



A Seduction at Christmas

Cathy Maxwell

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She never expected it would come to this.

Desperation and an empty stomach forced Fiona Lachlan to agree to a plan that ended up luring the wickedly notorious Duke of Holburn into trouble. Everything went terribly wrong, and now she has found herself posing as his ward. And while she swore nothing could make her desire a scoundrel, even if he was a duke, she is now drawing ever closer to the one man she cannot have.

"Beware of Innocence!"

Beware of innocence: The Duke of Holburn had spent years heeding this warning, and in doing so, managed to avoid the virginal young ladies who had been put in his path. But now his wild ways have gotten him into real danger. There are killers at the door and a temptingly beautiful woman in his arms. He is about to find himself seduced...and he isn't quite sure he wants to resist this time.

A Seduction at Christmas Details

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From Reader Review A Seduction at Christmas for online ebook

steph says

3.5 stars

Cathy Maxwell is a pretty tame writer when compared with others I've read in this field. Her stories are mostly plot and relationship centric, with a few tame and "less is more" sex scenes sprinkled in. I've read others by her in the past and it came to no surprise that this one followed the same format. I liked both the main characters, I liked the wide range of secondary characters and I liked the plot even though I knew who was the "bad guy" about halfway through.

Is this book going to win any awards? Probably not. Is it going to be one of those books on the Must Read Romance Novels lists that pop up on my social media sites often? I doubt it. But this book was nice and fun and a good distraction from my busy life. Which is important criteria to me because not every book can do that. So yeah, 3.5 stars. Enjoyable read.

Nesma says

Everything was stuffed in this story...

- 1) Rape
- 2) crazy families
- 3) Insecurities
- 4) Betrayal
- 5) Murder
- 6) Lame sexual content
- 7) Drama

I enjoy a good read, but over stuffing a story just to fill the gap for me is a NO GO..

Sandy M says

Yeah, I know Christmas is said and done, but this book just came in the mail and something pulled me toward it, made me open it up and start reading. I finished it in less than 24 hours. This is a fun, light-hearted read cut with a swath of danger and has very engaging characters. It's my first book by Ms. Maxwell, and after the joy I received from this one, I'm looking forward to reading more in the future.

I really enjoyed both leading characters. Fiona is a Scottish woman on her own in London, making her own way since her father's death left her in dire straits. She's learned life is hard for those not born of nobility and for those who have fallen from it. She had a chance to leave England with her rebel brother who sought escape with his wife to America, but she chose to stay because of the destiny she felt she would have because of one man. A man who she'd only seen once in her life, momentarily at a ball years before. She'd never forgotten the Duke of Holburn, but her faith has paid off and she's finally come face to face with him once

again.

The Duke, Dominic Lynsted, has been after one man for the past nine years, the one who stole the symbol of his inheritance and whose betrayal caused Nick's hardness and uncaring attitude. We hear about more than witness his rakish and scandalous ways, however, and we learn that perhaps he's not nearly as bad as the ton paints him through both Fiona's eyes and that of certain members of his family. Thinking he's about to have his revenge at last and regain possession of his prized property, he's surprised when he finds a beautiful woman instead. Fiona is a woman who is proud and strong and he remembers the one and only time he's ever seen her. Wanting more time with her, however, is the start of their need to flee for their lives and of their seduction of each other along the way.

For Fiona her love comes fast and strong because of her attraction for this man over the years. She's had feelings for him for so long that it takes only a few acts of kindness before she's totally lost her heart to Nick. He takes only a little more time to fall, wanting her trust first and swearing to protect her from the danger that's following them all over London. They are an engaging couple, and though they each have their moments of vulnerability, they persevere both in love and danger. The twist at the end wasn't totally a surprise, but it and its aftermath do cause some heartache. And there is a heartfelt scene between Nick and Fiona after all is revealed that sums up their love and relationship beautifully.

I look forward to the coming books in this series. This one was a very pleasant surprise.

See my complete review at <http://www.goodbadandunread.com>

Kimberly says

Once, Dominic Lynsted, Duke of Holburn trusted somebody and lost something precious because of it. While on his Grand Tour, Nick befriended Andres Ramigio Peiró, Barón de Vasconia, and the barón stole Nick's signet ring and abandoned Nick at Delphi. But when Nick wakes up in the presence of Delphi's famed Oracle, his life takes a turn. Armed with the Oracle's mysterious prophesy, "Beware innocence," Nick returns to England, vowing revenge against Andres. Years later, Nick finally has a lead on Andres. His quest leads him to a small inn, but the person he meets is definitely not the barón.

Fiona Lachlan knows all too well how fate can bring one low. Desperate for rent money, Fiona takes a job from one of London's most notorious courtesans. The assignment is simple – slip some (non-deadly) poison into the drink of Lord Belkins. Yet it's Nick, not Lord Belkins, Fiona meets, and each knows something is not quite right. And when assassins burst in, ready to kill Nick, the two must band together to survive. Neither Nick nor Fiona trust one another. But danger serves as a powerful draw between the two. As does desire...

Fate takes charge and brings two lovers together in this sparkling romance by Cathy Maxwell. *A Seduction at Christmas* is an engaging blend of love, passion, danger, and destiny with two protagonists who are sure to claim your heart.

When I first met Fiona in her brother Gordon's book, *In the Highlander's Bed*, I admired her inner strength and wondered at her fate when she chose to remain in London as Gordon left for America. Though *A Seduction at Christmas* begins with Fiona in somewhat desperate circumstances, her strength of character never wavers. I genuinely liked Fiona and had a tremendous amount of respect for her ability to overcome all

that has happened to her, which isn't to say the past has not left her without scars. As for Nick, events of his past have left their mark on him as well. Despite this, Nick is a generous, caring, and protective soul. In *In the Highlander's Bed* there was a fleeting moment when Nick and Fiona met and attraction sparked. Ms. Maxwell takes that flash of interest and turns up the heat when the two meet once more in *A Seduction at Christmas*. But more intriguing than the lust between the pair is how they manage to heal one another. Old wounds aren't instantly forgotten, but love serves as a healing balm of sorts, and it was wonderful to watch it happen.

A Seduction at Christmas is by turns sensual, heartwarming, and fun. I delighted in the banter between Fiona and Nick and relished their romance. A dash of danger keeps *A Seduction at Christmas* moving at a quick pace as Nick and Fiona try to figure out who is out to kill Nick and why. Fans of Ms. Maxwell, like myself, will also delight in getting to revisit Grace McEachin from *In the Highlander's Bed* and I do so hope Ms. Maxwell gives Grace a story of her own one day. *A Seduction at Christmas* also introduces readers to Nick's cousin Gillian, who is a lovely character. I finished *A Seduction at Christmas* well-satisfied and incredibly eager for the next *Scandals and Seductions* tale, *The Earl Claims His Wife*, ready to see Gillian find a happy ending of her own.

Reviewed for Joyfully Reviewed.

Julie (jjmachshev) says

Reviewed for queuemyreview.com; book release Nov08

Free will or fate? The arguments regarding which of these guides our lives and loves have likely existed since man (and certainly women) began to speak. Cathy Maxwell's latest historical romance "*A Seduction at Christmas*" is the story of a young man who, through a terrible loss, undergoes an eerie experience and receives a cryptic prophecy from an old crone at the Oracle of Delphi. He then seeks to escape what he believes is his fate, but his actions appear to be useless when his fate catches up to him in the form of a beautiful young, innocent woman.

Fiona is desperate. The young Scottish lass has lost her respectable job and needs enough money to keep a roof over the heads of herself and her loyal dog. She accepts a dubious job with trepidation. All she needs to do is pour a potion into the drink of a lord whose jilted lover is looking for a little revenge. Only when she's assured the potion will just make the lord violently ill, but not dead, does she agree. When she arrives at the inn, the lord she's supposed to meet isn't there. Instead, it's the man she's dreamed of since before her life became one of penury. And when three men appear trying to kill 'her' lord, she saves his life. Now her life is also in danger, but 'her' lord has no intention of losing her.

Nick has spent many years trying to redeem himself from a youthful folly. After losing his family's heirloom ring and receiving a warning/prophecy from a crone at Delphi to 'beware innocence', his whole life changed. He uses his cynicism to distance himself from any feelings and avoids innocents like the plague. But when Fiona places herself in danger by helping him, even his jaded senses can't ignore the way he's beginning to feel when he's with her.

It takes a special author to develop a relationship that feels believable when all the action takes place in a shorter amount of time. Maxwell did a good job of making the circumstances fit the telescoped time frame by forcing the protagonists into closer quarters than would be normal. The action flowed smoothly even with

the quick pace, and the supporting cast included some memorable characters that I'd like to read about again. The only drawback would be the rapid turnaround of the hero's character, but since it IS the holiday season, I'll just consider that a holiday miracle.

Cathy Maxwell's regency romance is one that will leave you with a sigh and a smile. Her talented development of the attraction and relationship between the hero and heroine makes this story a kind of Christmas wish come true. Whether their meeting was determined by fate or chance, it was the actions each took and their willingness to trust that determined the course of their romance. "A Seduction at Christmas" is a happy, more light-hearted story that will provide a welcome distraction from the holiday rush.

Mary says

This was an intriguing premise that a prophecy from the Oracle of Delphi could affect the young, rakish Duke of Holborn for the rest of his life. While trying to prove his worth to his stuffy uncles and keep his difficult mother content, he also has to frequent the gaming hells of London. Gambling seems to be the only place he has any success. He wonders if this is good luck or a curse.

Fiona Lachlan, the daughter of a Scottish magistrate, was raised to be a lady. But when her family is torn apart after supporting the Scottish rebellion, she is left to fend for herself in London. She has managed to take only respectable jobs so far, but fresh from losing her job, she is desperate enough to perform a shady errand for a notorious madame.

Nick, the duke, and Fiona are unexpectedly thrown together and are soon running for their lives. The mismatch of the powerful duke and penniless young woman is comical at times, but Fiona stands up to the duke and holds her own. They soon find that sparks fly between them, even though Fiona is not ready to trust any man and Nick is still worried about that prophecy.

The preparations for Christmas and all the various relatives at the duke's country estate are fun to read about. Danger follows them to the country, and the intrigue keeps you guessing until the end. There's plenty of action, both romantic and otherwise. I'm looking forward to reading the other books in the series.

Red says

Yea! There were many characters in this book, many locations, and interesting dialog. The writing was spritely and fun.

Foggygirl says

The story was flat and one dimensional and unfortunately the characters were as well.

Eastofoz says

1.5 stars for this tedious and annoying read. What a bad book, a complete waste of money and the time it took to get through it.

This so-called historical is written more in a contemporary language style than in a historical one. You'd think that the author would have done some research into the language of the time before writing. It's extremely repetitious and in need of some good editing especially when French is used. The characters are superficial and the story doesn't flow. Every stereotypical romance cliché under the sun is stuffed in whenever possible and they all get the gag reflex going. There's virtually no steam until the end and all this "love" is too little too late making the "profound relationship" between the h/h totally unbelievable. The h/h are barely together in a romantic way apart from "sensing" that they are destined for each other. The heroine is such a "good" woman you want to slap her. The hero is supposed to be so "feared" but everyone walks all over him. The paranormal element is dumb and just adds to the overall eye rolling "whatever" of the story. The Christmas part is an afterthought and just thrown in to no doubt help sell the book.

How this weak story could have ever been published is beyond me. It's not a Christmas story, though it tries to dupe the reader into believing otherwise, and it's an exceptionally poor romance that's barely worth a skim read.

Haley says

I've enjoyed Cathy Maxwell before but this book has pushed her up to the standing of one of my favorite authors! It's difficult to find a completely balanced book, usually I find one or two things lacking but generally am able to overlook it. That is not the case for this book. There was such a great balance in the relationship between the characters. Rather than start off as a completely sexual attraction there is a complete enjoyment of just being in each other's company and the other in general even during the times they find themselves bickering. As time passed the sexual tension increases as they fall in love. Once it got to that point their romance was touching, sweet, sensual and everything between. On their own both Fee and Nick were fantastically rounded characters who only grew all the more enticing as a couple as well as entertaining from their less than smooth start, their banter, finding a connection and falling in love.

Then there are the other characters involved. Maxwell did a great job at adding characters who you interact enough while reading to understand so that they aren't bland and 'just there'. It leaves you fully expecting to see them again and wanting to.

The story like the characters Fee and Nick is well balanced it runs smoothly throughout the story but keeps a pace that keeps you reading and wanting to read. It even begins at that pace where it is slow and dragging and something is always happening, big or small.

Near a perfect book. A great quick and fully enjoyable read.

ExLibris_Kate says

A Seduction at Christmas was a bargain ebook buy for me and I ended up really loving it! Set in Regency England, we have a Duke with a bad reputation and a young woman of good breeding that has fallen on hard times. The relationship between Holburn and Fiona definitely had sparks, but it was also very sweet. Both

main characters had their pasts to contend with and within the common construct of a Regency Romance, I found an emotional story that really drew me in. I definitely recommend this one for lovers of this sub-genre.

Lita Bouquard says

Fiona Lachlan a Scottish lass has lost her position as a seamstress. She was raised to be more, but politics and rebellion led her to this lonely situation in London. Fiona has suffered but pride, her dog, and one friend have made life bearable. The errand turns into a life threatening episode that bond Fee and Nick together as they try to avoid assassination. . During a desperate errand for a neighbor she sees a Duke that she once felt a connection with. Their story involves intrigue and romance. I liked both characters and an Irish Wolfhound named Tad.

A few things didn't sit right with me in this story- don't think its a feel good christmas story- its not. Fiona's friend was never mentioned again- only in the the beginning of the book. But I liked A seduction at Christmas -though the title doesn't really fit.

Christa says

I found this book to be a bit disappointing. It was quick to read, but the story never really grabbed me. I enjoyed the relationship between the hero and heroine, and that is what made it a three star book for me. Based on only the writing style and the plot, I would have given it two stars. If this were my first book by Cathy Maxwell, I would be reluctant to read more by her, but since I have enjoyed some of her other books, I am certain to give her another try.

When Fiona Lachlan agrees to go on an errand in place of a friend, she finds herself in a difficult situation. She didn't know that she would be expected to pour a potion into a gentleman's drink that would make him ill. Desperately needing the money, she goes ahead and agrees to the scheme, but is shocked when the Duke of Holburn arrives instead of the expected gentleman. Fiona has been fascinated by the Duke of Holburn since before her circumstances were greatly reduced. When he offends her, Fiona doses the Duke of Holburn's drink with the concoction. Just as the poison begins to show effects, he and Fiona are attacked and barely escape harm. Feeling terribly guilty, Fiona takes the incapacitated duke, Nick, to her home to care for him. Although angry at first, Nick quickly excuses Fiona and takes her to his home to insure her safety. It is obvious that someone wants Nick dead, and they must identify the culprit before he causes more harm.

My enjoyment of Cathy Maxwell's books is not consistent. I like some of them a great deal, and others not much at all. This one falls in between. I didn't become caught up in this book, but had to force myself to keep reading at a few points. What salvaged this book for me somewhat was the relationship between the hero and heroine. They genuinely liked one another from almost the beginning of their acquaintance. I liked the way that they trusted one another and were not afraid of becoming close to one another, even though neither of them had been in a loving relationship before. I read the other books in this series, and enjoyed almost all of them quite a bit more than this one.

Michelle says

There was something very simplistic about this story that prevented me from getting more involved in it.

Suzanne says

Fiona agreed to meet a man in an inn and all she had to do was pour a potent into his wine. Her neighbor was supposed to do this but Miss Jenkins had decided to elope with her boyfriend. Fiona was to get 20 pounds. Fiona was almost broke and rent was due. She was assured by the courtesan who hired her that no sex was involved and the potent was not dangerous but an embarrassing payback for an ex lover who had not treated her well. The room at the inn was booked in her neighbor's name. The man she wanted was not there but rather the Duke of Holburn. Fiona recognised him from a wedding she had attended and she had fantasized about him. The Duke believed she was there for him and when he claimed a kiss Fiona gave him the potent. It was effective and possibly a poison but gun shots rang out and it becomes obvious that someone was trying to kill the Duke. Fiona helped him escape from the inn leaving the courtesan dead from an accidental shot and the only place she could think of to hide was her frugal room. The killers continued to chase them but they were looking for her neighbor at first. By the time they realized they wanted the redhead Fiona and not the blond Miss Jenkins the Duke was better and after the killers killed the landlord Fee, the Duke and Fee's dog escaped to his townhouse. The Duke of Holborn had an ulterior motive for keeping Fee close. Years before his signet ring was stolen in Italy while he was on the grand tour. It was all he had left of his father and a Spaniard he met and thought was his friend had taken it. The Duke's uncles had used the loss of the ring as another reason why they felt the young boy should not be the Duke. An Oracle had appeared after the theft and she looked just like Fee. Her cryptic message said BEWARE INNOCENCE. The reason the Duke was at the inn was that he thought he was meeting the Spaniard to get the ring back. The man Fiona was to give the potent to was later found dead.
