well - I liked the Pygmalion reference. I'm

a sucker for that (Audrey Hepburn), although I thought that particular trope might have benefited a longer book more (so you could see the transformation from start to end in an epic fashion). What really kills this book is the length.

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