



## An Illicit Engagement

*Cecilia Gray*

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## **An Illicit Engagement** Cecilia Gray

Lord Lucas Willoughby earned his moniker as the Matchmaking Baron after his six engagements ended with each lady happily wed - to someone else. He swears off marriage proposals, until his headstrong neighbor proposes something else entirely.

Chastity Drummond has her sights set on a man who barely sees her as a woman much less a potential wife. She can't seem to get him on bended knee, but knows an engagement to the Matchmaking Baron will turn his head.

Lucas and Chastity's charade takes on a life of its. As feigned attraction becomes real, they wonder if they might already be perfectly matched.

Their illicit engagement will inevitably end in marriage – but to whom?

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Don't miss The Gentlemen Next Door series, because sometimes a lady in need of love need look no further than next door. The Gentlemen Next Door Series are historical regency romance novellas.

## **An Illicit Engagement Details**

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Author : Cecilia Gray

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# **From Reader Review An Illicit Engagement for online ebook**

## **Maria says**

This one made me chuckle, which was good. I still would have wanted more passionate descriptive scenes. Lord Lucas Willoughby has been successful in having six engagements, but never fulfilling them, because the women have married other men.

Chastity Drummond has had her sights on him for some time now. She proposes an illicit engagement to prompt a different gentleman to want her. Will it work to bring Lord Lucas around?

It ended to abrupt for me though, there was so much more areas to tap into.

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## **KyBunnies says**

This is a delightful book that is the second in The Gentlemen Next Door series by Ms. Gray. Please be aware this review may contain spoilers.

This book is about Chastity who we briefly met in the first book, A Delightful Arrangement.

Chastity is determined to marry someone who will make sure that her father's shipping empire will succeed another generation. Chastity is determined that Mr. Highster is the man for the job. What Chastity does not realize is that Lucas, Lord Willoughby who is a Baron.

Lucas is also known as "Matchmaking Baron" since he has had 6 betrothed that married other men who came into lots of money. His last betrothed went to marry his older brother. So Lucas is a little mad about all of this.

Chastity has ask Lucas to pretend to be betrothed to her so she can get the attention of Mr. Highster. Chastity believes this is the only man who can save and restore her father's shipping empire.

As like in the first of this series the author did not use the correct wording for the period I have taken off one carrot for this. But this is still a wonderful book and a great read. The two books in this series can both be read in about an hour.

The bunnies and I give this book 4 Carrots.

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## **Beyond the Pages says**

Lucas and Chastity were such fun characters to get to know. I loved the slow but steady build in their relationship. I appreciated how they each had their eyes opened to the possibility of a true love match. Initially I thought Lucas was caught up in a self-pitying role, but I was so wrong. He wanted to want. What a



phenomenal line. (Thanks, Cecilia!) Chastity, on the other hand, was a very determined, very driven, very crafty woman who was quite intelligent. One could see that from the get go. I love strength of character in my heroines, so Chastity was perfect. (Thanks, Cecilia!) Lastly, I must say that I simply adored the passionate chemistry that these two had. The slow building led to that wonderful ending. Most excellent!!!

Rating: 5/5

Recommend: Yes

Audience: True romantics

Status: Clean (a spot of innuendo)

Category: Novella

HEA: Yes

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## Jaclyn says

*An Illicit Engagement* is Cecilia Gray's second novella in *The Gentlemen Next Door* series. This is an entire series of novellas and finishing this one, I have now read the entire series.

I picked up book 1, *A Delightful Arrangement* as a freebie and quite enjoyed the quick, romantic tale. I tend to enjoy novellas, especially when I'm strapped for time. *A Delightful Arrangement* proved to be quite a lot of fun, as did the other novellas in the series; however, I do feel that *Delightful Arrangement* was the best of the bunch and the one that I felt told the most complete romantic story. *An Illicit Engagement* uses the tried a true fake engagement plot device. Chastity Drummond is on a husband hunt. She's looking for someone that will benefit her father's company and help run it. Unfortunately, the man that Chastity sets her sights on does not know she exists. So, Chastity enlists the help of her neighbour Lord Lucas Willoughby, also known as the Matchmaking Baron. He's had six fiances jilt him only to marry elsewhere, and advantageously at that. Naturally, Chastity feels that being "engaged" to Lucas will draw attention to her and result in her engagement to the man that she's really after. The only problem is that Chastity doesn't love her mark, and her mercenary ideal is complicated by her very real feelings for Lucas. Lucas is also none too pleased that Chastity is going to use him to find another man, especially when he realizes that he'd really like this engagement to stick.

While I wasn't as fond of *An Illicit Engagement* as I was of the first book, I still enjoyed reading it. The premise was great and the characters were charming. Chastity and Lucas already knew one another, so the romance itself was believable in the extremely constrained page count. So why the low rating?

What I liked about *A Delightful Arrangement* was the fact that there is a much broader picture of the hero and heroine's relationship; the development is there and I buy their happily-ever-after. This was not the case in *An Illicit Engagement*. The majority of this book is spent with Chastity and Lucas at odds with her idea for a fake engagement. I liked the sparring and the disagreements between these two, the tension was great and exactly what's needed in a romance. However, the resolution between these two is wrapped up very quickly and has Lucas behaving in a rather high-handed manner. For me, the happily-ever-after isn't there. I feel potential for it, but I ended the novella thinking "that's it?" I wanted to know what happened after the final scene.

While I didn't love *An Illicit Engagement*, it is still a cute read. I enjoy the author's writing style and I would be curious to read a full-length historical romance from her. Ultimately, this book is cute, but I think readers should be aware going in that there are not going to get a complete novel, meaning there's a bit of a lack of



completion with this one. I recommend it with some reservations, but I think readers should start with *A Delightful Arrangement*.

For similar reads, see The Book Adventures.

\*Review copy via NetGalley.

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### **Phoenix Carvelli says**

Nook book purchased.

I just love the characters in this book. The sisters definitely have more going for them in intellectual matters than any of their male counterparts. This was a fun book to read given the main focus of the plot. I can't wait for other books in this series. In one word, they are delightful!

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### **Dana says**

Good Luck Chuck : Regency Edition.

Note: I received this book for free in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Farrah says**

A nice historical romance novella that I enjoyed, *An Illicit Engagement* was a lovely read. I didn't like it as much as the first in the series, but I still thought it was a good romance

Chastity was a good heroine. I liked that she was clever and independent. But, I was annoyed with her stubbornness about marrying a man who was more suited to being a potential business partner. And, it seemed like she was very insensitive about the fact that Lucas had 6 fiancées leave him, with the way she kept poking at it. But, I was still okay with her.

Lucas was wonderful. He realized that he hadn't loved his 6 fiancées but, when he realized that he truly loved Chastity, he was determined not to let her get away. I thought he was adorable.

The romance was good. Despite Chastity's obliviousness, they were a well matched couple and I thought they were sweet together.

The plot moved quickly and I was kept interested the entire way through. I liked the story and the ending was



lovely.

An Illicit Engagement was a sweet historical romance novella. It wasn't perfect, but I did enjoy it. Romance lovers, if you want a quick read, then you might want to check this book out.

\*I received a complimentary copy from the publisher in exchange for an honest review

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## **Sophia says**

The second book in The Gentleman Next Door series was another delightful romp. It features the best friend from the previous story as the heroine.

Chastity is determined to marry a man who can forward the family's shipping business particularly in the South Pacific. Her family may be from trade, but she is still an heiress and invited to the best that society has to offer. She sets her cap for a man with clout in government in the area of shipping and trade. It is then that she encounters her next door neighbor, Lord Lucas Willoughby, known as the Matchmaking Baron because six of his fiancées found other men. Chastity feels Lucas' reputation can help her get the man she has her eye on and it does, but in the mean time, Lucas himself has gained her attention and is interested in her.

The second story had the nice twist of Chastity coming from a working class family and having to decide what is more important to her whether it is the family business or a chance on love. She knows what it means to live poor so the choice isn't that easy. I did feel that she ran roughshod over Lucas in the process though she did wake him up to what he had done wrong all those times with the ones before, but it was still a heartwarming story with its humorous moments. I did feel the romance needed a bit more teasing out, but it was a mild quibble.

Fast, fun and engaging with vast appeal for those who like their romance sweet and set against a historical backdrop.

My thanks to Net Galley for the chance to read this book in exchange for an honest review.

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## **Emily Elizabeth says**

As seen on Ed and Em's Reviews!

4.5/5 Stars

Cecilia Gray has captured my heart again with *An Illicit Engagement*. It is the second novella in a series called The Gentlemen Next Door.

This time she gives us the story of a young woman who is desperate to help her father keep his company and his fortune by finding a wealthy, connected husband and her neighbor, a gentleman who has been engaged six times only for the women to end up with a friend, a family member or an acquaintance. While, I have read historical romances where the girl plans to marry out of duty and not love, I have never come across a



story where the man has had such horrible luck in finding a bride! (Especially not an attractive catch like the man in this story, Lucas Willoughby!)

The author writes characters that you can really connect with. I may not be from the era that they are, but I can understand their thoughts, feelings and wants. Without that connection, a book can be very hard to read, if you end up reading it at all!

Chastity Drummond is a smart, determined character. She knows what she wants and she will get it. She's a very strong female lead. Lucas is bitter and cautious. He does not want to be used. He wants to be loved, not to be used - even if the using isn't purposely done. And he has the stubbornness and determination that matches with Chastity's. They make a fantastic pair! Don't even get me started on how much I love Cassandra. She's isn't a major character in this story, but book three is all hers and I can't wait to read that one!

I love that Cecilia includes characters from the first book in the series. When I started this book, I was so hoping she would because I adored Francesca and Phillip! I hope I will see more of Franny, Phillip, Chastity and Lucas in book three!

This novella is a fast read. I finished it in under an hour, but loved it dearly. It was a nice, light romance that was perfect for a morning with nothing to do. I was bummed that it ended where it did, because I wanted so much more! It ended too quickly for my taste, but I loved the story very much.

Cecilia knows her romance. This is the third story of hers that I have read and I assure you it will not be the last. I don't know how she does it, but she manages to keep my attention and make me fall in love with her characters. Every. Single. Time. Especially her brooding, dutiful men!

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## **✕Tabby✕ says**

### **THE REVIEW**

#### **Why this book?**

I wanted to read more from Cecilia Gray

#### **What I thought**

I seriously don't have much to say. This book was beyond boring I almost fell asleep. BTW Is all the girls in these books so stupid!

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## **Laura Greenwood says**



Review forthcoming on <http://a-reader-lives-a-thousand-live...>

I received a copy of *An Illicit Engagement* from Netgalley in exchange for my review.

Chastity Drummond is invited to the parties but shunned due to her common birth, but even she knows that she needs to make an advantageous marriage to help the family shipping business, which is where her next door neighbour, Lucas Willoughby, comes in. Known as the 'Matchmaking Baron' due to his six previous engagements ending up in the lady married to someone else quite happily, Chastity plans on capturing someone else's attention by hinting that she is engaged to Lucas. However what she didn't plan on was the attraction she felt for the Baron, or how he'd feel for the first time...

[Link to Goodreads](#)

[Link to amazon](#)

*An Illicit Engagement* is the second book in a series of Regency shorts (that can be read as stand alones) and as a short read it was great, there was chemistry and emotion with enough of a plot line to keep you entertained. Saying that it is exactly what it says on the tin, there's no real surprises in the story, though sometimes that is exactly the way a book should be (to cater to those moods where you don't want something serious i.e. in this case between books in a series about the end of the world).

I did like Chastity as a character, I wasn't too sure there was much to her from her appearance in the first book (as a friend of the heroine) but actually in *An Illicit Engagement* she had much more personality, and was one of those female characters that cares for more than just a dress.

Lucas Willoughby was definitely an interesting character. Normally with male Regency characters the male MC is either a rake or so emotionally shut off from the world that it will take that special woman to break him out of it. This is where *An Illicit Engagement* actually stood out, because Lucas was somewhere between the two. He'd had six previous engagements and yet wasn't considered a rake, and when he examined it himself he came to some logical conclusions.

The chemistry between the two characters was good, as was the relationship building, though I think the idea was that they didn't even realise they were doing it. In fact it was a very equal relationship, with both treating each other with respect, and wanting to protect the other.

Great as a short read, though there was no surprises in the plot line or the characters.

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### **Crystal (Books Are Sanity!!!) says**

Cecilia Gray has done it again! An amusing and romantic regency story, *An Illicit Engagement* is a quick and easy read! Poor Lucas is known as the man who cannot make it to the altar, every woman leaves him for someone else! Chastity knows that the future of her father's shipping company rests in her ability to negotiate trade routes through an older single man. She needs Lucas to introduce her to that man. What they don't plan on is that together they might just fall in love! This is the second book in the Gentleman Next Door series, but you do not need to have read the first book to understand this one!

I received this book for free and this is my honest review.



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## **Lady says**

Chastity Drummond is the oldest daughter of a self made socialite. She is invited to all the balls and social gatherings because of who she is and nothing more. Chastity has her sights set on this one guy, Mr. Highster who she thinks will benefit the company in the long run. But things are not going as planned and she decides to take matters into her own hands to get Mr. Highster to notice her. She asks her neighbor to help with the cause. When this happens does she still want to continue the plan?

Lord Lucas Willoughby is known as the Matchmaking Baron. He acquired the name by being engaged 6 times and each lady leaving him for someone else who is a better match. Lord Willoughby is trying to keep a low profile this season, but that doesn't happen once Chastity gets involved. Will he be able to hold his own with this lady??

This is my first time reading anything by this author. I loved reading this book. I did not want to put it down. She started becoming one of my favorite authors, I have to read one or two to be sure. I can't wait to read Cecilia's other books. I highly recommend this book to others.

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## **Becca says**

I needed a pick me up after two stinker books and I knew I could count on Cecilia Gray to deliver! Once again, her novella was charming. I wished it had been a little bit longer (I wanted to see the characters actually make it to the altar), but hey, if my only quibble with a book is that I want it to be longer, that is a success!

Chastity and Lucas were adorable together. I was snagged from the first line. I loved Chastity's determination and Lucas' dawning realization that he was truly "feeling" for the first time. Chastity cooks up a scheme to catch another man's attention by making a bargain with Lucas, but the scheme requires them to spend more time together and ultimately realize that maybe the two of them belong together after all.

It was sweet, short, and uncomplicated. But sometimes, it is exactly what I want. What a great way to end the week :)

I hope Cecilia Gray writes more regencies like this soon! 5 stars!

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