



Mad For Love

Elizabeth Essex

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From acclaimed author Elizabeth Essex comes an irresistible prequel novella introducing the Highland Brides, a quartet of bold, brilliant lasses determined to make their own happily ever afters.

Set a thief...Rory Cathcart's appreciation of the exquisite makes him the perfect man to expose forgeries and root out fraud in London's tempestuous art world. But when his latest investigation into forged paintings puts him squarely in Mignon du Blois' shaky sights, he finds himself deep in trouble, and captured by something more powerful than mere beauty.

To catch a thief...The moment Mignon stops a rakish thief from making off with one of her father's brilliant forgeries, she knows she's found the perfect man to help her steal back a priceless statue, and save her family from unspeakable scandal. She has no intention of falling for Rory's Caledonian charms, nor his seductive Scottish persuasions. From the drawing rooms of the ton to the auction rooms of the art world, the pair embark on a madcap adventure to save them both from ruin. But will the love they uncover be most priceless treasure of all?

Mad For Love Details

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Author : Elizabeth Essex

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From Reader Review Mad For Love for online ebook

Lyuda says

3.5 stars

Retelling of 1966 romantic comedy "How to Steal a Million".

If you've seen the movie, you pretty much know the plot. If you've not seen it, reading the novella would surely make you want to watch the movie.

Set in 1790, there is almost nothing historical in the novella whether in behavior, language, or social customs. So, if historical accuracy is important for you, I would suggest to skip the story. But if you can overlook it, there is much to enjoy in this quick, sweet, engaging, and funny read with lovable and adorable characters.

Jill says

3.5 stars

Marie (Mignon) du Blois and her father, Charles has fled Paris and the upheavals of the French Revolution and settled in London. To support them, her father, a forger of fine art, fobs off replicas on to unsuspecting and clueless English buyers. Mignon, afraid he will be caught and jailed, continually tries to talk him into giving up his vice. To no avail.

Rory Cathcart is a specialist in art forgeries for Christie's. When he hears of Charles du Blois' latest forgery, he sets out to expose him and in so doing hopes to further his career. While Mignon and her father are out one evening, Rory breaks in to their house. Unknown to this gentleman thief, Mignon has stayed at home. When she catches Rory in the act of stealing one of her father's forgeries, he introduces himself to Mignon as Rory Andrews.

When Charles is caught in a difficult situation of having one of his forged sculptures authenticated for insurance purposes....by none other than Rory *Cathcart*....Mignon hires Rory *Andrews* to steal the sculpture where it's on public display in the gallery at Somerset House.

Set in 1790, ***Mad for Love*** is a prequel novella to Elizabeth Essex's new series the *Highland Brides*. This is certainly different to anything I've read previously by Ms Essex. I wasn't prepared for the fun, light tone of this story. She writes that it was a homage to one of her favourite caper movies, and a more apt description would be hard to find for this delightful novella.

Perhaps it also may read a little differently to her usual style, because it's one of her early writings. Rory has a number of friends who I'm guessing will feature in the upcoming novels. The first full novel in this series is ***Mad about the Marquess***.

Mad for Love is a very enjoyable start to this new series by Elizabeth Essex, and would suit readers who enjoy romantic comedies and lighter historical romance. And is presently free at Amazon.
<http://www.amazon.com/Mad-Love-Highla...>

Steam: 1.5

ARC courtesy of ERB Publishing via NetGalley

This review will also be found at
<http://www.romantichistoricalreviews....>

Caz says

I've given this a B- at AAR, so 3.5 stars

I was pleased to learn that Elizabeth Essex would be publishing a new series of historical romances, as I've enjoyed her work in the past and have missed seeing her name on lists of forthcoming releases. Her new, *Highland Brides* series kicks off with **Mad for Love** which is either a short novel or a long novella - depending how you want to look at it - and which, she tells us in her notes, is one of the first things she ever wrote.

It's an enjoyable 'caper' story set in London at the end of the eighteenth century featuring mistaken identity, forgery, theft, a mischievous, quick witted hero and an intelligent heroine who is prepared to risk all in order to save the father she loves.

It's 1790 and Mignon du Blois and her father, who styles himself the Comte du Blois (although the title is not rightfully his because he descends from a younger son) have recently settled in England having fled the worsening hatred and violence towards aristocratic families that is sweeping across France. They have lost much, but Mignon is happy in London and hopes, eventually, to lead an unexciting and respectable English life. Unfortunately, however, her father is not helping her towards that end as he uses his prodigious artistic talents to make very clever forgeries of the many famous works of art that are now being looted or destroyed in France, and sells them for large sums of money. With things there so uncertain, and the market being flooded with art for sale - much of it from once wealthy families desperate to capitalise on their assets - it's a situation that can't but work to his advantage.

But Mignon's father is not the only forger in the family. Her grandfather was just as skilled, and in fact, it is his copy of a famous sculpture of the goddess Diana that threatens to stir up all kinds of trouble. The comte is persuaded to loan the statue to the Royal Academy for an exhibition without realising that it is going to have to be authenticated, and by the time he does realise, it's too late, and Mignon fears that he will be exposed and they will have to flee the country.

Rory Cathcart is the illegitimate son of an earl who acknowledged him and gave him a good education which culminated in his studying art at University in Edinburgh. At the beginning of the story, we meet Rory and three of his friends (who I'm assuming will feature in the other books in the series), and I enjoyed the sense of camaraderie the author has created between them. Rory's knowledge of art, his good eye and methodical

attention to detail enabled him to establish that his father had been duped into purchasing two very old, well-made forgeries. As a result Rory made a name for himself as something of an expert in the field, and has recently been called in by the president of the Royal Academy to authenticate the statue of Diana.

He has also been alerted to the fact that there are a number of forged Old Masters being made available for sale, but the only way he is going to be able to examine one of them is to break into the home of the suspected forger. Ascertaining that the house will be empty one evening, Rory does just that – only to be confronted by a petite but spectacularly lovely young woman who threatens him with an ancient halberd and ends up accidentally hitting him over the head with it.

A thief is just what Mignon needs. If she can hire someone to ‘remove’ the statue of Diana from the exhibition, her father will be safe, and they won’t have to run. Of course, it’s not difficult to predict what’s going to happen, but the story is no less enjoyable for that. It’s a fast-paced quick read that simply sparkles; the writing is deft and humorous, the central characters are both very attractive and even the heroine’s father is a bit of a wag with a twinkle in his eye.

But as with most novellas, it’s all a little bit ‘undercooked’. The premise is good, the characters are engaging and there’s some excellent dialogue, but the romance happens at the speed of light – apart from the entire chapter or two Rory and Mignon have to spend locked in a broom-cupboard while they wait for the right moment to steal the statue! The first half is perhaps better than the second, but overall **Mad for Love** is a light, frothy read that is a pleasant way to pass an hour or two, and I’m going to be checking out the first full length novel, *Mad About the Marquess* on the strength of it.

Sissy's Romance Book Review says

I received an eARC, from NetGalley and the publisher, in exchange for an honest review.

Mad For Love by Elizabeth Essex is a really sweet, funny and all around great book.

Mignon du Blois’ has a father that is a con-artist, French art forger and scoundrel.

Rory Cathcart has heard that du Blois’ has made a forgery that Rory is investigating. Rory likes to expose forgeries and end fraud in London. Rory goes undercover at du Blois by acting as a thief. While setting off to find the painting he is found by Mignon. Rory has her convinced that he is a thief but Rory is accident hit over the head by Mignon (funny). Rory steals a kiss from her and then leaves. But they are bound to run into each other again...how else can they fall in love?

Toula says

First in a new series . Historical Regency. Hero is Rory . Heroine is Migoin .

This is just like the rest of Elizabeth books . Funny , playful but with a touch of mystery .

Rory and his 3 friends like to play detective . They go through things looking for Scams. They think they are on to something .

Migoin and her father left worn torn France and settled in England . Migoin father has no money but he know how to make money and nobody will be the wiser of it . Actually his father did the scam also .

Rory gets caught breaking into amigo ins house looking to expose the Scam Migoin father is doing . Her father is looking to continue the scan for many years . Grab it and find out all about it

Becca says

I received this novel at a reader event and I must say, the trade back of this is gorgeous in person (and a perfect addition to my bookshelf!)

I have been in a reading funk and Mad for Love was got me out of it. This is a gentle novella with a little bit of suspense that somehow manages to stay bubbly and entertaining throughout. I took my time with this story and only read a chapter or two a day (again...reading funk); while I was always able to put the book down because of its easygoing pace, it was always a delight to pick it up again the next day.

The story is about a French forger and his daughter who have made a life in England, but are in danger of being discovered as frauds. Rory is an art expert, paid to reveal forgers...but he finds himself falling for the beautiful and intensely private daughter, Mignon. What happens next is a humorous caper story inspired by an old movie. It had all the charm and no pitfalls.

This story is nothing earth-shattering, but I found it lovely. The breezy storytelling and likable leads made this a perfect cure for a reading funk and I recommend it for a short reading escape....possibly while drinking champagne :)

Zoe says

First one must correctly categorize this book, then one may appropriately review this book.

This book is so very cute with its smart writing and poignant characterization. Rory and Mignon are too cute. I really enjoyed Elizabeth Essex's writing. So.....classically and elegantly smart.

But this book is not a romance romance, per se. It's a historical fiction with a romance element. Most of the book centers around art forgery and theft. If I was rating on my personal feelings, it would have been 2 stars. But I liked the writing so much. I am rating this objectively for the cuteness of a book that it is.

*I received an ARC from the publisher on NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Carol She's So Novel?? says

I'm glad, yes glad, to see someone has given this novel a 1★ rating. It can be a lonely feeling to be the only one who doesn't like a book.

The jacket should have given me a clue this wasn't going to be my sort of book but I have read & loved other historical novels with *dubious* , shall we say, covers. This certainly doesn't say eighteenth century French émigrée to me!

& I enjoyed the start with Mignon & her father very much. They sparkled together. The story went downhill for me from when Rory & his largely irrelevant friends entered the picture. Rory's bizarre modern American speech with the occasional "ye" & "yer" (*yer?*) thrown in had a lot to do with it.

★ Also sometimes Mignon's surname was Blois & sometimes du Blois. I'm assuming that would be the same as if my surname was St John. It wouldn't be acceptable to call me Carol John now would it?

★ Mignon tries to attend Brooks - a Gentleman's Club. According to Wikipedia it is *still* a men only domain. One time she is wearing black & grey - mourning colours. Just. Not. Done.

★ I've had a quick look online & I can't find any source that said Bow Street Runners (an early form of police) also acted as security guards. If I'm wrong, please correct me.

★ & above all (view spoiler)

Finally, the last 10% of this book was actually a preview of the next book which made the pacing feel completely off - it was over before I was ready.

Edit; I've corrected the page numbering - go me! & just editing to make it clear the mistake in page numbering isn't the author's fault, but it did impact on the read for me.:)

Psychgirl says

2.5 stars. This was not for me. It was funny at times, which was its only saving grace. I found that it was hard to suspend disbelief on this one. Dialogue at times really took me out of the story.

Sonya Heaney says

Originally posted [**HERE**](#)

This, an introductory novella to a new series, is my favourite thing I've read by this author so far. I liked the original plot, I liked the slightly earlier (1790s) setting, and I liked that the characters were a teeny bit below the usual social standing of historical romance characters. I also liked that sex scenes weren't stuffed in where they didn't fit!

The last time I read a book by Elizabeth Essex I was a bit angered by a weird political message threaded through the plot; I found it totally inappropriate for Regency England and I think I may have been unfairly harsh in my review. That in mind, when this novella came up for review I decided the author deserved another chance.

Art forgery is a fad in the historical romance genre at the moment (not a complaint; one of my favourite authors is tackling it), but apparently this book was written years ago, so this is before its time.

I must say, I do like Essex's writing style. It flows really well, and keeps you turning the pages.

There was a great amount of research that went into this one, but it never felt like the author was showing off her knowledge at the expense of the story. The art facts didn't overpower the book.

I definitely think this is a series that will be worth looking out for.

Review copy provided by NetGalley.

Christina ~ Brunette Reader says

3,5 Stars

As stated in the author's foreword, this novella, besides being one of her earlier works, is an homage to William Wyler 1966 comedy *How To Steal a Million* (starring Audrey Hepburn and Peter O'Toole) and is just as much a humorous romantic romp revolving around the art world.

In 1790 London, French expat Mignon Du Blois spends her days desperately trying to contain her father's enthusiasm in producing forgeries of the Old Masters and while the "trade" seems to have gone quite smoothly so far, selling as authentic Vermeers and Hals imitations to gullible collectors is one thing but loaning a faux Verrocchio statuette to Sir Reynolds Royal Academy proves to be a different and riskier stunt altogether. And when a delicious and mysterious gentleman thief enters the picture, Mignon may likely see her heart stolen as well.

Two lovely leads, a quirky plot, written with flair and gusto and punctuated by witty banter, *Mad for Love* makes for a quick, sweet and fun read.

Joann Maggio says

Mad for Love ??????Written by Elizabeth Essex

A rather cute novels about a seemly art savvy family the du Blois and their pension for art forgery.

The theme of the book was quite unusual and certainly caught my attention immediately. Mignon du Blois knew her father Charles had been forging and selling his paintings as originals by the old masters for years.

Rory Andrew Cathart is the by-blow of an Earl has been sent to school and become quite the professional authenticator of fine art work.

I did enjoy the story but at least one quarter of the book occurs during a heist and be it Mignon and Rory in a closet together. I felt the author then wrapped up the whole story in the last fifteen pages. We were given out HEA, we were enticed into a promising story but let down by the rapid closure.

I wished this author would have expanded more on her characters. I do hope her continued series show a bit more.

Amanda says

3.5 stars!

If you've seen *How to Steal a Million*, which I have, and loved it, which I do, *Mad for Love* won't hold many surprises plot-wise but it sure was a fun, romantic read. The Georgian era setting combined with charming leads and effervescent dialogue helped distinguish this retelling of the classic 1966 film. Although I have to say I think Rory and Mignon made much better use out of the infamous museum broom closet.

Major bonus points also must be given to Elizabeth Essex for featuring a non-English couple (Rory was Scottish and Mignon was French). Now I can't wait to read the rest of the books in this series, the heroes of which we're introduced to briefly here as Rory's merry mates, all of whom are Scots as well, yay!!!!

Tracy Emro says

****I received a copy of this book from NetGalley and the publisher in exchange for a honest review****

I really liked this book, but it was unlike any Elizabeth Essex book I have ever read (and I have read them all). This book was very light reading.

Marie aka Mignon is the daughter of a French art forger - her father is a complete scoundrel (albeit a lovable one). His latest forgery has been brought to the attention of our hero Rory Andrew Cathcart (he is the illegitimate son of a Scottish earl) - Rory's friends are questioning the authenticity of a certain painting that is in the "du Blois Collection".

Rory breaks into the du Blois home to examine the painting and is caught by Mignon. He convinces her that he is a thief and that he will leave quietly, as he leaves she accidentally drops the weapon she was holding and it bashes him on the head. Horrified that she has injured the man, Mignon rushes to help him. When she discovers that he is bleeding, she insists on tending him. When he is leaving he tells her he lives a Brooks Club and he steals a kiss.

They meet again at an art exhibit, where Mignon's father has loaned a statute of Verrocchio's Diana - which is actually a forgery done by Mignon's grandfather. She is not happy about this loan, but since the statue will never be sold, she doesn't see any harm. That is until the museum wants to insure the statue and must have it authenticated.

Rory works for Christie's auction house and has been hired by the insurance company to examine the statue. Mignon's father is frantic when he finds out that the statue is going to be examined and is ready to run. But Mignon hatches a plan to ask her thief for help - not knowing that Rory is the examiner.

Rory is totally smitten by Mignon and agrees to help her steal the statue.

What ensues is a totally madcap, sweet little adventure, that never gets any steamier than some steamy kisses and a little heavy petting. I was expecting a bit more drama when Rory's true identity came out - but it was

pretty much glossed over and they proceed directly to their HEA.

I would happily recommend this book - but don't expect the usual Elizabeth Essex fare - this is a very different type of book, but very entertaining and very sweet. I am looking forward to reading the rest of the books in the series.

Diane K. Peterson says

A charming little book! Great setup for conflict -- Mignon's father creates and sells beautifully done art forgeries and Rory is building a career as an art expert that detects forgeries. There is some delightful dialogue between Rory and his friends and between Rory and Mignon. The whole book was cute and fun. The resolution was a little too simplistic, but overall it was a great read.
