



The Viscount Needs a Wife

Jo Beverley

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The *New York Times* bestselling author of *Too Dangerous for a Lady* returns with another roguishly delicious Regency romance...

Since being widowed two years ago, Kitty Cateril has been trapped in her late husband's home, where she is expected to mourn forever. Desperate to escape, Kitty will consider any option—even a hasty marriage to a stranger with no intention of abandoning his bachelor ways.

London life suits Beau Braydon, especially his work keeping Britain safe. So when he inherits the title of Viscount Dauntry, he has no intention of resettling on a rural estate. He can't resist the opportunity to marry a sensible widow who can manage Beauchamp Abbey for him—until he realizes Kitty is more than he bargained for...

Before Kitty and Dauntry can adjust to each other, a threat to the royal family takes them to London. Soon someone is determined to prevent Dauntry from exposing the villain, and secrets in Kitty's past threaten their growing love...

The Viscount Needs a Wife Details

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Author : Jo Beverley

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From Reader Review The Viscount Needs a Wife for online ebook

Pam says

This is a standalone regency romance filled with historic lore. The author takes us on a journey through a difficult time in England when the country was in mourning and vulnerable, she weaves a timeless romance with intriguing characters for all to enjoy.

Kitty Cateril has been a widow for several years and is currently living with her in-laws. Her mother-in-law is still mourning her son and expects the same from Kitty, but Kitty is ready to live again. She met her husband after he was injured in the war and although they seemed to have a happy marriage, by the end he was jealous and angry and often took it out on her. Her best friend Ruth has a proposition for her; a neighbor has just become the new Viscount Dauntry and he needs a wife to help manage the large Abby he inherited, which includes the mother and daughter of the deceased Viscount, all who are making his life miserable.

Beau Braydon does not want the life of a country Viscount, he would rather spend his time in London but when he finds out about his long lost cousin, he agrees to the title. However he needs someone in place to live in the country while he goes back to London, and he finds a willing widow with Kitty. There are misunderstandings prior to the marriage but they find they are very compatible. But because of a crisis, they have to travel to London unexpectedly and are surrounded by espionage, mysteries and danger; they must find their way toward the truth while falling in love.

This is a book that sucks you in with the author's writing skill and her character creations. I have enjoyed many of Ms. Beverly's books in the past and although there are Rogue sightings, this is a standalone story that brings the regency era to life.

Kitty is suffocating as she lives with her in-laws and is very grateful her friend Ruth gave her an out. And like the prepared person she is, she asks a lot of questions and goes into this marriage with her eyes wide open. We find out slowly how hard her first marriage was toward the end and I like how she wants to make this work, even traveling with him to London when he clearly believes she should stay home. They are very compatible both in bed and out, and enjoy getting to know each other.

Braydon is very stern in the beginning, only wants a wife to keep the Abby running smoothly but is happy with Kitty from the beginning. He knows that he will be returning to London and will rarely travel to the country and is unsure of what to think about Kitty when she wants to go with him. While in London he finds out that she is very well liked by the service men who frequently visited Kitty and her husband's home, this starts to bother him as he realizes his feelings for her are growing.

At this timeline, London is in mourning because of Princess Charlotte who died in childbirth, and with the added crisis surrounding several princes, the danger is ramped up. Also Kitty is bound and determined to solve a mystery about the previous Viscount and his wife, and what she finds will change their lives forever.

The pace of the story is a bit slower as the author takes her time developing each scene and the romance between these two. For the most part she stays true to the times of post Napoleonic War, where many are coming back broken in both body and mind and the area is in a state of unrest. I love how compassionate Kitty is toward the soldiers, one of the reasons so many like her. I enjoyed the secondary characters the author introduces us to and the additional storylines that round out this book. This is a wonderful historical romance for those that like intrigue set in the regency era.

Lindap says

3 Stars

The storyline was decent and I did enjoy the strong characters. However, the time span between marriage and love was soooo short. They married and the next day Braydon had to return to London. Kitty went with him. Upon getting ready to return to the Abbey she gives him a 1 week anniversary-of-marriage gift...1 week between their I do's and oozing love. After that point Jo Beverly had us tripping over so much information in the epilogue to achieve a speedy ending. The one wrinkle I felt as I was reading about their time in London was all the shopping she was doing. So much so they talked about needing a second carriage for the turn ride to the Abbey...not to mention all the big items she sent ahead. I just don't know if a newly minted Viscount, who's only been one a very short time, and is still investigating where the expenses are going, would open his purse strings that wide and so quickly after marrying someone he's still getting to know. Yes, he had his own money before hand, but still. Maybe it's just me...

Sherry says

Whenever I read a historical romance by Jo Beverley, I know I'm going to get a well-written, well-plotted story peopled by likeable characters, and this book is no exception.

The plot in this novel revolves around a marriage of convenience. Kitty Cateril has been trapped in the role of mourning widow by her grieving mother-in-law for almost two years after her ex-soldier husband's death. She desperately wants a change, and so when an opportunity to marry offers itself, she decides she must grab at the chance. Beau Braydon, the viscount of the book's title, needs a wife to manage the country estate that goes along with the title he has unexpectedly inherited, since he is firmly committed to a life in London. Acquiring a wife quickly would be preferable, since the former viscount's remaining family are pressuring him to marry his predecessor's teenage daughter. In spite of a bit of a rocky start, both Kitty and Braydon decide to move ahead with their marriage. As they get to know each other, each of them realizes that they have been very lucky to find each other, because they have passion and the potential for friendship—and maybe even more.

This is the story of two reasonable people determined to make the best of the situation each of them freely chose. While there are some passionate encounters between the two, there isn't a lot of grand emotion here. Instead, it's a quiet story of discovering love unexpectedly.

The story doesn't have a lot of action, with the focus mostly on the interactions of the two main characters as they work out the details of their relationship and domestic lives. The synopsis mentions a threat to the royal family, but the sleuthing that Braydon does into who's behind the threat reveals that it isn't at all what it seems. A secondary mystery revolving around the former viscount's wife, who ran off with an actor and abandoned the family, also comes to a relatively gentle resolution.

Readers who enjoy romances with a lot of dramatic action and emotion might find this book a bit boring.

However, readers who, like me, enjoy marriage of convenience stories where the focus is really on the hero and heroine coming to terms with being married to a relative stranger will appreciate this novel.

An ARC of this novel was provided by the publisher through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Critterbee✱ says

This is the first Jo Beverley title that I have read, but I have heard many positive reviews of her work, so I decided to read *The Viscount Needs a Wife*. I enjoy historical fiction, and have strong opinions about historical romance. Happily for me, I thoroughly enjoyed this book.

The writing style was smooth and confident, with no noticeable inconsistencies. The characters were realistic and very likable. There were two separate mysterious story lines which were resolved in a very satisfying manner. The author played a little with historical events, but in a way that I found interesting rather than annoying.

Also, only after reading the author's note did I realize that several characters from previous books made appearances. They appeared in natural ways, not in the manner that I have seen too often in other author's works, where I recognize that they must have been previous characters from their unreasonably instant intimacy with the hero or heroine.

Without spoilers, it is hard to further explain exactly why the book was such a good read. Still, I can safely say that I was very happy with the ending, and really enjoyed this read. Three and a half stars, rounded up to 4 because of the skillful storytelling.

****eARC Netgalley****

Sophia says

Once again the author tackles difficult subjects while offering an engaging romance and a teaser of a problem for the hero and heroine to solve. It was captivating, thought provoking, and sigh-worthy.

This book can stand alone easily. For those who have read the older *Company of Rogues* books there will be familiar faces, but for those who have not, the story won't feel like the reader is missing something. The author added a note at the back that she is most definitely veering into new territory from now on out with the *Rogues* taking a back seat and new characters and their situations moving to the forefront.

Kitty Cateril has been a widow for two years and has been living with her late husband's family on their country estate. Her mother in law keeps everyone in the deepest mourning and it is slowly stifling young-hearted Kitty. Kitty loved Marcus and grieved when he died, but her marriage had not been easy especially when wounded Marcus was in severe pain or his new helplessness got to him. He was a man, war hero that he was, but not a saint. Now she feels like she has to get away or go mad, but she has no where to go unless she accepts a position as a governess or companion.

A means of escape comes her way in an unorthodox manner. Viscount Dauntry, is in need of a wife. He is

clear and precise about his expectations. She will have the running of the Dauntry's country estate and charge over the recalcitrant women folk of the former Viscount's. All this so he can live in town and go on with his life there. Kitty has her reservations, but this is as good an opportunity to escape as any. And maybe it won't be so bad with an absentee husband and a difficult project to manage.

Braydon never wanted the Viscountcy and now he's stuck with it. He has the Fifth Viscount's haughty, stubborn mother and the man's sullen daughter hating that he now controls their future and has stepped into someone else's shoes. Braydon has work still to do for the Crown and he prefers city life, but he has to get the affairs of the estate, the smaller estates, and the family in order because he will not shirk duty even if he doesn't like it. He needs a wife and has no time to shop around town for one because there would be expectations. The friend of the vicar's wife seems ideal as describe- capable, responsible, widowed, no money or prospects, poor current situation that will make her willing to marry quickly... perfect.

And what Braydon gets is a fiery-haired, spontaneous, strong-willed woman who treats any discussion like a battle and, barriers like challenges. But she is also giving and compassionate and full of life. Too bad she won't suit. But...

Braydon, for the first time in his life, whimsically does the unexpected by bringing Kitty home as his bride. What shouldn't be now is and both of them feel the pull and the challenge to change the arrangements to something a bit more than convenient.

This one kept me off balance somewhat. This story is a swirl of elements with a blend of history, mystery, and romance. I don't know if it was purposeful, but there were some sly references to young impressionable ladies reading too many gothic tales. Northanger Abbey anybody?

The story is long, but it only lags a few times and not for long. It takes some time establishing matters and developing the main plot, but there are a few subplots as well.

But, the story isn't merely a romance with some history and mystery tossed in. The themes of this story give it depth and they are true to the time and place of the post Napoleonic War and Regency era. It addresses: people coming back from war broken in more than body, coming back to figuring out how to live in peace after war (No Vet organizations or hospitals or counselors), living with grief and how to properly mourn, how primogeniture of males inheriting titles and wealth can leave mothers, wives, and daughters fearful of their future, divorce and separation during that time, what it's like to marry a practical stranger for a marriage of convenience, the hidden world behind closed doors of spousal abuse, women's role in the marriage, home, and society. So much gets touched on.

But probably the biggest draw are the two main characters- Kitty and Braydon.

Early on, I thought for sure that the heroine and I just were not going to suit. She comes across a certain way and the reader is purposefully led to form these conclusions until the layers of Kitty's past are revealed and suddenly her thought processes, warring nature, and prejudices make some sense. Kitty is an independent, strong-willed woman. This is a strength, but also a weakness for her because her temper and emotions lead her and, with all that indomitable will, she has to be careful to rein it in when a cool head is needed. She formed an early impression of Braydon just as he did with her. Both were mostly wrong, but also right. Braydon tends to gather his facts before he speaks while Kitty makes facts fit her opinions. So when Braydon calmly sets organized plans in motion without consulting her, but on the other hand, also hears her out and heeds her advice and words, it stops her in her tracks just like when Kitty's intuitive and out of the box thinking comes into play, Braydon learns the value of her differences.

The marriage of convenience trope is handled well in this story. I had no trouble believing in the romance because the author doesn't rush it along and she makes sure the difficulties as well as the slow-build

attraction are there.

It was an interesting dynamic that Kitty is a widow who tends to want to take charge in the bedroom just as she does in all other aspects of her life. It occurs to her belatedly that Braydon also likes the leader role and might not prefer a wife as fiery and passionate in the bedroom. She worries what impression this is making on Braydon especially since Braydon has encountered several military men who were part of the Kit Kat social club and remember her warmly to him and he finds her more than once in a circle of all men who obviously admire her. But Braydon surprises her again in that he treasures her passion and shows her that he isn't made of ice and marble like she thinks. Watching them get to know each other and appreciate each other is the best part of this story.

There were some family secrets that are nosed out and Braydon has a mission. The family secrets and Kitty's investigation were more interesting than Braydon's. Truthfully, I found the investigation he had to conduct was the least interesting part of the book and I was eager to get back to other things.

And for those who are Rogues fans, there were some appearances, Hal and Blanche, Stephen and Laura, and Charrington. Briefly in a few scenes with no big roles, but fun to spot them.

In summary, I found this a compelling historical romance that had unique elements, engaging characters, and spicy slow-burn romance.

My thanks to Penguin Group for the opportunity to read this book in exchange for an honest review.

Patricia Rice says

Full disclosure--the author is a friend and colleague and I'm a fan of hers.

Truly one of the most delightful Regencies I've read in a long time! As always, Jo Beverley smoothly lays down historical detail as a carpet for her protagonists to dance across. The history is unobtrusive but a solid foundation for plot and character. She takes a favorite romance meme of the ice king and fiery queen and turns them into more, bringing them to life and love and surrounding them with real people to encourage them. The theme of mourning and mothers fits with the time period of Princess Charlotte's death in childbirth, and readers will love the very real emotions of the hero and heroine warily doing their duty, and eventually rewarded so wonderfully!

1-Click Addict Support Group says

I felt as if this entire book was a gossiping conversation among friends. The dialogue felt so natural, and flowed in such a similar way to a personal chat, that I just slipped right in and felt as if I were there. The way the topics ran, the way it gave you the information you needed to understand the relationship between the characters. It was funny, it was real, it was just so lovely.

The scenes were so well set as well. Never over the top, each included sensory descriptions more than physical ones. The way a couch felt, the way a room smelled. The difference between hard, slippery marble floors and the plush rugs of a bedroom. I would pull myself from the pages surprised to still be in the real world. It was that captivating.

The romance was a pleasure to read all on its own. Kitty is a realist. She knows what to expect going in to what is basically a marriage of convenience. She doesn't get all doe-eyed and hurt at the idea that he doesn't love her. Braydon isn't a cynical ass either. Well, not overly. He has a couple moments of refusing to love, but nothing that involves storming out and raging fights. It's all very adult, and full of mutual respect and enjoying each other's company.

Their realistic attitude about two adults consenting to a sexual relationship was also really fun to read about in such a well-played historical. Kitty is a widow, so no prudish or frightened virgin. She is a woman, and she appreciates that she has needs. Her husband appreciates this, and their bedtime relationship matures much more quickly than their love. It was the love that was a slow burn, blossoming from a mutual respect, to a friendship, to a real love match.

The history happening around the main story was fascinating. The culture, the intrigue, and the mourning of a princess. The notes in the back about the accuracy and the liberties taken made it all seem so real, and extremely enlightening.

I couldn't read this book quickly enough, and couldn't stop talking about it to everyone around me, as I laughed and sighed out loud. I immediately stalked the author, intent on eventually reading everything else she has ever written. I can't wait to disappear again into one of her lush stories. ~ George, 5 stars

Sherwood Smith says

Copy received courtesy of NetGalley

Jo Beverley is one of the writers I think of as the heirs to Georgette Heyer. She has internalized Heyer's distinctive style of Regency language thoroughly, skillfully blending it with modern speech so that it's immediately accessible to today's reader unused to actual period style. Take the title, *The Viscount Needs a Wife*; in period, the word 'want' meant 'need.' But that would change the meaning for modern readers unaware of that.

Beverley has also modernized the Regency romance in the sense that the bedroom door does not shut when the arranged marriage here between the new Viscount (who prefers to be called Braydon, his last name) and our heroine Kitty takes place. In fact, their sexual compatibility is actually an important part of the plot in the sense of two strangers setting about getting to know one another in the most practical way imaginable.

The new viscount is in want of a sturdy, practical, strong-willed wife to take over the Abbey that he inherited along with the title, which includes the Dowager Viscountess, who hates his guts, and her granddaughter, who uses her seventeen-year-old wiles against the viscount at the orders of her granny.

Braydon also has a secret avocation: he is in essence a part of MI5 100 years before it was invented. And there is a plot against three of the royal princes that must be investigated with delicacy, as post-Waterloo has brought unrest to England.

Meanwhile Kitty Cateril is a widow, constrained by her grieving mother-in-law to in essence bury herself. A letter from her school friend, happily married to the vicar in charge of the parish the viscount now lives in, brings Kitty for a visit to meet a man who needs a wife quickly, one without a lot of relatives and baggage.

The setup is a bit contrived, but Beverley gets so much character development going that the reader is willing to go along for the ride if she enjoys the arranged marriage trope. The story develops at a leisurely pace, taking time to paint the scenery and furnish lovely period details about caps, hats, servants, the bells of London, etc. Beverley knows the period, and the world-building shows it.

The pacing continues to move along leisurely as we learn that not one but two mysteries face our newlyweds. Meanwhile, they are trying to get to know one another, and to respect one another, as well as pursue compatibility in the boudoir.

I guessed the probability of one mystery, and was taken by surprise by the other; I think contemporary readers will be pleased with this couple, and with the story. Some of the personal conflicts resolved very quickly, but I prefer that to melodramatic angst and misunderstanding dragging on for pages, and Braydon was interesting without being an alpha “dukebag”—a character type I avoid.

Anna's Herding Cats says

Reviewed for herding cats & burning soup.

Amazon: <http://amzn.to/1s20dW6>

Okay, okay. I know. It's Book 17. I know! Do. Not. Panic! It works totally fine as a stand alone. Promise!

The Viscount Needs a Wife was a hefty book at over 400 pages but I flew through them and was completely wrapped up in the lives of Kitty and Braydon as the two come to an arrangement. She's in need of an escape from her deceased husband's very controlling family and he's in need of a wife to help him handle his newly acquired title as a Viscount and the two quarrelsome women who came along with it--the mother and daughter of the former Viscount. And so two strangers with only a mutual friendship with a local couple become husband and wife days after meeting and set out to conquer their new life together. Difficult women, mysterious disappearances and plots against the Crown included.

I loved these two! Braydon and Kitty are both somewhat hesitant about their new lots in life but I loved their spirit and how they were together-- when things were going well AND when they clashed. She's fiery and bold and he's rather proper and buttoned up at times but oh they worked. They had delightful banter and it felt genuine. They could rub along well and then suddenly tempers flaring and insecurities sneaking in since they honestly did not know each other at all or how to react to some things. I kind of liked that and seeing the two of them trying to get used to having someone so significant and new in their lives. And oh they did have nice chemistry together which made for some deliciously heated moments. The romance was just lovely.

There was an abundance of intriguing outside issues that pulled me along too.

---Struggles with the former Viscount's crabby and domineering mother who was making everyone's life hell and had me rooting for a good set down on Kitty's part.

---The added mystery of what happened to the former Viscount's wife. She'd disappeared years earlier and

the scandalous mystery so intrigued Kitty.

---And then Braydon's time spent trying to help uncover a murderous plot against three of the royal princes.

---Everything blended together wonderfully. I liked all of the outside elements and seeing Kitty and Braydon work together on all of it. It was just fun seeing the two of them out of their elements but finding their stride together.

Now, I did start to think--wow there is no way this will have a satisfying end on all parts--since the book was quickly ending and so many things left to deal with but Beverley pulled it off with style and left me delighted and in some cases a bit surprised with how things turned out.

I could have easily spent another 400 pages with Kitty and Braydon but I loved how things ended for them and have a hope they'll be spotted in one of the future books and we'll get to see how their life together is going. Well done! The Viscount Needs a Wife was thrilling and deliciously romantic. I'm definitely a new fan.

Susan says

Good book. Kitty and Braydon are both trapped in lives they don't want. Kitty had been married to a wounded war hero who has since died. His mother has made grieving an art form and, with no place else to go, Kitty is stuck mourning a man long gone. She is desperate to find a way out, even if it means finding a position as a governess. Then a good friend tells her of a man who is in need of a wife to care for his home and family members.

Braydon never expected to inherit a title. He was quite happy with his bachelor life in London, with its parties, beautiful women, and his occasional work for the government. Inheriting the title also means inheriting the previous viscount's domineering mother and spoiled daughter. He has no interest in settling in the country, and asks for help finding a wife who will do it for him.

The initial meeting between Kitty and Braydon doesn't go well. She isn't anything like what he had pictured and he is certain that she would not be up to the challenges ahead. Kitty found him to be rather cold. But both are quite clever, and in their first official encounter have quite the battle of wits to get the other to withdraw from the arrangement. Instead, they discover a growing connection, one that surprises them both. Braydon begins by trying to avoid it, seeing a complication he doesn't want. Kitty is simply wary of risking her heart again.

In spite of their misgivings, they follow through on their plan. I loved seeing them get to know each other. Kitty is strong, independent and quite clever, with a tendency to speak/act on her instincts rather than thinking about them first. She is also vivacious and social, and in her previous marriage had a large group of friends, many of whom were her husband's soldier friends. Her friendships with these men puts a little bit of a strain on her marriage to Braydon, until he can deal with his unexpected jealousy. Braydon is also clever, aided by a nearly photographic memory. His work for the government is important to him, and he refuses to give it up just because his circumstances have changed. I liked his willingness to include Kitty in what was going on, as he discovered that she had a different perspective on events. I found his unwillingness to get involved in his estates a little disconcerting. As the days go on, their attraction and growing friendship begins deepen. Though neither had had any intention of letting their emotions get involved, there didn't seem to be

any way to stop it. There was no great disaster or danger that exposed their feelings, just the growing realization that they wanted more.

There were a couple of mysteries running through the book. First was the attempted attack on three of the royal princes that brought Braydon back to London. His assignment is to find out who is behind it. His work on this shows some of the problems that plagued England at the time, such as a poor economy, what to do with returning soldiers, and the growing strife between the classes. What he discovered surprised him and threw a different light on the problem. Also going on was a look into a family secret. The previous viscount's wife had run off, but never been divorced. Kitty wants to know what happened to her. In their search for that information, something else is discovered that will have an unexpected effect on their future. I thoroughly enjoyed how that one worked out.

While there wasn't any real intensity to either mystery, unlike in some previous books in the series, it was still very well done and kept me hooked from first page to last.

Jacob Proffitt says

A delightful regency romance with an unusual hero and a great heroine. I liked both immensely, but once again, work commitments have kept me from reviewing it for a week. I'll note two things and be content.

First, while the 17th(!) in a series, there's really no intrusion on the story, here. I had no trouble being fully engaged and while there are hints of interesting characters on the fringe, I didn't feel the lack of having their complete stories.

Second, this totally piqued my interest in Jo Beverly. I've avoided her because her series are huge at this point and have gone on for decades. It has been my sad experience that with long-standing romance authors I enjoy their more recent works much more than their earlier ones and that conflicts with my hatred of starting in the middle. But this was *so very good* that I determined to experiment further. So I already have another under my belt chosen from the middle of a different series and to cut this short, I'm now looking for the beginning. I can't wait to get to know her work better and I truly hope the early works don't suck.

A note about Steamy: Yeah, it's been a while, but I remember there are only a couple explicit sex scenes and that they lent themselves well to the story. So the middle of my steam tolerance and well done.

Caz says

I've given this a C+ at AAR, so 3.5 stars.

Although set within her *Company of Rogues* universe, Jo Beverley's most recent novels have introduced new characters who are not part of the Rogues' "inner circle", even though some of the Rogues have made cameo appearances or been mentioned. This latest story, **The Viscount Needs a Wife** features a character who appeared in the previous book in the series, *Too Dangerous For a Lady*, when he appeared as a friend and colleague of the hero and was instrumental in helping to foil a plot to blow up the Palace of Westminster.

Beau Braydon has found himself unexpectedly elevated to a viscountcy he had no idea he was in line for and

doesn't want. Now Viscount Dauntry, he has inherited title, estates, wealth... and an extremely unpleasant dowager and her granddaughter (mother and daughter respectively of the previous incumbent) both of whom are still in residence at Beauchamp Abbey and who are seemingly immovable. A former army officer, Braydon's intelligence, perfect memory and his ability to move freely about society have made him invaluable in the government's search for the seditionists and would-be revolutionaries who have sprung up in England following the Napoleonic Wars. His work doesn't leave Braydon a lot of time to spend trying to placate the two angry and resentful women he has been saddled with, and besides, he's not someone who enjoys country living. He needs someone to run the Abbey on a day to day basis, and who will also be able to deal with the dowager and Isabella – and decides he needs a wife. Not having the time to embark upon a traditional courtship, Braydon instead mentions his plan to a friend, whose wife suggests her friend, Kitty Cateril, the young widow of an army officer.

Kitty's husband was seriously wounded before she married him, but she loved him, even though their marriage had become increasingly difficult over the years. Now, however, she is suffocating under the weight of her mother-in-law's grief; even though Marcus has been dead for two years, she refuses to put off her blacks, made Kitty's life miserable when she went into half-mourning and basically expects Kitty to live as though she had died along with her husband. So when a letter from her best friend asks Kitty to consider the idea of re-marrying, she can't help but be energized at the prospect of escaping the dreary life to which her mother-in-law wants to consign her.

Kitty can't believe she's considering the idea of marrying a man she has never met, but freedom beckons and she determines to make a good impression. She's been told that the viscount wants a sensible, reliable wife, one who will manage his estates and his relatives, and live quietly in the country. Kitty is sure she'll be able to manage his household, but thinks that perhaps her friend hasn't told Braydon everything. Kitty isn't exactly the shy, retiring type; she's naturally vivacious and light-hearted, so when the viscount comes across her unexpectedly, romping across the fields with her dog, she thinks she's ruined her chance of escape.

But while Kitty and Braydon don't get off to the best of starts, there's definitely a strong attraction there, and, as Braydon has pressing business in London and no time to change his mind, the wedding goes ahead as planned.

Two strangers getting married and having to adjust to a life together is a storyline that always appeals to me, and having enjoyed meeting Braydon in the previous book, I was looking forward to reading more about him in this one. As was the case in *Too Dangerous for a Lady* Ms Beverley's research is impeccable and she has created an interesting story which makes excellent use of the historical background of the very unsettled political situation in the late Regency period. The gap between rich and poor was enormous, the Regent was expensive, ineffectual and despised, and those in power were still sensible of what had happened in France not so many years earlier and were worried about revolution. Braydon is called in by Lord Sidmouth, the Home Secretary, to assist in the investigation of a recently uncovered plot to assassinate three of the royal princes.

The problem, though, is that while all this is well put-together and makes for an interesting read, the romance and central characters are rather underdeveloped. For one thing, the whole story takes place over a very short time period – Kitty and Braydon have been married for only three or four days by the end of the book, and we're asked to believe in their respective "I love you"s when just a week earlier, they had no idea the other existed. Ms Beverley does a nice job in showing an affectionate companionship developing between them, and I rather liked Braydon's willingness to confide in Kitty and that he doesn't try to shut her out from his work, but it still happens too quickly for it to be believable. The plot-driven nature of the book also doesn't allow for much character development. Braydon is rather bland overall – he has something akin to a

photographic memory, is handsome, charming and clever – but his character lacks depth. Kitty is a sketched out a little more fully; lively, quick witted and determined, she's more than up to the task of dealing with Braydon's difficult relatives and the author adds nuance to her character through the little glimpses we get of her previous married life. But ultimately, neither of them is especially memorable which makes it difficult to get a sense of exactly why – apart from desire and expediency – they would fall for each other.

The Viscount Needs a Wife is as well-researched and well-written as one would expect from such an experienced author, but the romance is lacking. In my review of the previous book, I expressed similar reservations, but was able to recommend it because the historical background and story were so interesting. While that is true to an extent here, the storyline isn't quite so compelling, which makes the deficiencies in the central relationship all the more obvious. If you're looking for a well-told story in which the romance takes a back seat, then you might enjoy this, but I can't really recommend it if you're looking for an emotionally satisfying romance.

Desi says

I love that all the story lines wrapped up sensibly and without true malice. Though the tension was certainly present at the start. The main relationship was beautifully portrayed and had such surprising depth that I find it hard to conceive that the timeframe was a little over a week, and I do wish that that had been conveyed as quite a bit longer.

Overall a soothing, sensible and balanced work, with endearing characters, who confront issues before they grow out of proportion and who had actual, interesting and witty, conversations with each other. Lovely incorporation of historical fact as usual.

Alison says

Kitty Cateril's husband died two years ago and since then she has been living with her in-laws in a state of perpetual mourning. When her best friend writes to say that a local nobleman is looking for a wife to manage his country estates, Kitty feels that anything is better than her current life.

has been trapped in her late husband's home, where she is expected to mourn forever. Desperate to escape, Kitty will consider any option—even a hasty marriage to a stranger with no intention of abandoning his bachelor ways.

Viscount Dauntry, formerly Beau Braydon, has only recently inherited the lands and title after the death of the previous Viscount and his son. More accustomed to London life and his role as a government spy, he wants to find a wife to Beauchamp Abbey for him together with the Dowager Lady Dauntry and her granddaughter Isabella who live there.

Despite a bad first impression Kitty and Braydon agree to marry but soon they realise that a cold-blooded agreement doesn't quite work in practice. Then, Braydon is called back to London to investigate an attempt to assassinate three royal princes and suddenly the two of them are investigating more than just a plot against the monarchy.

Loved it. One of my favourite tropes, one of my favourite authors, not a thing to complain about.

Carol Storm says

I did not finish this one. I didn't have the heart. Jo Beverley is gone!

I met her once, you know. Back in 1998 I was on my way home from my teaching year in Japan and I had a stopover in Victoria. When I ran into her at a local bookstore I recognized her right away. It was unbelievably gracious of her to sit down and have tea with me at a nearby cafe! While we were eating we started talking about my favorite characters and scenes in *TEMPTING FORTUNE*, and I started describing all the stuff I imagined could have happened to those same characters in other stories. Jo Beverley looked at me in that tough, English, no B.S. way she had and said, "have you written any of this? Because you should."

When it comes to dealing with fans and aspiring authors, romance novelists are, as a group, almost always very classy people. Jo Beverley was the classiest of them all!
