



The Courtesan Duchess

Joanna Shupe

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Can a bold-faced lie lead to everlasting love? One by one, the impetuous heroines in the Wicked Deceptions series intend to find out, each in her unique way. . .

How to seduce an estranged husband--and banish debt!--in four wickedly improper, shockingly pleasurable steps...

1. Learn the most intimate secrets of London's leading courtesan.
2. Pretend to be a courtesan yourself, using the name Juliet Leighton.
3. Travel to Venice and locate said husband.
4. Seduce husband, conceive an heir, and voila, your future is secure!

For Julia, the Duchess of Colton, such a ruse promises to be foolproof. After all, her husband has not bothered to lay eyes on her in eight years, since their hasty wedding day when she was only sixteen. But what begins as a tempestuous flirtation escalates into full-blown passion--and the feeling is mutual! Could the man the Courtesan Duchess married actually turn out to be the love of her life?

The books in the *Wicked Deceptions* series:

1. *The Courtesan Duchess*
2. *The Harlot Countess*
3. *The Lady Hellion*

The Courtesan Duchess Details

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From Reader Review The Courtesan Duchess for online ebook

Esther says

First time reading this Author and she just gained a new reader.

This book starts in "steam" mode and doesn't let up for about 1/2 of the book. Hot!!

Not going to really go into details about the synopsis of the book. The summary pretty much covers it. Nick (the Hero) was forced to marry Julia by his Father, who he hated (I hated him too). He's bitter and leaves for EIGHT YEARS, right after the "I do's". Julia is treated horribly by his family during the time he's away by his family. Thank goodness for her Aunt which I loved by the way. Julia then decides it's time to do something to survive these horrible in-laws and devises a plan. She seeks help by the best courtesan to entice her husband and accomplish her goals for survival. And Julia and Nick together...WOW!!!

This was a well written and engaging read. The story pulled me in from the first page and didn't let up till I read the last. The characters had great depth and evolved as the story progressed. There's lot's of steam, action, chemistry and a good plot. Again well written story.

I hated Nick at times.

SPOILER!!!!!!!!!!!!

(there is a part in the book that really made me mad. He was mad at Julia and proceed to find someone to help him forget. So he goes and finds a prostitute and proceeds get a blow job but realizes he's only thinking of Julia and walks away. But really Nick...geez).

But as the story progressed and you learn what Nick had to endure from his Mother and Father you see why he behaves as does. He character grows and you begin to see how Julia brings out the good in him. Julia, she's strong, sweet, beautiful, faithful and determined. I liked how she stood up to Nick. Julia also grew as a character throughout the story.

I enjoyed the secondary characters and am looking forward to future books about their stories.

Netgalley for an honest review.

Daniella says

Reading is a risky game. There is always that chance of you investing too much in a story, only to get yourself burned in the end.

I took a risk with *The Courtesan Duchess*.

And I got burned. So badly in fact that I had to watch cat videos to calm myself down.

Before I rant, I'd have to applaud Ms. Joanna Shupe for her writing prowess. It's not everyday that I'm this impressed by new writers, since normally, their inexperience shows in their inept grasp of the technicalities. There is usually that great flaw in the plot structuring, the pacing, or the planning that screams "fledging writer"--pardon the term--but I didn't find that in this book. In fact, it actually seemed as though Ms. Shupe has been writing novels for years, with the masterful way she wrote the story.

But a good grasp of the writing technicalities is not enough to produce a good book. If it has no soul, if there is no connection with the characters, if the story is not believable, then everything is all for naught.

I have two main issues with this story.

The biggest problem with this book is that I could not stomach the hero, Nick. Reading about him was a big test on my endurance. For one, **his way of thinking, his logic, was ridiculous!** The author's justification or excuse for his actions was a flimsy one, and downright illogical.

Okay, let's talk facts: During his wedding, Nick's impression of his wife was that she seemed like an innocent girl.

What he did: Nick abandoned her after the wedding, justifying himself with the excuse that she was his father's pawn. Whenever his wife was mentioned, he got angry.

My thoughts: If Nick believed that she was innocent, why would he assume the worst about her? What right did he have to get angry at his innocent wife? And if he planned on abandoning his ducal responsibilities, why get married in the first place? Why did he have to get married BEFORE going abroad? Why not go abroad BEFORE the unwanted marriage????

Another thing: Simon ("Winchester" as he was called), Nick's best friend, has told him repeatedly over the years that his wife was suffering. Nick knew his family was cruel. Nick met Julia, who was pretending to be a courtesan. He wooed her. He got to know her. Then, he found out that Julia was actually his wife.

His reaction:

That **whore**.

It had all been a game. The rumors, the flirting, the kissing. **She'd merely wanted him to chase her, to fall at her feet.** And he had, goddamn nitwit that he was. It was some sort of revenge for ignoring her for eight years. God, and the things he'd told her. Nick had revealed parts of himself to her that he hadn't shown anyone, ever.

And she and Winchester had been laughing at him the whole time.

My thoughts: How could he assume the worst of Simon, his best friend? Shouldn't the NORMAL reaction would be to give his best friend the benefit of the doubt? Given their extensive history together, you would have thought that Nick would know that Simon wouldn't stoop so low. Also, given that he actually got to know Julia over the days they spent they spent together, I expected him to give her the benefit of the doubt as

well. ESPECIALLY since Simon has hinted so many times that she was suffering. Why didn't he even think, for once, that Julia could be experiencing hell with his family????

I'm sorry, but Nick was not justified at all. He was so **NARROW-MINDED**, so **consumed by angst**, that I wanted nothing more than to punch him in the face.

CAN YOU TRY TO BE LESS SELFISH, NICK? PLEASE FOR FUCK'S SAKE THE WORLD DOES NOT REVOLVE AROUND YOU!!!!!!

After that fuckery, there was no redemption for him. I was killing him in my head with every page.

The other problem with this story was that the justification for the story itself was not convincing. A virgin pretending to be a courtesan without the man knowing it? Umm right. I'm not buying it.

While the writer gave a valiant effort at justifying the story, I'm not convinced. I think I would have been more forgiving if Nick wasn't such a fucking asshole.

Sorry, but yeah, I blame Nick for this 1 star rating. He was awful. Just fucking awful. I have ZERO tolerance for disrespectful, immoral and hypocritical MOTHERFUCKERS like him. He can burn in hell for all I care.

Caz says

I've given this a B at AAR, so 4 stars.

I have to confess that when I read the opening scene of this, Joanna Shupe's début novel, I almost closed the book and picked up something else. In it, the heroine watches her long-estranged husband pleasuring (though not shagging!) another woman in the middle of a game of cards at a very debauched party – which isn't really the sort of thing I expect to read right at the beginning of a romantic novel! But I reasoned that I was probably supposed to think "ew", and kept reading – and I'm glad I did, because **The Courtesan Duchess** turned out to be an engrossing, angsty story which, while not without flaws, was very readable.

Eight years before the book begins, Nicholas Seaton, heir to the Duke of Colton, was blackmailed by his unpleasant, dictatorial father into marrying a sixteen-year-old heiress for her money. Still reeling from the impact of the death of his beloved older brother, and knowing his father quite capable of carrying out his threats, Nick had no alternative but to agree to the scheme. But that was as far as he was prepared to go, and he left the country immediately following the ceremony, leaving his young bride untouched and dependent upon his cold, uncaring parents.

In the years of his absence, Nick has inherited the dukedom and has had no contact with his wife or his family, and wants none. He ignores what his friends tell him of his wife's difficulties, and continues his hedonistic lifestyle with no thought or care for what is going on back in England, where Julia is facing penury. She doesn't want her husband back; she doesn't even know him other than by his reputation as the 'Depraved Duke', but his mother refuses to allow her to live in any of the ducal properties, his cousin is embezzling money from the estate and has drastically reduced her income in an attempt to force her to his bed – and in desperation, she comes up with a last-ditch plan to force the family to provide for her

financially...

You can read the rest of this review at [All About Romance](#) She travels to Venice, where she disguises herself and pretends to be an infamous courtesan, determined to seduce Nick, and get herself pregnant. She reasons that if she is carrying his heir, his miserly mother will be forced to at the very least provide her with an income. I'm not a big fan of the "oops – I shagged you and had no idea of your true identity" type of plotline, but this one is rendered plausible by the fact that the couple didn't know each other before the wedding, Nick was drunk for most of it and Julia was little more than a girl at the time and her appearance has changed somewhat over the years. The bit I found hardest to swallow was the idea that she'd had "lessons" in how to act like a courtesan from London's finest ladybird, one Pearl Kelly, whose words of wisdom can be found at the beginning of each chapter.

Everything goes according to plan, and Julia and Nick spend an idyllic week together, actually getting to know each other out of bed as well as in it. The love scenes are nice and steamy, and the author writes the more tender, romantic scenes very well, showing Julia discovering that her gorgeous husband is not at all the hardened reprobate his nickname would suggest. He's generous, considerate, and quite sweet upon occasion, and before the week is out, she is horrified to discover that she's fallen for him.

When Nick discovers the truth, he is naturally furious, and immediately suspects Julia of having seduced him in order to foist another man's child upon him. The infamous double standard that allows a man to put it about as much as he likes and be patted on the back for it, while a woman who does the same is reviled rears its head – Nick refuses to believe Julia when she tells him the child she is carrying is his and calls her a whore. He sends her away to his estate in the country to await the birth, fully expecting the baby to arrive "early".

During their time apart, however, Nick is brought to see the truth of Julia's situation and to realise that he has behaved very badly towards her. He still can't forgive her for her deception, but he can't forget her either – and he's furious with himself for the fact that he still wants her, in spite of everything.

It's always difficult to like a man who jumps so easily to the worst of conclusions and who is ready to fling horrible insults at a woman who has done nothing that he hasn't done himself. But then, this is an historical romance, and it's a sad fact that women were held to a much higher standard in this regard than men were at the time this story is set. Julia, however, refuses to take Nick's crap, and makes it clear that whatever he believes, she is his duchess and that she deserves his financial support if nothing else – and that once he's sorted all that out, he can bugger off back to Italy with her blessing. But just as Nick discovers the reasons behind Julia's desperation, so does she come to learn more about the circumstances that caused Nick to behave as he did.

The bulk of the story is concerned with how these two emotionally bruised people find their way back to each other, and in spite of Nick's being a git for a large part of it, I did want them to work everything out. As often happens in stories like this, the hero probably doesn't grovel enough. But Julia is no pushover, and struggles between wanting to forgive Nick and wanting to (metaphorically) kick his arse.

The book is well-written and the two principals and major secondary characters are strongly drawn, but the secondary plotline in which someone is out to do mischief to one or both of the Coltons feels like overkill. Nick and Julia have enough to contend with without external threats and the final showdown is rushed and rather too melodramatic for my taste. I also found myself shaking my head at the rather "girly" dialogue occasionally given to the male characters, such as this conversation between Nick's friends Winchester and Quint –

“he fell for her, Quint. I saw it happen. Colton and Julia fell in love in Venice. They were mad for each other – until the guilt overcame her. She didn’t want to hurt him so she left. And it’s only a matter of time before they realise how perfect they are for one another.”

I just can’t hear a man talking like that!

With those few reservations in mind, I’m going to recommend the **The Courtesan Duchess** to anyone looking for a new author to try. It’s been a while since I’ve read a début historical romance that I’ve rated above average, and while this one does have a few flaws, I’m definitely interested in reading more by Ms. Shupe.

WhiskeyintheJar/Kyrarkyker says

1.5 stars

For more quotes and comments - Buddy Read Courtesan Duchess

Hero marries young heroine, leaves before they even consummate wedding night and stays away for YEARS. Why? His father made him get married because he wants to make sure hero continues the family line. Hero does not want to continue line because he hates his father. Why hero didn't just leave before getting married? I don't know.

Heroine is left to the horrible mother-in-law who doesn't live in their home and gets a stipend controlled by the cousin who wants the dukedom to himself. Realizing she has to do something to insure her and her aunt aren't left destitute in the streets by the getting worse cousin. Heroine decides to get hero's friend, who she has becomes friends with too, to bring her to hero in Italy and pretend to be a courtesan and get pregnant, with hopefully a boy so she can gain control of the dukedom's riches.

What follows is a bunch of sex that I skimmed because the insta-lust was immediate and I didn't feel connected or that I knew the hero and heroine to let alone feel connected to them as a couple. I honestly felt the hero was trash and he never redeemed himself. After he finds out the courtesan he was hot for was his wife, he calls her a whore and then thinks she was pregnant by some other dude and was trying to pass it off as his. He stays away from her as we get massive month jumps and only shows up when she goes into labor. He was staying away because if she gave birth too early he would know the baby wasn't his. He never grows to trust the heroine's word.

I do like the set-up of the abandoned wife taking charge to get hers or what seems like in this case, survival but the hero was just absolutely trash. The writing fundamentals were good but wasn't a fan of the plot or characterizations.

Aly is so frigging bored says

3.5*

It was an enjoyable read, I can't say that I was blown away though. I liked both characters, they had flaws and made mistakes and they felt human. That being said, the hero was a complete asshole for at least 50% of the book. Many people know that I liked assholes, but this guy... he couldn't even admit he was mistaken and apologies, that made me rate the book less.

All in all, I enjoyed myself and I'm definitely reading the next one. I'm hoping the author will write the story of the courtesan that Julia studied under, she seemed fascinating.

Cristina says

The blurb says it all.

The H is one cheating bastard that leaves his young wife behind for eight years.

The h is left with no choice but to pretend to be a courtesan to get herself pregnant by the H so she can have use the baby as leverage to get some money,

The funny thing is once the H knew the truth, he was mad she'd tricked him. Give me a break. The girl was 16 when he left her with no money, no word if she was alright.

It was just wasn't my kind of book...

Joanna Loves Reading says

Pros:

1. The writing
2. Spicy sex scenes (calling them love scenes would be inaccurate) (also a con because I listened to some of these at work, my bad)

Bonus: good narration effort by Carmen Rose, whom I was leery to try again after the last experience.

Cons:

1. The Hero a.k.a a jerk ass wanker shithead
2. Not feeling the love (NOT AT ALL)
3. Stupid Villain (utterly, ridiculously stupid and also nonsensical)
4. Plot
5. The only time the h&h's spend together in any sort of agreeable way is in sack. THAT IS THE SUM OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP AND CONNECTION. At least it was good sex?

Buddy read with WhiskeyintheJar/Kyraraker in our first real miss.

Salma says

I love it I LOVE IT SOOO MUCH .. you may predict some of the events still the Author will blow your

mind by other super unexpected things .

Nick & Julia were adorable .. more so were her funny aunt Theo & the incredible Hulk : fitz

Julia's and Nick's best friend Simon was something else i must know his secret so see you in next book Si ;)

Valerie Bowman says

One of the best debuts I've read in years. Joanna Shupe's *The Courtesan Duchess* is fast-paced, compelling, and super sexy. You won't be able to put it down.

Julie says

Check out my other reviews at [Little Miss Bookmark!](#)

OOH!! This is a good one! Okay ... *The Courtesan Duchess*. So very good! First, for those of you that don't know what a courtesan is ... it's basically a prostitute for rich fellas back in the day. It was no secret that dudes went outside of the marriage for ... things that they didn't want the mother of their children to do and/or basically to just be a dog. And it was okay back then, women didn't talk about it, courtesans were just a part of their lives. Well, not that I know for SURE that is how it was done ... that is how it is done in the hundreds of historical romance novels that I have read. Anywho ... this is about a woman named Julia who was basically abandoned by her husband after she said "I do" to him. She just deals with this abandonment for eight very long years. Then she comes up with a plan ... she is going to seduce her husband. She gets all of these tips from a lady of the night on how to seduce him and after she disguises herself, she sets the plan into motion. That's it. And what happens is nothing short of a fabulous read!

I just adored this book from the very first page. I don't know what it was ... the writing style, the characters, the whole premise ... it was just awesome. I loved the sassy gumption that the main character had, it knocked the story up a few pegs. If the characters aren't interesting or if they are just ... normal ... it's not interesting to me. I really didn't have to worry about that with this one. Joanna Shupe did an amazing job of introducing you to the characters but not bogging you down with too much background info on them and just let the reader find out for themselves what really makes each character tick.

The way that the story played out, you were really lead to hate Nick (the husband) and I LOATHED this fictional man with everything I had. I really wanted Julia to make him suffer. I won't say whether she did or not because it's something that you have to experience when you crack the spine on this one. The premise was amazing, the execution was amazing ... the whole damn thing was amazing. I've never read anything by this author but I know that she has quickly become a staple in my life and I'm excited to see what the other two novels in the series are like. If they are anything like this one, I know I'm in for a wild ride!

Inés Izal says

-3.5-

Me ha encantado la idea tan original que tiene la autora para poder juntar a los protagonistas. Es algo muy

novedoso en novela de época, lo que conduce ha escenas muy divertidas.

Peero siempre tiene que haber un pero, y en este caso sería la actitud del Nicholas cuando descubre el pastel. Entiendo su enfado pero nunca es justificable menospreciar tanto a una persona cuando tú llevas ocho años huyendo como un cobarde.

Julia es todo lo que pido en un personaje: valiente, fuerte, decidida y muy sensata.

Pero es muy blanda, yo le habría hecho de sufrir mil horrores antes de condecirle el perdón. (Soy muy rencorosa).

Quizá algo que me ha parecido flojo ha sido el misterio del "malo", pues con las pistas que daba, lo vi claro cien páginas antes de terminar.

Me quedo con una buena sensación y esperando por su continuación. Tengo muchas ganas de conocer la historia de Simon.

Grecia Robles says

4 STARS

Me gustó mucho y se me hizo muy diferente a otros libros de histórica que he leído sobre todo por la protagonista que ya estamos acostumbrados a que sean recatadas tímidas inocentes y sobre todo en la intimidad, pero Julia no lo es al menos tuvo que dejar de serlo para poder seducir a su marido que en cuanto se casó con ella la abandonó por 8 años y ella está desesperada y quiere lo único que el puede darle un hijo que garantice su estabilidad económica; lo hace con ayuda de su amigo Simon haciéndose pasar por una Cortesana.

Tuve muchas ganas de pegarle a Nick por todas las bobadas y tonterías que dijo e hizo cuando se enteró que su querida Juliet era nada más y menos que su esposa, se me hizo egoísta que sólo pensaba en el mismo, pero yo tengo esa vena masoquista y a la vez sádica me gusta cuando ellos se portan como unos patanes pero cuando se dan cuenta de su error se tiene que arrastrar por el perdón, me hubiera gustado un poco más de sufrimiento pero bueee...

También tuvo sus parte de misterio y villanos medio psycho como la cuñada que mira que tengo ojo y siempre sospeche de ella.

Espero pronto leer el siguiente libro y que pronto publiquen el libro de Quint y la amiga de Julia.

Stacey is Sassy says

DNF at 35% no rating as I did not finish.

Well, my first attempt using my new Romance Package from Audible was unfortunately not to my liking. I checked out a few reviews and saw that I wasn't alone. Now, unlike others, I kind of knew that I'd be meeting a douchewaffle hero who has no respect for his wedding vows. Where I differ, is that it wasn't my biggest problem (it was a problem, just not my biggest problem). Unfortunately, the narration, mixed with the storyline didn't work. Now, I actually liked the narrator's voice and think she did an OK job, but her reading the sex scenes made my skin crawl.

Now, talking about the sex scenes...it was described as "sweet" on Audible. Bloody Hell!! If that's sweet, I'd love to see what steamy was like. The hero was smarmy and lecherous and not at all what I'm used to in my Historical Romance reads. I don't mind sexy and dirty talk but this did not get my heart pumping or turn me on at all. I suppose the justification was that he thought he was talking to a courtesan?!?

Can't say I'm a fan of the hero and I don't think the rest of the story was long enough to be able to convince me that he could change his spots. I'll pass on *The Courtesan Duchess* and go searching for something else.

Quite a few positive reviews so don't judge this story on my review alone. Also, keep in mind that I was listening not reading. It may have been a better experience if I didn't have to "hear" him.

Feminista says

What a disgusting plot.

This is definitely one of the worst books I have ever read.

The hero marries the heroine and then leaves her and sleeps with countless other women. The heroine being a good girl, remains faithful and a virgin and decides to beget an heir from her husband because while her husband is around gallivanting, she will do the right thing and not sleep with another man.

Then the hero finds out that the courtesan he sleeps with is really his wife. He gets angry because he thinks that she was not a virgin when she came to him and that she is carrying another man's baby. He tells her that she won't give the bastard that she is carrying his name. So what, his wife is supposed to die a virgin? Not be with any other man, but remain faithful to him until the end of her days, while he is out sleeping with god knows how many women and doing god knows what.

What was really disgusting was that after a little sex, the heroine fell in love with him. I am not kidding. A little sex and everything is all love and sunshine and puppies. Forget about the way he treated her and their wedding vows. Oh, no everything is forgiven because he only left to teach his father a lesson. He HAD A REASON, everyone. Who cares that he left behind his wife, an innocent who married him and whose life he ruined by leaving, because a wife during those historical times had little power, she would not be able to marry another man and hell he called her a whore because he thought she slept with another man. So what was she supposed to do with the rest of her life? Knit (not that I have anything against knitting) and aimlessly wander through life waiting for her husband to come back. If it was up to him, he would have selfishly ruined a woman's life in his quest for revenge. But hey, love forgives everything.

Pepa says

No se puede decir que el argumento no sea original, aunque más que nada la primera mitad de la historia, luego ya se ve venir por dónde van los tiros. Aunque admito que al final la autora todavía guarda un par de giros.

Es una historia que me ha gustado, sobre todo ella y su determinación y valor. Yo hubiera sido más mala persona al final, pero es una historia de amor jajaja. Él no me ha caído muy bien, sí es simpático y guapetón y luego pasa a engrosar las filas de los típicos libertinos –no digo más- .

Le faltan unas cuantas collejas bien dadas.

Hay buenos secundarios que son los protagonistas de la ¿trilogía?

Un estilo sencillo pero bastante cuidado, con algunas frases «raras» creo que fruto de la traducción. Ritmo ágil y con buenos giros.

Reseña completa: <http://masromance.blogspot.com.es/201...>
