



Ravishing the Heiress

Sherry Thomas

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Millicent understands the terms of her arranged marriage all too well. She gets to be a Countess by marrying an impoverished Earl. And in return, the Earl Fitzhugh receives the benefit of her vast wealth, saving his family from bankruptcy. Because of her youth, they have agreed to wait eight years before consummating the marriage--and then, only to beget an heir. After which, they will lead separate lives.

It is a most sensible arrangement. Except for one little thing. Somehow Millie has fallen head over heels in love with her husband. Her husband, who has become her very best friend, but nothing more...Her husband, who plans to reunite with his childhood sweetheart, the beautiful and newly widowed Isabelle, as soon as he has honored the pact with his wife...

As the hour they truly become husband-and-wife draws near, both Millie and Fitzhugh must face the truth in their hearts. Has their pact bred only a great friendship-or has it, without either of them quite noticing, given rise to a great love?

Ravishing the Heiress Details

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From Reader Review Ravishing the Heiress for online ebook

Elisabeth Roam says

I'm sad to say I was disappointed by this book. I was really looking forward to it and even paid the full price for an ebook version. After all is said and done, almost 9 bucks is a little much for a book that really doesn't deliver.

I wanted to like it because the story line is amazing and has so much potential. I think Sherry Thomas is a good writer, Some of the lines in the book were very poetic and true of love and life.

I get the main idea with Fitz, he's heartbroken about not getting to live the life he had planned. He's in love with a woman he can't have. But the way that his heartbreak was used as an excuse for his behavior over and over again was annoying. There is nothing I hate more than a heroine who is humiliated through out the novel repeatedly and then made to feel sorry for by the reader. The author didn't even have the good grace to make the heroine some what beautiful. It was said many times that she could never compare to her husband in looks and that she wasn't as beautiful as the woman he really loved. Ugh! At least make her beautiful if she's going to suffer for most of the novel! I was cringing at the thought of Millie (who is described as short, tubby and not very pretty) finally confessing that she had secretly loved her husband for years. Great! Just the clincher that makes her look more pathetic. I know the book praised her many other qualities but I felt that Fitz needed to suffer a little more and really yearn for Millie like he did Isabelle. The fact that Millie can organize and remodel a house and start a business doesn't exactly do it for me. I had a hard time believing that those qualities endeared her to Fitz as much as they did.

The last few chapters were rushed and there wasn't even an epilogue. In fact the closing chapter is that Millie's face is all splotchy and red from crying and Fitz starts to kiss her, really? The love scenes left something to be desired and I felt the book in general lacked that heat, that special spark that should endear us to Fitz and Millie. Instead we were given lots of facts and events that took place "with his wife" and "with her husband". In the end it sounded like Fitz was just way too comfortable with his dowdy wife and the life they had built together. Way too comfortable with the way "his wife" had catered to him over the years and done everything to make him happy as he continued to pine after Isabelle.

The author did very well in describing two people that shared a friendship. The author did very well in describing the story in the element she most likely intended it to be in. Yet as the reader I kept thinking, Where's the spark? The passion? Why doesn't Fitz man up? Where's the retaliation that Millie deserves? Where are the 'fantasy elements' in this romance novel? Where's the freaking epilogue?

boogenhagen says

In general I like ST, and for the most part I liked this book. But.... (and there is always a but, isn't there.) What kind of cockamamie idear was it to sleep with the guy you know is going to leave your hiney before he shacks up in blissful love with his bit on the side?

Are you freaking kidding me? Who DOES that and thinks they're not an idiot?!?

Well this h, that is who. I did not get it, she was supposedly in love with someone else, at least that is what

the H believes, and yet she was willing to sleep with the H to get preggers. That makes NO sense to me and really comes across a device plot to give the H his cake and let him eat it too and a very convoluted way to keep the h chaste while the H manages to land every piece in skirt that flashes by.

If Milli was so intent upon letting Fitz go to the point where she demands an annulment so everyone can live in moral decency, there was no reason to have her sleep with him - especially when she was so reluctant to begin with. Now I realize there has to be a certain amount of steam in the book to keep things going, but that whole let's go to bed with each other even tho we are in love with other people irked me to no end.

Millie wants an annulment, if that is the case don't jump into bed with the guy, get your annulment and find someone who won't cheat at the drop of a hat when a glimpse of stocking wanders by.

I believed they loved each other by the end, but it wasn't the kind of end all be all I read romances for, more like making the best of a bad situation because Milli couldn't keep her knickers on as she was too weak to say no to coercion when there was no compelling reason not to. By the end, Milli's parents had been dead for years, the company could still be run and Milli was finally free, but she settles for an asshat instead.

Which just goes to show how hidebound and simplistic she is, especially when we revisit her character in the next book and she is a total moral prig. This one isn't bad, and the H, aside from being a manho, was okay. I just had a very hard time with the evolution of this h at the end.

Rachel (BAVR) says

[image error]

????α [Punya Reviews...] says

My review contains spoilers and they're mostly my thoughts as I went with the book...

That above space is blank because I'm in mourning. That's right, I'm mourning because I just gave a ST book a 2 star. I tried, tried, tried, tried.... I F*CKIN' TRIED loving this book but I failed. If you know me, you'll also know that I'm a huge fan of hers. I love her writing so much that I would read anything she writes. I know she's a charming wordsmith of expressing emotions, angsts, romance in a way that'll surely take your breathe away. She definitely took mine away with her first 4 books. ST can even write cheating (something I loathe and avoid) in a way that I can't but bow down to her superiority. But in this book, she failed me miserably. I put my faith in her writing but I ended up being so miserable that I was torn between a DNF and throwing the book out the window. Even the first book in this series, though not a favorite, I enjoyed much. But God, what the hell happened in Ravishing the Heiress?

First, words of caution: This review is going to be all rants, disjointed rants at that and might question my sanity. But I have to let these off of my chests. If you're still interested, you may proceed...

As I always do, a little recap of the series first (and to keep myself calm). In *Beguiling the Beauty*, an enraged Venetia weaved a drama of deception for the Duke of Lexington, Christian because he tried to defame her in one of his lectures. Christian is a scholar, who has been in love with Venetia (and her unearthly, head-bumping beauty) his whole life. Even though the reasons behind that deception, how it was carried out and some of Venetia's activities bugged me, I was convinced by the end that these two have a stronger feeling for each-other than I initially gave them credit for. Venetia even apologized for hurting Christian and considering her personal troubles with first two marriages, I sympathized with her. In between, we got glimpses of Fitz, the Earl and Venetia's younger brother, and his 'plain-looking-but-the-heiress-of-a-big-fortune-made-in-canned-foods' wife Millie. I liked Millie from the get go because undoubtedly she was no vapid miss. Even though she's reserved and keeps a calm demeanor, she is smart and has a brilliant head in business. It was explained that their marriage was a MOC. They've married very young but in these 8 yrs. they haven't consummated their marriage because of pact. At first, I thought it was something to do with Millie's fortune or something, some official agreement probably. Then, it was revealed that she's madly in love with her husband, has been since the first day. Fitz doesn't see her as anything but a polite friend, even though Millie's money gave him the backbone to take care of the debts and estates left by the previous Earls. Then I learned that he has been in love with another woman, whom he planned on marrying before he was 'forced' to marry Millie. That woman, Isabelle married later, been in India but recently informed him that she's a widow and soon, would be returning to England. It was hinted that Fitz is still pining away for the beautiful Isabelle and wants to take up with her once she's back. Alright, I knew trouble was ahead... and then, in a very disgusting scene it was also revealed that Fitz is a cheater. He keeps mistresses regularly and worse, flaunts them. Millie not only knows that but also, she knows of their identities. This scene, where they discuss about his sluts and Millie recommending him a new one as he's broken off with his latest, made me so sick I felt a gag coming. I knew their book will have some stuff for me to weather but as I said, I put my trust in ST's hand, knowing she'll handle everything just fine.

But that didn't happen.

I also disliked Helena, Fitz's twin. She was happily committing adultery with a man who couldn't even stand up to his mother and married someone of her choice instead of Helena, even though he was courting her. She thinks their relationship is 'sacrosanct'! (b*tchslap anyone?) Helena is independent, as in she owned a publishing company from some relative and earns herself. She thinks she's doing what any other independent, unconventional women would do. Huh? B*tchslap!!! It was because of her is how Venetia, who had no idea about Christian but for his title, finally meets him. We see that Fitz's best friend, Viscount Hastings, an incorrigible rake, has also been in love with Helena all his life but Helena doesn't even have a clue. She actually hates Hastings. And Hastings likes to rile her up, very recently with the knowledge of her secret affair. The buildup of book 3 was there as well but I'm not grudging it as some reviewers did because it's something necessary for a series where each books are so connected. Either way, Helena and Hastings's banters were SOOOO good, and Hastings so YUM, I enjoyed those scenes.

Then came book 2... Let me tell you about the flashbacks first. These flashbacks I despised because not only they were distracting me from the present but also, they were full of Millie's miserable existence and Fitz's immaturity. Millie grew up knowing she'll never have a choice in her marriage, let alone love and was fully prepared to marry anyone with whom her rich, businessman father betroths her. She knew she would never be a 'great beauty', having a very average face and figure. Her self-confidence was low to begin with, thanks to everyone around her. I really felt for her. She learned other things to make up for, such as, how to run a house, all the ladylike behaviors that a titled gentleman will look for in a wife, mastering the piano and different languages etc. From all things, Millie was dedicated and brilliant. She knew she would never fall in love when she saw the 33 yrs old Earl of Fitzhugh, yet she sympathized because he was also being forced in this marriage for money. But that man died soon after the betrothal. The next on the line was one of his

cousins. No one was sure if he'd be up for this match. But Millie's world tilted from its axis the day she saw Fitz. He was much closer to her age (she 16, he 19) and as handsome as they came. Millie fell in love, just like that but she knew this man would never love her back. I can't tell you how awful I found the later scenes... One day, Millie finds out that Fitz is in love with another woman. Seeing how beautiful she is and how Fitz's face becomes full of yearning, Millie's heart breaks and she begins to think of herself as someone who ruined lives. WHY Millie? WHY? I tried telling myself that she was very young and read on.

In a nutshell, they were to marry soon. Fitz had no other way but to 'give up' his childhood crush, Isabelle. I loathed his attitude towards the marriage because his interest in Millie was probably zero. He thought her 'cold and bloodless', and so, she meant nothing to him. And he NEVER tried to know her or her mind, which he termed as 'mysterious' over and over again because Millie kept her distance. Then before the marriage, it was Millie who made this stupid pact of non-consummation. I got that she felt vulnerable of being too much hurt. I understood her standing. I even got that Fitz was a bit taken aback because this rubbed on his manliness but did they have to abide by this moronic plan for 8 yrs? Seriously??? The reading of Fitz's immature behavior just before and after their marriage was pure horror. He got drunk and sick on their honeymoon. Oh, how lovely! A honeymoon of every girl's dreams! Millie had to take care of him, knowing this is what she drove him to. I say, serves him right! Guilt and more guilt were being piled up on her conscience. He ignored Millie most of the times, and dreaded seeing her. There were many scenes that broke my heart but this one was one of the specials... Fitz had a pet dormouse named Alice, given to him by Isabelle. Fitz took care of it like it was a treasure and last link to her. He never, once, while Alice was alive, let Millie hold the mouse or pet it, even though Millie craved this little attention from him. It was as if Millie will sully it with her touch. It rubbed me raw, that he dismissed her feelings just like this. But, knowing how much Fitz loved the mouse, later Millie made taxidermy of the mouse and kept it on his study. Fitz kept on treating Millie like a tree-stump and took up with other women soon enough. He would leave her for days to be in London (and more women), while she was alone, working to restore his country house or some other duties. Yes, Fitz liked to talk to her about the house and the business etc., he even got that his wife is intelligent but that was about it. Millie knew it all but she was still guilt ridden about everything, though I don't know WHY, and let him have the free reign. She thought she could spend her life like a martyr. At least for the next 8 yrs...

As time passed by, Fitz tried to remember her birthdays and so on, but those were nothing but duty. I can't explain it in any other way. Millie would remember everything about him though, would even give him small gifts that reminds her of Fitz (like that walking stick that has the same blue on it as his eyes). But Fitz remained as callous as ever. At some point, some of his supposed kindness towards Millie begins to chafe raw on me, as if she deserved these crumbs and nothing else. It also grated on my nerves that Millie would think of him the 'perfect man' for her, who's always doing 'the right thing' (seriously?) and that she was happy to be his (pretend?) wife. Someone kill me now! Fitz would become upset with the news of Isabelle's marriage and subsequent coming of children, be a moron and drink and f*ck other women, while his wife pined away for him and got hurt and hurt and hurt. Millie was even sadistic enough to tell Fitz that she's in love with a married man. I think you know whom she meant. Fitz took her by her words, never once trying to delve into this reserved woman, who became his good friend in a very short time. I can't possibly explain the misery, the feeling of it, for Millie and for me as well.

So, I understand that for the first 3/4 years, Fitz didn't see Millie because had his head inside his arse (and other women's for that matter) but in one flashback, it was revealed that in the 4th yr of their marriage, he began to feel really attracted to Millie (and her brilliant business focused mind that so far helped them build an empire of sort). But did he do anything about it? Did he consider pursuing her, finding out if there could

be anything between them? NO! He kept on finding new fuckb*ddies instead, never once feeling guilty about it. SOB!! I was SO MAD, when once they went on to this vacation in Italy (in flashback) to celebrate their recent business success. By this time, their relationship was much better, consisting of more affection. Millie was still putting up this façade of ‘good friends’ to keep her sanity. But of course, Fitz the cheater didn’t disappoint and soon found someone to f*ck, even there. Millie observed and knew. What was that Millie? You started talking about his sluts after you found that out? Asking him how does it feel to seduce women? You even gave him clues as to how he works on getting his next slut, as you’ve observed over the years? Fitz discussed them as if it was nothing but a sport akin to horse-riding. He even confirmed that he slept with two sisters at a time. After all, Millie is his close friend now! *gag* Then, in your mind, you begin comparing yourself with them, that how it’d feel to be one of them? For this undeserving dirty f*cker who kept his virginity for his beloved Isabelle, until he knew he was marrying YOU? OMG, I felt like brushfiring Fitz!! Millie, GOD, MILLIE!! What is wrong with you woman? How could you sit there all those years, enduring this misery when I knew you had so much more to offer? I loved you woman, I still do and I believe we could become best buddies if you were real but I would never tolerate what you did! NEVER!! Why didn’t you stand up and took him by his d*ck and let him know who’s the boss??!

Millie?????

And thus, I found out that discussing Fitz’s sluts was an old ‘friendly hobby’ of theirs. God, I feel sick, plain SICK!

The flashbacks were distracting the hell outta me because I wanted to learn more of their relationship development at the present, rather than that gigantic mass of utter misery and the boring tidbits of their business world. I just didn’t care if they sold millions of canned foods or soft drinks or whatever. I just DON’T give a F*CK! I want to know what’s going on now. So I got really annoyed and skipped the business part and kept thinking of killing myself (or Fitz) with each and every wretched scene that reminded me that Millie was nothing to Fitz but a means to money and duty and just maybe a little affection. I didn’t believe in his supposed kindness. He was a man I would never respect! How can a man be so oblivious of this woman, with whom he was living and who worked with him every day to build his home and hearth, rain or shine? How was it that he never even thought about delving in and at least to know who she *really* was? Oh yes, that’s right, insensitive SOB who was also immensely immature. Fitz never grew up from his 19 yrs old self, and I can sadly confirm that neither did Millie from 17 yrs. old. And because of those flashbacks, there weren’t enough stories between them as far as their no-existent romance was concerned.

Then, Isabelle was returning and this cheater f*cker started planning away adultery, even arranging a townhouse, with Millie’s money. He was thinking of buying a house somewhere, with Millie’s Money. Every freakin’ thing on his back was bought with Millie’s MONEY and he had the temerity to think cheating on her was alright? And Millie, who never was jealous of those thousand other women (Fitz, shy? MY ARSE!), now suddenly is hurt because of Isabelle? Isabelle returns and Fitz the cheater goes to meet her with springs on his step. Ooh, my beloved has returned after 8 yrs! *gag* Millie inquires after these meetings as if she’s discussing some close friend.

Millie???????

Then, there are more gagworthy scenes between Fitz and Isabelle. She’s oblivious that she’s going to wreck a home, planning away their adultery too. It’s as if Millie’s feelings don’t count at all. I sat there, agape, thinking how callous people can be! I saw it much earlier what Fitz saw at the end (though maybe not in my

way), that Isabelle was just looking for someone to take care of her and manipulating Fitz was just plain convenient because he was a moron of the first order. Isabelle becomes angry when Fitz takes something from his and Millie's farm to give it to her, because it had Millie's touch. Oh really b*tch? She tells Fitz how not cool it is for a man of his station to 'engage himself in businesses'. She even had the audacity to present herself in the train station, when Venetia returned home from her honeymoon, as if she belonged there and Millie, who was a bit late to arrive, had no place, even after all she'd done. Isabelle was unwanted by everyone but Fitz.

Then Fitz thinks, oh, it's time to make legitimate heirs, then move on and so, time for another stupid plot. Have sex with the ignored wife of 8 yrs for 6 months, get her with child, then leave her for committing adultery. My head was hurting because neither Isabelle nor Fitz even considered the ramifications, be it Millie or the child. The home-wrecker b*tch was even angry that Fitz would bestow this much attentions to his wife. OMFG! And then, when they finally started having sex, everything turned from misery to plain awkward. It was painfully clear that ST has lost her focus and rhythm, as if she was grasping for something that wasn't quite coming out right... Millie was still compromising as ever, always saying *sorrys* that Fitz didn't deserve in the first place. NO WOMAN, no one asked you to be *that* understanding! I felt nothing from Fitz but lust. He never really had to prove anything to Millie. He NEVER ONCE apologized for his deplorable behavior throughout the years, while she proved herself over and over and over again and only got hurt in return. She NEVER voiced herself, until the very end and it wasn't even for herself but she was concerned for the children Fitz might have with Isabelle. They will bear the brunt of their illegitimacy and so, Millie asked for a divorce, so that Fitz can marry Isabelle.

Till the end, I had to witness Millie getting hurt (no matter the reason) and I wanted to question ST about why she was being so cruel and make Millie suffer so? Why not just kill the freakin' woman and give her some relief! She broke my heart over and over again, never quite delivering enough balm to heal my wounds. I don't want to read such misery that gives me nightmares. I don't want to read about a callous hero who humped OWs and pined away for someone else throughout the book. And I don't want such a 'saintly' heroine, who doesn't know when to think of herself and stand up when it's absolutely necessary. And I don't want to talk about this book ever in my entire life!!!!

I still feel like I haven't done enough ranting!

PS: Some development about Helena and Hastings's relationship were there too, and saved me from keeling over in misery. It seems like Hastings wants to become a writer and gave Helena his personal erotic writings aka porn *winkwink* to publish. Loved it! The only bit of fun I got from this book. Anxiously waiting for Tempting the Bride.

PPS: The author's note explains that the home-wrecker b*tch would be getting her story, a novella, in an upcoming anthology. I'm plain horrified by ST's attempt at making a wounded party out of her. Whatever! You can rest assured I'm not reading that.

Mei says

I don't know if I could do what Millie have done, but I applaud Ms. Thomas for having written such a wonderful story!

I wanted so many times to slap, shake, punch Fitz that it's not funny!!!!

How can an intelligent man submit a woman (his wife!!!) to something like that???!!! Inconceivable!!!

I got, at the beginning that he was devastated. I got that he didn't want to marry. I got that he was sick to his heart. I got all that!!! But, for God's sake, he went with other woman without shame or thought how his wife will feel about that!!!!

And when, after many years, finally they became friends and partners and they both had feeling for each other what did he do? He decided to leave Millie for his ex when she returns to London as a widow!!! With two children too!!! OMG!!! O-M-G!!!!

So, I don't, really don't know if I would have been able to bear all Millie went through! She was a saint!!! A fool, IMHO, but still a saint!

So, why 5 stars? Because Ms. Thomas (you, dear lady, are a genius!!!) has written an incredible story, where a saint (Millie) gets her heart's desire: the idiot she loves! More, the idiot finally discovers what a gem he has as a wife and how much he loves her!

What a journey this was!!! Spanning years, heartbreaks (for poor Millie obviously!) and beautiful freindship-building moments, this story has left me with a satisfaction of having read a true life, not love, but life-story!

Karla says

WARNING: GIFs (since it seems to be a bugaboo for some with liking and feeds and whatnot)

It's been a couple days and yet I still don't know how to formulate my thoughts about this book.

Why?

Because I still feel like this:

"Oh, but you're just a hater!" you might say. And you'd be (partly) right. These new romances do have lots to live up to IMO. It's not (entirely) my fault they usually fall short. I admit I'm a harsh grader with the plethora of Regencies and ~~Regencies in all-but-name~~ Victorian-set tales of passion, angst and woe that are published by the megafuckington load.

But I'd never read Sherry Thomas before, and the description of her as being an author who writes outside the normal formulas piqued my interest.

That said, **full disclosure**, this *was* a Snarky Buddy Read from the very beginning (and check out my colleague-in-pain's review here). But the praise for Thomas *did* have me optimistic.

blinks

And, to be fair, the writing was a cut above what I've suffered in other books (hence the second star). But still, pretty turns of phrase here and there don't erase the experience of...wait, let me get my list....

- 1) Godawful bloody annoying schticky narrative framing (aka time leaps back and forth between chapters) that wrought **absolute fucking havoc** on the characterization in relation to the story's pacing.
- 2) Totally unrelated-to-the-story-at-hand but blatant-and-obnoxious-please-buy-my-next-book secondary character subplot bait.
- 3) A heroine who is not only a doormat, but is a doormat used by people who step in dog crap.
- 4) A hero who is an emotionally-stunted bounder, which is not a sin in itself, but who doesn't possess one ounce of charisma to offset some unbelievable douchebaggery.
- 5) A total rush job climax and "resolution" that sucks donkey balls.

So as a half-assed stab at coherency, I'll digest one at a time.

#1: The Narrative Device

OK, this is from a purely self-centered perspective, but I don't have oodles of free time at a stretch where I can sit and read uninterrupted. It seems like lots of romance readers can consume a book in one sitting (or nearly so). You are "the other half" to me. I've got my nose pressed against the window of your lovely unencumbered afternoons (and your ability to stay up past 9pm). So when an author picks a gimmicky device like alternate timelines between chapters, it's not friendly to someone who has to put the book down every ten minutes and scramble to remember just WTF is going on (**and when**) every time I come back to it. There, uninteresting bitchery over.

Now, as for how it trashed the characterization, the way Millie's and Fitz's relationship unfolded didn't survive the sharp breaks between chapters/chronologies. So much of it was stagnant and soggy that I had no idea **what** time period I was in. (And those wretched secondary characters didn't help matters.) Then, at the end, it shifted gears entirely and seemed totally fake and alien to all that had come before it. When things had to change in the H and h's attitudes towards each other, it was usually told and not shown because we had to rush off and see what Book 3's couple were up to.

#2: Stop It With the Series Crap, Srsly

A huge reason why this book sucked was the shoehorning of **Couple from Book 1** and **Couple from Book 3** into Book 2. For a book that apparently clocks in at under 300 pages, the amount of series bait filler that eats up time is unforgivable. What did Helena's and Hastings's scenes have to do with Millie and Fitz? He gives her porn to publish and she gets horny. They always clash, but he's in love with her! And she's chasing after a married man! Oooh, when does Book 3 come out? I can't wait!

Sorry, but no. When I see these word-count gobbling bits o' **nothing** my reaction is not one of wallet-grabbing anticipation.

(Visual approximation)

It's the book in my hands *now* I want to focus on, not what's being released months down the road.

And yeah, I know this trend ain't changing anytime soon, but it's no less annoying.

#3: Millie the Doormat of Dog Crap

OMG, srsly, I've never yearned so much for a feisty TSTL heroine in my life. At least they grab their destiny by the balls and try to do something, even if it's idiotic, impulsive, and doomed to failure. What does Millie do? She waits, she endures, she suffers, and she eventually gets the prize at the end (and what a prize *eyeroll*). What the hell is the moral of this story? Show an aptitude for advertising chocolate bars and a willingness to suffer repeated humiliation and you'll earn the love of your man?

Truly, I don't know how Millie's mind works beyond the pathetic eagerness of a Golden Retriever for every crumb of consideration Fitz drops in front of her nose.

And this is a small bitch, pure and simple, but why must these heroines have little or nothing else in their bookcases besides Jane Austen and the Brontes (you know it's Charlotte)? C'mon, authors, do a little research and have your heroines be a little bit less cliché in their reading.

#4: Fitz the Douchebag

Look, I know it sucks to not marry the girl you want, but Fitz was a whingeing emo teen well into adulthood. He made the conscious decision to throw Isabelle over for an heiress who could fund his weekend trips to Home Depot and tidy up his crumbling manse. He had ~~little~~ nothing about him in his favor. Even by the final clinch, I didn't think that Fitz loved Millie. The only things that seemed to push him towards her in the end was that Isabelle is a class snob and he's been in business long enough to lose his own snobbery towards merchants. Oh, and the dormouse Isabelle gave him died, so that severed an emotional tie of steel.

Sherry Thomas loves her emoz, and Fitz is a wallower who trashes rented rooms, drinks himself into a stupor on his honeymoon, and pines for his jilted honey for years.

Not sure why I'm supposed to be glad that this douche decides the wife he humiliated in public for 8 years by carrying on with multiple women is hot in the sack the first time and worth keeping. Millie's masochism at wanting to hear about his amours (while weeping and dying inside) made them the most pathetic, miserable and unsympathetic couple I've ever read.

#5: That Suckass Rush Job Ending

After all the angst and slow-as-molasses-if-not-entirely-absent plot, to get a last-minute climax and declaration of lurve leaped over annoying and landed into full-on obnoxiousness territory. Really, that's how you want to push the story over the finish line? A silly misunderstanding, a frantic search, and then final clinch? Really??

But I really shouldn't have been surprised by the WTFery since the hero and heroine's biggest relationship moments can be distilled down to this formula:

Rachel Reads Ravenously says

4.5 stars

HELL HAS FROZEN OVER

I found a historical romance book that I LOVED!!! And it's all Didi's fault because of this spectacular review she wrote.

I have a long history of loathing with historical romance. As a history major in college I get nitpicky about the details and often end up screaming things at the book such as "why are you not pregnant yet?!" or "why are you talking like a millennial!". <---Neither of these two things were an issue with this book.

Ravishing the Heiress (with a title that has nothing to do with the book) is about a young girl named Millie who meets her intended fiance and falls in love with him on sight. The problem is Fitz is in love with another girl but he must marry Millie for money. Cue eight years of Fitz's anguish over losing the love of his life, and eight years of Millie anguishing over a husband who could never love her back. Through these eight years the two become best friends and have an unconventional marriage in which they aren't together intimately but only put on a show for propriety. Fitz also remains unaware of Millie's feelings for him.

This was the perfect angsty read to get me out of my reading funk, and it definitely made me rethink my historical romance ban. As long as it's angsty and historically accurate. For those who are maybe interested in reading this, it reminded me quite a bit of Natasha Anders' *The Unwanted Wife*, which I also loved.

Jill says

So, we come to it at last.

A mundane marital task, was this not? An obligation he'd put off for too long. Why then, as he advanced toward the bedroom, did he feel as if he were being swept out to sea? That the tides and currents would be unlike anything he'd ever known in the calm estuary that had been his marriage?

Millicent (Millie) Graves, an heiress was wed at sixteen. Her father determined that they be joined to a titled family, arranged the marriage to the impoverished Earl Fitzhugh. Fitz, at nineteen and newly titled, was not yet ready for marriage let alone children. Fitz and Millie make an agreement to not consummate the marriage until they both want children. Though married they would live separate lives for the agreed eight years. But now with the eight-year pact finally drawing to a close, Fitz's first and only love makes a reappearance in his life.

There are many talented writers of historical romance. But even they tend to write within certain guidelines, never wavering from what's expected from the genre. Sherry Thomas does not write the expected. She steps on the toes of predictable romance tropes. Her romances rely on the usual happily-ever-afters, misunderstandings and impossibly handsome heroes. But she takes a twisted and often tortured path to that rainbow at the end of the story. Her romances don't work for everyone, that's for sure.

But with a writing style and prose almost second-to-none in historical romance, she delivers in *Ravishing the*

Heiress another absorbing story. Sweet, sensible, self-controlled Millie falls in love at first sight with the handsome, young Fitz. Fitz, in love with another barely notices Millie as a woman, but they develop a deep, beautiful friendship over their eight-year marriage.

Readers who baulk at adultery, misunderstandings and the hero pining for another woman for most of the book, will have trouble enjoying this. Fitz, for the most part is a blind, selfish fool. He's offended when others disrespect Millie, yet he is the worst offender and the cause of others' disrespect, a hypocrite.

"No one is allowed to disrespect my wife, least of all some woman with whom I am temporarily keeping company."

Their honeymoon was awful, heartbreaking for Millie (and for me as a reader). The narrative switches back and forth between the past and present. The resolution of all this drama is quick and the ending abrupt.

But like every Sherry Thomas novel I've read, at the end, I'm left with the impression that I've just read something more than a mere romance.

Steam: 2.5

Pavlina Read more sleep less blog♥♥ says

Omg this was amazing!! I wasn't so frustrated most of the time with the hero and I cried a lot but it was such a beautiful story! I wish there was more!

Las says

The take home message of this book: Be a good girl, never complain, don't make any waves, and eventually he'll fall in love with you.

Yeah, I hated everything about this book.

It's love at first sight for Millie. She just sees Fitz, and boom, it's love. I'd give her a pass on that since she was only 16, but since she shows no signs of growing up in the course of this story, I'm calling it Fail #1.

Fitz still fancies himself in love with Isabelle after not having had anything to do with her for 8 years. "But they were so in love!" you say? They weren't married, or engaged, or in a relationship, really. They were teenagers in the throes of their first crush. As tragic as the circumstances of their parting were, they each went their own way and had lives of their own. But they still managed to be in love with each other, so much so that when Fitz finds out her husband died, he immediately contacts her, and they make arrangements to spend the rest of their lives together, his wife and her children be damned. That's...not normal. If it had been, say, three years, sure, that would be understandable. But eight years? Fail #2.

So Fitz just announces to Millie that he plans to permanently live with Isabelle, right? But first he and Millie

are going to follow their original plan and finally have sex after 8 (EIGHT!!!) years of marriage, and hopefully conceive in the 6 month window Fitz--without consulting with Millie, but why should he, since she'll just nod her head like the good little girl she is?--has decided is an appropriate amount of time. After a bit of a freakout, Millie, of course, agrees, no questions asked. Questions like, "Hey, asshole, don't you think it's fucked up that you plan to abandon me for another woman, making me an object of curiosity and ridicule in society?" or, "So let's say I conceive--what's your plan then? You're going to abandon your child? Or do you expect me to hand him over after I give birth? How exactly will this child be raised with one parent sobbing in her pillow every night because she's a pathetic loser with shitty tastes in men and another who's shacking up with his childhood sweetheart? And how will society treat him under such circumstances?" (You can change the above language to make it historically accurate.) With all that's wrong with this book, THAT is what most chaps my ass. Those things didn't occur to anyone? Fail #3.

As Fitz and Isabelle spend more time together, he inevitably starts comparing her and Millie, with Isabella coming short. That's right, people, he has to be annoyed by the woman he loves in order for him to consider staying with Millie. What's the problem with Isabella? Well, what it all boils down to is that Isabella is too opinionated. She's impulsive, vivacious, has qualms about his interests in business and isn't afraid to tell him so. I suppose I should be grateful Sherry Thomas didn't go completely conventional and make Isabella a total bitch, but, really, the end result was the same...Fitz having an easy choice to make because one woman is so "obviously" wrong for him (personally, I think he could use a woman who would challenge him, but that's not the kind of heroine we're stuck with). Fail #4.

Both the book and many reviewers insist that Millie should have been honest about her feelings to Fitz. I don't agree. First, because I don't really believe in her love for him--love at first sight doesn't count, and there's not a single indication that Millie's love ever matures from that beginning. If at the very least there has been a moment where Millie thought, "What the hell was wrong with me that I thought I loved this fool," especially during their honeymoon, and then showed her falling in love in earnest, than yeah, I'd call it love. But that never happened. Second, and most importantly, Millie's pride in this is about the only thing I found admirable about her. Why would she confess to loving a man who's made it clear he doesn't love her; who plans to leave her and live with another women? We're told that by telling him, it will open his eyes to how much he loves her, and that's what ends up happening. And that, my friends, is bullshit. Why would anyone want that? How could anyone believe in the love of man who barely noticed you for 8 years, who had to told that you loved him in order for the possibility of a future between them to occur to him? How can anyone believe that this man truly loves her instead of just feeling a combination of lust and obligation? Of course, Millie believes it easily. She actually knows he's in love with her before he does, and she just (quietly! Ever the stoic martyr, our Millie) hopes that he'll eventually realize it and and come back to her, so she can happily take him back, no questions asked, no anger, no recriminations. Fail #5

The book sets up Helena's story with Hastings. Helena, pretty much the only interesting women in the series, is getting a really shitty love story. Another love at first sight tale, since Hastings has loved her forever, and he has a really creepy way of showing it. Following her around, interfering in her private life, threatening her...yeah, that sounds like the makings of a great love story. Fail #6.

What the hell happened to Sherry Thomas?

Kelly22 says

[image error]

Wicked Incognito Now says

In a nutshell, this newest Sherry Thomas novel is rather similar to some of her past successful stories. This has all of the unrequited angst of *Not Quite a Husband* and *Private Arrangements*, without the past of betrayal and heartache. The heartache is there, of course, but in a blameless form.

Millie is the heiress, and Fitz holds the title. Like so many HR plots, Fitz must marry the heiress in order to bring his estate back from debt and ruin. They are both extremely young, and to make it worse, Fitz is madly in love with another girl. What's more, Millie instantly and illogically falls head over heels for Fitz. When she discovers that he is heartbroken, she can't bear to find herself marrying someone who will always resent her. So she offers him a bargain: Let's not live as a married couple until we are honor bound to produce an heir. We shall live separately for eight years. Fitz, of course, jumps at the chance to sow his wild oats and wallow in his heartache. Meanwhile, the two develop a magnificent friendship that leaves Millie in constant yearning for the man at her side.

I think Sherry Thomas has outdone herself here. She has really hit her stride as a writer. I adored *Beguiling the Beauty* (released two months ago) and this newest novel even improves upon *Beauty*. ST has managed to take her past successes and has honed her skills to an art-form. These novels are extremely tightly plotted. I'm convinced Thomas's skills at pacing are unparalleled. It is simply impossible to put her books down.

This novel, like most of her others, takes place in the present as well as the past. Just when things are beginning to get really interesting in the present, she abandons the present to take the reader back to scenes in the past. It can be highly irritating, but it forces the reader to calm down and enjoy the ride. It forces us to watch how this couple has come to be in the place they currently are. It's careful characterization at its best. Just when I think I am going to be horribly disappointed in the outcome of the novel, something happens to assuage my growing frustration. Just when the hero or the heroine have irritated me to the point that I'm mentally yelling at my Kindle (wishing I could throw it against the wall), the heroine or the hero do something that soothes my agitation. I think, "alright, that's what I wanted."

This particular predicament is caused by stupid actions and feelings. Let's not mistake that this heroine and hero could've easily righted their wrongs. But this is why I love this book. People do stupid things and find themselves in predicaments caused by too much pride and not enough backbone. But I HATE perfect heroes. I hate perfect heroines. I love stories of people finding themselves and each other and getting over their emotional baggage. I can easily understand how anyone would find themselves in these situations. Many reviewers have reviled Fitz, and I understand that. But his situation is entirely based upon believing that Millie had no interest in him romantically. She was so head over heels for him that she rebuffed a few of his early attempts to get close to her (I'm not sure why, that was a bit strange). He really did feel that she only wanted the close friendship that they had developed.

Sherry Thomas excels at creating internal conflict. This is the type of romance novel I always want to read. Because so few authors do this well, I find myself savoring every new release of a Sherry Thomas book like a decadent cake. *Beguiling the Beauty* was the first ST release in two years. It was the equivalent of anticipating a gorgeous red velvet cake for months on end and then gorging on it in two days. And then soon after we engorged readers are presented with the hot fudge sundae of *Ravishing the Heiress*. It doesn't get any better than this!!!

Now, even though I patting my full belly in complete satisfaction, I get to anticipate *Tempting the Bride* for release in October. Mmmm....turtle chocolate cheesecake anyone?

Cecilia says

Disappointing. I like the marriage of convenience plot, and I love the way Sherry Thomas does angst. I even liked the flips back and forth in time - it was a slightly different way to get the story of how the relationship developed between the two protagonists. I didn't even mind the heroine's inability to speak up for herself for most of the book; she seemed to be functioning mainly on pride, and that made sense to me. However, what did not appeal to me was the hero's behaviour. I get that he had a heart-breaking disappointment, but while that gives him leave to be moody, I thought his behaviour crossed the line several times into douche territory. Only at the end does he stop being an arse, and then it's all over. In terms of respecting his wife, I would really have liked him to grow up a lot sooner. And, in terms of him getting his happy outcome after all the pain he's given his wife, I think I needed to seem him have to work for it. Another aspect that didn't thrill me was how much time in this short book was given to the couple that will feature in the next book.

Sam (AMNReader) says

I rate this about a 4.25. I'm big into rounding down these days.

About 4.25 of those stars are for Millie's fortitude. Her stoic pragmatism was something here, and her strength something else.

I won't recap, but I'll definitely say in many ways this isn't an easy read. And it would be easy to malign Fitz for his choices and seemingly constant rejection of Millie, but part of why this book worked was that he, too, was rejected time and again by her. (At least in my eyes. If my spouse is all, "hey, going to meet another lover?" or "hey, jumping off the bed when you are sexy snuggling" it'd feel kind of shitty) I'm not sure why he'd think anything but what he thought, and his appreciation of her really did ring true from the very early 'bricks' of their relationship. Also well done was her 'status' in his eyes. This very sweet "no one treats my wife rudely" thing, which could sound ironic, but isn't.

And friendship is such a lovely foundation, isn't it? I think the choices in this book were brave and made for a unique plot. It would be easy to have Fitz hung up on his long forgotten lover but Thomas made her *available* to him, and in the end that's what set this book apart. I did feel like the end was too quick--would have loved some more quiet scenes from these two once they really start their lives together.

So a couple random paragraphs there, but in the end I'll just say this: I loved their quiet humor, I loved their quiet strength, and I loved their quiet and powerful love.

Didi says

4.5 STARS

I LOVED this. Let me first just say that the title is quite misleading. Ravishing The Heiress is a title that sounds like you'd be reading a bodice ripper, or that the story is quite lusty and not very deep. In reality it was none of these things. It was angsty, emotional, heartbreaking and beautiful all at the same time. This is not a quick historical romance and although it's just under 300 pages, it unravels slowly, letting you witness the evolution of love from friendship.

This also reminded me of Unforgivable, by Joanna Chambers. Same idea: a young and plain girl gets married off to a fledgling man of the nobility to save his family from ruin. Said man is resentful and not at all happy to be married off to someone other than the girl he loves. Whereas in Unforgivable, the hero was quite the asshole, abandoning his wife and seeking other women for pleasure, this book shows our hero accepting his lot in life and basically making the best of it.

You see, impoverished and almost destitute, George Fitzhugh has become an earl at age 19. His distant cousin, the previous Earl, has died suddenly and was betrothed to Heiress Millicent Graves, in a bid to save his land and title. Now the burden falls on Fitz (George), but not only is he in opposition to the union, he also must abandon his love, Isabelle Englewood and marry Millie.

My heart broke for Millie so much throughout this book. She was in love with Fitz from day one even though she was only 16. Their marriage became very amicable and they became very good friends but never consummated their union, rather deciding to wait 8 years! Why? I'm not going to spoil that one! But throughout their marriage, they became close and dear to one another. Millie would get her hopes up but then they'd be squashed again with Fitz's unrequited love. She never shared with Fitz how she felt, believing that to protect her heart she must remain stoic and complacent. She knew what he did with other women, it wasn't a secret then that a man had a wife and various lovers throughout his life. But she suffered internally and quietly.

I also loved Fitz. I tried to hate him for how he made Millie feel, although unbeknownst to him, but he was a great and caring husband in almost every sense of the word. But his affection and lust were entertained elsewhere. Until Isabelle came back on the scene. I couldn't stand that woman! I understand she and Fitz once had something but she was so callous at times and insensitive to Millie and her position in Fitz's life. Watching Fitz slowly realize how he truly felt about Millie was one of my favorite things about this book. It was almost subconscious, his change in feeling. He'd bottled up his desires and thoughts and mistook them for friendship but when things were tested he really came through. Still, the honeymoon scene broke me in two, and many others had me tearing up constantly, especially when Millie believed Fitz had abandoned her.

This was a beautifully written, moving, emotional and affecting book. I love the friends to lovers plot but seeing it with a twist here was fantastic. Unrequited love is a guaranteed tear jerker for me, it gets me every time. But when that person finally sees the fool he or she has been, it's perfection. The only thing I wished was for there to be an epilogue, it just ends but maybe in the next book we'll see more of Fitz and Millie though the next book is about Fitz's sister, Helena. Highly recommend this book to HR fans, it's different and refreshing, also beautiful and epic feeling. Loved it, loved it!
