



## The Shy Duchess

*Amanda McCabe*

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## **The Shy Duchess** Amanda McCabe

With her golden hair and dazzling emerald eyes, Lady Emily Carroll should have her pick of suitors. Instead, her crippling shyness has earned her the nickname "Ice Princess."

Nicholas, Duke of Manning, isn't looking for a bride, but he won't pass up a stolen kiss at a masked ball. With her blushes hidden, Emily lets her inhibitions go. Only to find herself betrothed! Now it's her wedding night, and her new husband seems determined to thaw his Ice Princess and reveal her every secret....

## **The Shy Duchess Details**

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Author : Amanda McCabe

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Genre : Romance, Historical Romance, Historical, Regency, Regency Romance, Historical Fiction

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# From Reader Review The Shy Duchess for online ebook

## Kelly says

I would have said that this was your 'standard' Mills and Boon novel - Hero, Heroine, few silly obstacles, realisation of love - it was actually one of the better ones that I had read. Two criticisms beyond general Mills and Boon flaws: Firstly, Emily was a klutz. She fell over about 12000 times in the first few chapters, for no other reason than it gave Nicholas a chance to touch her. Yet, once they 'hooked up' she didn't so much as stumble again. Secondly, one of my pet hates in books is when characters constantly recite the other characters names.

*'Are you tripping over like an idiot, Emily?' 'I am, Nicholas!'*

Not the mention my even **bigger** pet hate, which is when relations call each other *By. Their. Relationship.*  
\*Shudder\*

*'Hello Sister!' 'Morning, Brother, did you see that ditz Emily fall over again?'*

A light, afternoon read but nothing to set your literary world alight.

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## Carrie says

Lovely historical. McCabe is one of my favorite harlequin historical authors.

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## Becca12348 says

DNF. Some spoilers in further comments.

Only made it about a fourth of the way in. This books is SO CONTRIVED. The writing is juvenile (way too many exclamation points and quotations) and tries too hard. The characters lack depth and are generally unlikable, but perhaps this is because the heroine seems to dislike everyone around her (it almost reads as though she belittles their existence, and thinks that she is above everything and everyone.)

Emily, the heroine, is a mismatched conglomeration of characteristics that the author seems to hope are becoming, but ultimately read as inconsistent. Many things also seem to be out of place for the time period. Exactly how does the governess of an earl's daughter become the master of a school to help former prostitutes? Where does she get the funds to not only teach these girls, but to house and feed them? How could she think it possibly appropriate to hire her former charge as a teacher? If she truly cared about Emily and understood the society in which she lives (which presumably she does since she was a governess to the aristocracy), how could she possibly think this a good idea? Secrets like these don't tend to stay secret. Emily doesn't even try that hard to keep it a secret. She brings along a maid, whose allegiance is not to her mistress, but to her mother and father. How would she ensure the maid's silence?

Also, if Emily is supposedly under the microscope of her parents, and society, how is she able to find time every week to make it to this part of town for hours? It feels like this situation was ultimately contrived - invented simply for the purpose to show the audience, oh look how likeable our heroine is! She wants to be helpful! Granted, I did only read about 25% of the book. Perhaps these questions get answered further on,

but given the quality of writing I doubt it.

The hero also seems to lack depth. He's so much of a Gary Stu, it's hard to understand him. The author does try though - we get the sad story of his first wife, but the description of their whirlwind courtship seems forced and unlikely.

The stories I tend to give one stars to, I usually do because they affront my morals (i.e. rape, dubious consent, general assholishness). This book didn't really qualify under these standards, but I couldn't give it more. It was NOT a good book. I can't say that "it was okay," because it really wasn't. It reads like something a high school student would write. No depth and fully contrived.

I feel so horrible about having cut this book to shreds, especially when I didn't even finish it. Perhaps it DOES get better, but I don't have the motivation to read further. I really don't see how it could get better, but never say never.

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## **Jess the Romanceaholic says**

This is a Quickie Review. For the full review, please visit The Romanceaholic.

Expected Release Date: February 15, 2011 (Available Now!)

Publisher: Harelquin

Imprint: Harlequin Historical

Author's Website: <http://ammandamccabe.com/>

My Source for This Book: Gift

Part of a Series: Diamonds of Welbourne Manor (spinoff)

Series Best Read In Order: Works well as a standalone

Steam Level: Steamy

Overall, this was a delightfully soft, fairly lighthearted historical romance. Emily's shyness combined with her desire to please and take care of her family made her a wonderful heroine, but she also balanced her giving nature with a touch of rebellion in some of her charity work, which helped to keep her from becoming boring. Nicholas was more of a beta-hero than I'd expected, but even so, he was a good man and grew to become truly devoted to her.

In the end, this was a very sweet, yet sexy tale, perfect for those times when you want a lighter read rather than one heavy on the angst.

Recommended for fans of shy heroines (of course), of marriages to avoid scandal, and of two people discovering that sometimes the one you thought the most ill-suited for you is actually your perfect match.

4.5/5 Stars

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## **Preeti ♥? (Romance She Reads) says**

Another oxymoron of the day - treacly fluff!

*How adorably earnest she looked, his serious new duchess.*

A truly shy h unlike the purported ones who start roaring like lionesses pretty soon in the story. I am not

much for wallflower/bluestocking hs, for the authors tend to overs-stress on these qualities making for a flat, dreary reading.

But this h's shyness is believable and relatable and she's a true sweetheart. The society sees her as a haughty and cold 'ice princess' as does the H and his family.

*She was not the sort of lady he usually liked. She was quiet, watchful, where he liked blithe gregariousness, daring and humour.*

But he cannot help being drawn to her again and again.

The H's a nice decent guy, if a secretly tormented widower who keeps his pain well hidden even from his family.

Some mishaps and incidents push them towards each other. There's a wary attraction but love doesn't feature on their mindscapes. A practical moc ensues and a sweet, heart-melting and at the same time bland journey to love and hea follows.

*She smiled as she touched the petals, suddenly looking so very young and free. The shy, slightly worried London lady was gone. And he could feel his old, grief-saddened self melting away, too.*

Two things that I need clarification for...

*"And once—well, once there was a person. But that was a long time ago, when I was too young to appreciate what such an understanding was."*

Who's the H referring to here? His dead wife would be a logical conclusion. But he has shared with the h about his first wife. If this person was her, he could have said so but he leaves it at this. Just curious.

And who's the h referring to here??

*Perhaps the dark-eyed lady needed him, or maybe he could not bear to be away from her so long.*

This happens just after she discovers the first wife's painting in his desk and he comes in to tell her that they are leaving for London. The only ow barely referred to, is a redhead and the h knows the first wife is dead so who the hell is this!

Darn niggles!

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## Hina says

My first book of this author, and it was a good one. Emily Carroll is a beautiful young lady of the ton whose parents are looking to get their daughter married. She could have had a bevy of suitors, if not for her debilitating shyness around people, the men misinterpret that she is an "ice princess" and the rest think of her as a wallflower, since she spends much of her time hiding in ballrooms behind potted plants. Nicholas, Duke of Manning is being pressured by his family to get married and for a while Emily seemed to be a good candidate, but Nicholas thought she was too serious to fit into his fun loving, outgoing family. But Nicholas has his own reason to not want to get married, and hopes his brother Stephen will be his heir. Through coincidental meetings, Nicholas and Emily get to know each other and under the guise of masks, kiss thinking the other doesn't recognize. Nicholas realizes that Emily is no ice princess, but very warm, friendly and kind to those she knows, but feels guilty about kissing her and feels honor bound to propose even though he does not want to get married. Emily realizes that Nicholas is outgoing and is always surrounded by people and his family, you can be alone in a crowd of people and Nicholas rather be alone in his country estate than in London. When they meet again at the last ball of the season, Emily confesses of the kiss and is angry

when she finds out he knew her identity all along. They get caught in a compromising position in which Nicholas promptly announces their betrothal. They both decide to make the best of the situation and try to have a happy life. Nicholas tells Emily the reason he did not want to get married and that no one else knows, even his family was that he fell in love and got married in Italy while on his grand tour but his wife died. He does not tell her that his wife died in childbirth along with the baby and that he is deathly afraid that if Emily gets pregnant, her life would be in danger, so he doesn't plan on getting Emily pregnant. Emily also keeps secrets from her husband like she has fallen in love with him, but after finding his former wife's picture in his desk think Nicholas still loves his first wife. She also does not tell him that her former suitor, Mr. George Rayburn is blackmailing her after he finds out that she volunteers her time to teach disadvantaged females who are former prostitutes and as a newly duchess will bring scandal on Nicholas. In the end, Nicholas does figure out her secrets and that he too is in love with his wife and his wife tells him she is pregnant and they can get through it together and Mr. Rayburn gets a thrashing.

In my opinion, this historical romance was very drama free compared to the others especially being a Harlequin. Emily and Nicholas had issues of their own, but they seem to work through them without much angst. I don't know if that was because the book was not long enough and the character didn't have the time to develop or that it was author's intent to be as angst-free as possible because problems arose and they were solved very easily. Emily slowly seemed to be gaining confidence and finding out who she is, but we do not see that in action. Nicholas seemed to move through his fear of childbirth as well only in a couple of pages, although it seemed ridiculous that he took no additional precaution and kept having unprotected sex, so yes don't be so surprised that she ends up pregnant. Overall, the book was pretty good, even with the lack of angst and the relief reader feels that it will all end in happily ever after. Nicholas and Emily were very likeable characters and regardless of missing a developed plot, somehow the author cleverly made that deficit feel inconsequential. The book is enjoyable to read especially if you are looking for something light-hearted and quick.

I think this is the series in order since it's not numbered:

1. Diamonds of Wellbourne Manor by Diane Gaston
2. The Shy Duchess by Amanda McCabe
3. How to Marry a Rake by Deb Marlowe

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## **Elaine says**

Oh, such a lovely story. Wholly enjoyable.  
4.5\*

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## **Mou says**

My Second harlequin romance ... I have to admit harlequin historical books are better than modern harlequin romances ...

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## Karyn Gerrard says

3.25 out of 5 stars

This was a leisurely, inoffensive read, much like the shy duchess herself. Emily hides among potted palms at social events, such is her painful shyness. Even though she is beautiful and her parents have pinned their hopes on her marrying well, most of the eligible men call her 'The Ice Princess', Emily overhears just such talk from a couple of gentlemen, and in fleeing the scene in mortification, falls against a well muscled chest.

It is Nicholas, Duke of Manning. He is every inch the proper Duke, in looks and bearing. They had met before at a house party (part of the Anthology The Diamonds of Welbourne') They have an enlightening conversation. Nicholas cannot forget her. Perhaps, she would make him a good Duchess, she is well mannered and well born. But did he want an ice princess in his bed?

Nicholas is a fine hero, upstanding, a true gentleman, and one with a secret. He has been lonely a long time, and the more he comes across Emily, the more he senses a simmering passion under the ice princess facade.

Nothing really earth shattering happens in this book, it is focused almost exclusively on Emily and Nicholas, and their sweet but short courtship was endearing. But I felt it lacked a real narrative heat, no real tension in the plot. An over zealous suitor of Emily posts a touch of menace, but hardly merits a raised eyebrow. Also Emily herself is keeping a secret, but again, it is not enough to cause any great shock.

However, once Emily becomes the duchess, things heat up between her and Nicholas. She discovers Nicholas' secret, and it has her doubting they could ever be truly happy, despite how well matched they are in the bedroom.

A satisfactory read, I found the hero and heroine well thought out and their love story sweet with a nice balance of heat to keep things from getting too dull. However, I wished there was more going on here to create a little tension.

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## Michelle says

*The Shy Duchess* started with *The Ice Princess*—Lady Emily Carroll, strolled outside and almost took a fall before she was rescued by the Duke of Manning—Nicholas Fitzmanning. They immediately attracted to each other though remained oblivious of each other's feelings. Nevertheless, the two got married after a scandalous encounter at another ball. And so, began their journey towards self-discovery and each other. Lady Emily seemed sensible and smart at first, but then she disappointed me by making stupid decisions over and over again. She asked Nicholas about one secret that no one else knew of and he told her. But she didn't consider it worthwhile to mention her secrets. She closed up to everyone and I was disappointed that one of her problems didn't get the proper resolution. In fact, it wasn't even mentioned despite the heavy impact it had on Emily's trouble to trust people.

On the other hand, I was satisfied with the way the author handled the marriage of convenience. The main characters acted like adults and talked their problems with each other except the aforementioned secrets. Nicholas cared for Emily and showed it. He understood that his first wife was his past and that Emily was his future. It was refreshing to see such a common sense sometimes in romance novels. His fear for Emily being

pregnant was justified considering that his first wife died in childbirth. It was only that Emily's habit to jump to stupid conclusion about Nicholas and his feeling for her that annoyed me. I guess it was only essential for the drama to last for as long as it could. ?

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## **Michelle K says**

Totally not for me. Kudos for the beautiful cover that drew me in though.  
<http://anotherlookbookreviews.blogspot...>

Just look at the beautiful cover. It is a piece of art! So lovely. In fact, I was drawn to read *The Shy Duchess* from my huge TBR pile because of that beautiful cover. I won this book in a fabulous blog hop and I was eager to try a new to me author. I am a huge historical romance reader as it is my favourite of all the romance genres but *The Shy Duchess* wasn't for me. I want to be specific why I didn't care for the book because my reasons may very well be the same reasons other would love this story.

I am not a shy person. I am reserved and I like to hold back a bit in a crowd until I am comfortable but I am very very far from being shy. Reading about *The Shy Duchess*, I had a very difficult time relating to Lady Emily because she was so timid and skittish. She saw the worst in every situation and seem to seek out the negative with every interaction. I like my female protagonists to be confident and sure of themselves. Reading about all of Emily's hesitant reactions drove me a little crazy.

Nicholas was not a manly alpha Duke character that had a tortured upbringing. He wasn't abused and in fact had a wonderful family. It was nice change for once but then I realized as it turns out, he was boring. I know lots of readers that don't like the whole tortured past going on with their heroes so *The Shy Duchess* is for you. Is this the type of conversations you enjoy? Let me set it up for you...

Emily and Nicholas sneak away to a secret watering hole on their honeymoon and they are laughing and having a great time. Nicolas says to Emily, ...."we could sing and weave daisy chains, and lay in the sun all day long."

Yeah I don't know about you but weaving daisy chains doesn't bode well with me and what I like to read from my heroes.

Even with Emily here is an example of her getting all mad and angry. "It was time for something quite extreme. She was going to have to get rude."

Oh heavens forbid my female protagonists doing extreme rudeness!

So *The Shy Duchess* is as fluffy as a romance novel as you could get. She is an annoying English proper prude and he is as gentle as an English gentleman could be. All wrapped up in a whole lot of boring.

Teasers: stuffy ballrooms, firework display, gallant save from a runaway carriage, morning sickness before her courses were even missed \*eyeroll\*

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## **Ti says**

This book is really a very solid 3.5 to 3.75 - It doesn't quite get to 4 territory. It is nice that the premise is of a



shy lady, but somehow it doesn't ever get over being self-conscious as a book. The sex is written well, but still somewhat odd, not really sexy, but fairly well done. It would have improved by having the sex and touching be a smidge more erotic.

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### **Kimm says**

The cover of this book caught my attention every time I passed it in the store (which was a lot...). I finally gave in, because it was a Regency after all. How can you go wrong? Besides, it's Amanda McCabe and she writes great books.

A beautiful and aloof heroine who is woefully misunderstood by everyone is one of my favorite character types. Lady Emily fits the profile perfectly. Her relationship with Nicholas follows the standard romance pattern all the way to their Happily Ever After. It's the perfect afternoon or weekend read to temporarily escape the stresses of life. No disappointments found here and the detail to the Regency period is an appreciated bonus.

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### **Bella says**

**Lady Emily Carroll** is extremely shy, preferring to stay at home reading or teaching rather than going to balls and such. However due to her station and her mother's eagerness to see her married, Emily must attend at least some of the balls. During one of these balls she hears some unfortunate things about her and decides to step out for a bit, there she literally runs into ...

**Nicholas, Duke of Manning** who is not necessarily looking for a marriage, is very proper and is trying to do everything to uphold the family name. Nicholas and Emily have actually met before this incident but due to her shyness Emily thinks she has no chance with the Duke, much to her mother's despair.

Due to an unfortunate or fortunate (depending on how you look at it) Nicholas and Emily must marry. Both seem ok with this, there was no resentments and such.

This book was really easy to read, there was no great tension and there didn't seem to have much happening really. It was really low on angst which I appreciated.

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### **Angela Fristoe says**

I guess I was expecting more conflict.

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