



The Education of Mrs. Brimley

Donna MacMeans

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A little knowledge is a dangerous thing...

Emma Brimley made one small fib in her application to teach at the Pettibone School for Young Ladies: She claimed to be a widow. But when she arrives in Yorkshire, she is dismayed to learn that she's expected to prepare her students for the intimacies of marriage—of which she knows nothing! Her only hope of maintaining her place lies with the alluring Lord Nicholas Chambers, a neighboring artist whose behavior is scarcely consistent with that of a gentleman.

True to his reputation, "Lord Bedchambers" offers Emma a scandalous bargain: He will answer her questions about anatomy and bedroom etiquette if she will pose for him...in the Grecian fashion. Though keenly aware of the dangers of such a scenario, Emma determines to best this noble roué—never thinking she may be risking her heart as well.

The Education of Mrs. Brimley Details

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Author : Donna MacMeans

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From Reader Review The Education of Mrs. Brimley for online ebook

LibraryLass says

This is a great debut novel with a storyline which is not the norm. I liked the build up of the sensual heat between Emma and Nicholas. At first I thought I would be put off with the idea of her posing for an artist, but it worked really well throughout the whole story.

The author built towards the end with a good rhythm and pace to her storyline. The essential secondary characters were well written and added to the story quite nicely. The only negative comment is that I thought the author could have (should have) fleshed out the relationship between Alice and Emma...only because of what transpires at the end.

Overall though a great and enjoyable book which I read in one sitting. I look forward to her next book.

♥?elody says

What a dud. Oy. The plot and set up had sooo much potential but the actual execution was really disappointing and fell completely FLAT.

It took me forever to finish this. I just could not get into it and I felt the story dragged out forever. One of my main issues with this was the heroine, Emma. I'm not a fan of uptight prudish heroines, my patience runs really short usually when I'm stuck with a book that has one. It just dries up the story for me and makes it less enjoyable to read. But besides that, Emma's complete naivete and obliviousness to sexual relations and men in general just went a little extreme and unrealistic for me. To be honest, she came off a little TSTL at times and just wishy washy. The constant debating or questioning the hero's true intentions and calling him 'sir' through the whole damn book just drove me berserk. The man has made love to you, pretty much declared his feelings, has seen you naked yet you STILL call him 'sir'?? WTF? Just made me roll my eyes. Sorry genteel rules or not, it's too damn haughty and ridiculous for my mind to grasp. And as from a romance aspect?? UNromantic.

Besides that, I really wanted to like the characters, love them but just couldn't. They came off very one dimensional and just meh. I barely got to know the hero in this, Nicholas. Through half the book you barely get his POV, get a fuzzy description of what he looks like *barely* and 80% of the book is focused on the heroine's shame, guilt and fluttering over her bad bad dark awful secret. RME. We keep getting Emma's POV constantly but barely anything on Nicolas until the last half of the book. It's like the author didn't want to spend time fleshing him out. He has a limp and walks with a cane, I was curious to know the story behind it, yet the author decided to wait to reveal that information near the end in a passing conversation to his BROTHER and not the heroine. Come on. Nicolas came off as more of a secondary character at times which is strange. What a waste. A male hero who's an artist is just all kinds of yum in my book. *sigh* And the villainous Uncle in this was just so incredibly vile and disgusting that I couldn't believe it.

The only part that made me smile was that surprisingly sweet poem at the end. Made the inner-artist in me all starry-eyed. If only I had an artist write me such a beautiful endearingly sweet prose. :P

Iza says

It was not exactly what I expected it to be, but it turned out better than I thought !

I don't think it was historically completely accurate (who would leave a woman, even a widow, alone in the company of a rogue and think nothing of it), but who cares ? The story was good, the romance was very good, I enjoyed reading it immensely and am happily looking forward to reading the next :D

Christa says

I found this book to be okay, but nothing special. At the beginning of the book, I did not find the hero appealing, but I liked him better as the book progressed. The heroine was mostly likeable, but I found her to be somewhat annoying. Her attitude towards the hero seemed to waver back and forth in a tiresome manner.

Emma Brimley has been hired to teach at a school for young ladies in Yorkshire. Upon arrival, she finds that she is required to teach what young ladies should expect from marital intimacy. This is a problem, as Emma lied on her application, is not the widow she claimed to be, and is an innocent herself. Hearing that neighboring Black Oaks is home to Lord Nicholas Chambers, whom the schoolmistresses find scandalous and shocking, Emma visits him with the idea of borrowing books of an intimate nature. Lord Nicholas, an aspiring artist, tells Emma that he will answer all of her intimate questions if she will pose for him. For each question asked, Emma will remove an article of clothing and pose for him in the resulting state. As Emma gains instruction from Nicholas, he paints her, and they become attracted to one another. As they succumb to attraction for one another, they must decide if they can trust one another.

I didn't dislike this book, but I didn't find it to be engrossing reading material. I didn't feel much of a connection between the hero and heroine, and was disappointed in that lack. There didn't seem to be much trust, liking, or chemistry between them. I will probably read more by this author only on the recommendation of someone with very similar reading tastes to mine.

Melissa says

I enjoyed this book, even though the premise is completely ridiculous and some of the things that happened made me roll my eyes. It kept me entertained the whole time, and sometimes that's all I need. A 3.5 rating, I'd say.

Cheryl says

[image error]

Nisha says

As a debut novel, this is off the charts. I loved it. Unlike most of the historical romances I read, this one takes place during the Victorian, specifically the late 19th c. Our hero is Lord Nicholas Chambers, a man with a scandalous reputation and aspirations to be an artist. Still a player, but he's an artist, so I guess it is easy to forgive. Our heroine is just as awesome. She is Mrs. Emma "Brimley", the new girls schoolteacher of Literature and manners, along with the bedroom arts (aka. sex ed). If only Emma wasn't a virgin. To get the knowledge required for her job, Emma goes to the one person who could give her the information, Nicholas. Somehow, they manage to form a bargain, she poses for his next piece while he gives her lessons on the male anatomy and sex.

Obviously things never go as planned and the bargain becomes more in no time.

This was such a pleasure to read. Emma was a virgin for about 3/4ths of the book, but the build up was great. Not only sensual, but hilarious (since somehow, her experiences are transferred into her sex ed lessons). Nicholas was such a cute hero, and a real nice guy, despite his many 'girls'.

Dina says

This was my 1st read by Ms. MacMeans and her debut book, and it was a great start for both of us. :)

Emma Heatherston is forced to escape from London after she overhears her sleazy uncle's plans for her: she's to be sold to the highest bidder - a rich husband or a brothel, it doesn't matter - to fund his expensive lifestyle. Pretending to be Mrs. Emma Brimley, a young widow in need of a new life, she manages to get a teaching job at the Pettibone School for Young Ladies. Upon arrival, she's informed that she's expected to teach more than literature and poetry: she's to teach her innocent students to prepare for the intimacies of marriage. Shock and despair don't begin to describe Emma's feelings, but she can't risk being fired and sent back to London so she agrees to teach the girls all she knows about "bedroom etiquette" - which happens to be *nothing*!

Emma's salvation comes in the form of Lord Nicholas Chambers, the notorious rake known as Lord Bedchambers who lives right next door to the Pettibone School. Women are seen going in and out of his house on a regular basis, so Emma is sure he's more than apt to give her the information she needs to keep her charade going. There's more to Nicholas than she expected, though. He certainly knows his way around the bedroom, but he isn't the rake everyone thinks. He's "just" an artist and lets the gossip go around because it gives him the privacy to paint without being disturbed. When Emma (boldly) arrives on his doorstep and asks him to educate her on the intimacies of marriage, he makes her a proposition: he will answer all her questions if she poses for him. Obviously, there's a catch: he wants to paint her as the Greek goddess Artemis - a *naked* Greek goddess Artemis, to be more specific. After some negotiation, they strike a deal: for each question he answers, she'll remove one article of clothing. And thus, the education of Mrs. Brimley begins...

Oh, this book was fun! Nicholas and Emma were very likable, their chemistry was great and he was the best sex ed tutor she could ask for. Even though Emma's "education" is the main focus of this book, it doesn't take over the story. I mean, this isn't an erotica/romantica novel, so the book isn't filled with non-stop sex scenes. In fact, the ~~sexual~~ sensual tension was very well developed and I was almost panting when Nicholas and Emma finally *did it*. It's so much better when the H/h are *in love* when that happens, isn't it?

Now, the premise of the book... Yeah, it's very unrealistic and you have to suspend disbelief to immerse yourself in the story. I'm not sure, but I don't think sex ed classes were taught in Yorkshire back in 1876. Anyway, I enjoyed this read enough to let that go. Mrs. MacMeans' writing was engaging, the story was entertaining and the characters were interesting. At the end of the day, that's what matters. :)

Julianna says

Reviewed for THC Reviews

The Education of Mrs. Brimley was my first read by Donna MacMeans and also her debut novel. I wasn't quite sure what to expect when I picked it up. On the one hand, the premise sounded sweet and sexy, and I also discovered that the book won RWA's prestigious Golden Heart award. On the other hand, the GoodReads rating for the book is kind of middle of the road. I'm happy to say that I generally enjoyed the story and thought it was well-done for a first effort, but at the same time, it wasn't quite perfect, so I could see why some of the lower ratings came into play.

Our heroine, Emma, was born on the wrong side of the blanket. The author never really explains what happened to her father, but she was raised solely by her mother who passed away just a short time before the story begins. Emma and her mother lived under the good graces of her uncle, who treated them both poorly. He constantly berated Emma for being dowdy and plain, telling her she'd never snag a husband, and essentially using her as a servant to his own daughter. While Emma's mother still lived, she acted as something of a buffer between Emma and her uncle, but after her death, Emma overhears the uncle saying he's going to sell her to a man. At this point, Emma runs away. She responds to an ad for a teaching position at a girl's school far away in the country. The only problem is, they're looking for a widow to fill the job. After forging a reference and posing as a young widow, Emma gets hired. Then she finds out exactly why they wanted a widow: they need someone to teach “bedroom etiquette” or what amounts to sex ed. Of course, she knows nothing about the topic, but is desperate to keep the job. When the school library turns up no books that are helpful, she decides to risk a visit to the school's next-door neighbor, whom she's been warned is a rakish artist. Emma only intends to borrow a book, but soon finds herself making a deal with the “devil” to be the model for his latest painting in exchange for unlimited information about intimacies between a man and a woman.

Emma is a sweet, bookish young lady with a bit of an intellectual streak when it comes to literature, the other class she's teaching at the school. She has a particular interest in poetry, and discovers her neighbor apparently does too when they share a carriage ride at the beginning of the story. Even in an inebriated state he seems able to complete lines of poetry she begins, creating an instant connection between them. I could relate very well to Emma being made fun of and looked down on most of her life. Given those circumstances, it makes perfect sense that she doesn't believe Nicholas at first when he tells her she's beautiful nor does she believe that someone like him could be interested in a nobody like her. I enjoyed watching her grow to become more comfortable in her own skin as well as to accept her own beauty and her being deserving of the love of a good man. She's a great teacher, who immediately becomes a wonderful asset to the school and a friend to all the girls. The only thing that would have made Emma better is if she'd come to realize Nicholas's love for her sooner. With her perceptions colored by the lens of her uncle's cruelty, she has a tendency to often misconstrue things that Nicholas says or does and this continues right up until the very last pages of the book, which became somewhat tedious and frustrating.

Nicholas has endured his own share of ridicule. His father never believed in his ability as an artist and

frequently derided Nicholas for his continued pursuit of art. As a result, he's taken up residence in a country manor house practically in the middle of nowhere, far from his family. Aside from traveling around to the local taverns and occasionally bringing one of the serving wenches home to model for him, he's pretty much a loner, who's completely immersed in his work. I think what frustrated me a bit about Nicholas's character is that there aren't very many scenes from his POV (at least not until toward the end) and those that are present generally don't last for more than a couple pages. This made it somewhat difficult to get inside his head and understand what he's thinking. The author hints at a lot of things about him, such as family conflict, a possible connection with one of the girls at the school, sensitivities about both his crippled leg and his art, and what exactly happened to cripple his leg, but she takes quite a while to actually reveal much about him. Even when she does, some of the questions I had were merely answered and then over with in the blink of an eye. Some examples of this were nothing more than a very brief mention of what happened to Nicholas's leg and his father and brother instantaneously coming around to support his artistic endeavors after viewing just one painting (though granted it was a masterpiece). I just think Nicholas would have been a fuller richer character if more of these things had been explored in more detail. As is though, I did like him, most especially for how he's able to put Emma at ease and help her come to believe in her own beauty and worth. I also loved how he's so much more than the rake he's perceived to be, and in reality can be a true gentleman and a trustworthy secret-keeper.

Where I thought the book could have really been improved is in certain aspects of the writing and plotting. From the moment I read the cover blurb, I was intrigued and thought the premise would lend itself well to being a rather steamy book, but unfortunately it didn't quite get there. Yes, there are certain parts that are rather sensual, but despite Emma modeling for Nicholas wearing (eventually) next to nothing, I didn't feel a great deal of sexual tension until quite a ways into the story. Part of the reason for this is probably that Emma is very prudish and even a little fearful in the beginning, so there's not much of a turn-on factor there. Once she begins to emotionally reveal herself to Nicholas, the sense of connection does improve dramatically, but just as things are getting good, the author takes a step back from their burgeoning relationship, leaving them dangling in the wind again. Then they keep doing this same dance throughout the rest of the story. I've never been a big fan of miscommunication or misunderstandings being used as the primary conflict in a book and here I felt like they were somewhat overused and at times felt rather forced. It seems like every couple of chapters one of them, usually Emma, is misconstruing something, which became rather tiresome. As to the sexual tension, my personal favorite scene is when Nicholas gets Emma to undress in front of him, telling her every little thing to do. That scene was exceptionally well-done. On the downside, after all this build-up of Emma and Nicholas frequently discussing sex and her modeling nearly nude, I was expecting some great love scenes that sadly never materialized. There's only one, which wasn't anything all that special and which was over in a matter of a few paragraphs.

There were a couple of other little things that also bugged me. Firstly there are a number of incorrect words used. In most cases they're the type that sound and/or look similar but simply aren't the right word for the situation. Eg. soothed instead of smoothed, shuddered instead of shuttered, crumbled instead of crumpled, etc. I realize typos are to be expected in any book, but there are enough of these mistakes to call attention to themselves and to make me pause in my reading to figure them out. Also I found a factual error. Late in the story a character is kidnapped using the old cloth saturated with a drug over the nose trick, making them pass out. The problem is the drug used is stated at least three times to be laudanum. I immediately questioned the veracity of that. Upon looking it up, I discovered, as suspected, that there is no indication for the use of laudanum in that way and that it would only render a person unconscious if taken internally in a liquid or pill form. What the author should have and probably meant to say is chloroform, which would also match her description of the odor quite well.

I freely admit that I'm not entirely certain of the historical accuracy of the premise of the story either. It

seems somewhat unlikely that a proper girl's school would offer what amounts to sex education, but I was willing to go with it. Especially after it's revealed how that class came to be taught, it made a good deal of sense, so in the end, I felt like my trust wasn't misplaced. It certainly made for an entertaining premise even though the sexual tension of the situation wasn't fully realized the way I was hoping. Generally speaking, the characters were likable, and flaws aside, the story was reasonably well put together. I was somewhat confused by where the author was going with Nicholas's brother, William. At times, he comes off in a less than favorable light, but I guess he must be a pretty decent guy, because he becomes the hero of *The Seduction of a Duke*, the next book in the *Chambers Trilogy*. Although we barely get a glimpse of her, their sister, Arianne, the heroine of the third book, is seen as well. Overall, *The Education of Mrs. Brimley* may not have hit the heights of perfection for me, but it was still a pretty good read, good enough to make me continue with the series at some point.

Emery Lee says

A very well-written and atypical historical romance.

When Emma Heatherston, masquerading as the widowed Mrs. Brimley, accepts a position as a teacher at Pettibone's finishing school, she has no idea she will be expected to prepare the young ladies for their conjugal duties.

Desperate to acquire knowledge she doesn't have, rather than be dismissed, she turns to a neighboring rake, Lord Nicholas Chambers aka Lord Bedchambers. In need of a semi-nude model for his latest painting, Lord Nicholas strikes a bargain with Emma - if she will pose for him, he will tutor her in the aspects of physical love.

What I loved about this book was that the sexual chemistry between the main characters, Emma and Nicholas was palpable from the start, and continued to build with every encounter even though they barely touched for half the book. This was the magic for me- when Nicholas set out to educate (seduce) the virgin Emma by using only the power of words (and an occasional paintbrush!)

Since I read it all in one night, I have to give it 4 stars!

Rane says

When Emma Brimley pretends to be a widow in order to work at a all girl's school, she's shocked to learn she'll be teaching more than literary, but getting the girls reading for relationship with their future husbands! Turning to the neighboring artist with a rep for being a rake Lord Nicholas Chambers, to help her teach the girls some bedroom etiquette, didn't prepare her for losing her heart in the deal!

I truly lost my heart to this stunning book, I couldn't get enough of both Nicholas and Emma and had to re-read it twice in a row!

Emma Brimley is running away from a uncle who only wants to get rid of her to pay off his debts, ruin all her life for being born on the wrong side of the blanket. Emma feels a deep lack of confidence. Emma comes up with a plan to flee her uncle, when she comes across a help wanted ad for a teacher. In widow weeds, Emma passes herself off as a young widow, and on the way to the school on a snow night, she meets a man very much in her cups whom spouts poetry. Only to find out later he's a well-known rake whom lives close to the school, another shocker lays on Emma when she learns she must teach the young girls how to handle bedroom affairs with the husband when they marry- only Emma is as innocent as her students! Knowing her options are very limited, she turns to the neighboring rake and artist Lord Chambers, and when a deal is settled between them having Emma pose for his next painting, she never thought in her wildest dreams she lose her heart along the way..

Nicholas Chambers, known as Lord Bedchambers, due to always bringing women home, holds this image so he won't be bothered by anyone while he works on his artwork, trying to prove to himself and his brother and father. Nicholas is curious of the new teacher and young widow thinking it was all in his drunk head, but when she steps into his house asking for help to teach her students sexual interactions with their future husbands, Nicholas is very surprised this widow is very innocent, but also finds it a great challenge to find a way around her demand not to touch her and find a way to get her in his bed, while getting his painting complicated, but the more time he spends with Emma the more he can't get enough of her, and the more he knows he'll never be able to let her go....

The Education of Mrs. Brimley hits on a lot of my loves in romance novels, not only did it have two memorable leads in Emma and Nicholas, but it had a sexual tension that could be cut with a knife, with mere words and how Donna MacMeans set up the scene had me fanning my blushing face~!

While from different walks of life, both Nicholas and Emma had a deep vulnerability that really drew them to one another, Emma lacked confidence in herself due to years of having been put down by her uncle and cousin, this didn't mean Emma was without a backbone, far from it! She stood her ground over and over, but she never truly knew her own self-worth and inner light until she met Nicholas whom made her see her own beauty. While at the same time she gave a gift of accepting Nicholas beyond what he wanted others to see, to accept his art.

Nicholas was looking to find in his art a sense of self-worth, behind it all, he cared and loved deeply, and even going as far as to take care of his godchild from a distance. Nicholas wasn't beyond being sly, with a wicked wit and the words he seduced Emma with, were beyond hot, without it being corny or icky. Very smooth. Both really gave each other up something in order for the other to be happy and to show their love, while things didn't always go as planned as we like, it was still very beautiful to see them fall in love with one another.

Another great aspect of this book, was while it couldn't turn out to have things that's been done before in other books, this book was all original, from Emma trying to bargain her way out of painting her only her slip and Nicholas getting fooled into having his painting shown. There was a chance of having a huge misunderstanding, but MacMeans went the high road and made it very sweet and romantic with Emma and Nicholas showing their feelings and talking to one another then having to do down the "Oh!~ I misunderstood- road"

With the secondary characters like the spinster sisters to Nicholas brother (which am happy to learn gets his own book along with his comeuppance!) Moved the story along nicely, and while I was sad to see it end, I

couldn't help but sigh happily at seeing Nicholas and Emma's HEA, and a peek into their continuing happiness.

Overall: The Education of Mrs. Brimley was a true and enjoyable education with a deep and wonderful romance with two amazing leads. I give this book a few golden stars and an A+ !

Ruth says

This book was a total surprise to me, and as a result, I'm struggling for how to review it. From the relatively low average rating and the title, I thought it was going to be a silly, fun, sexy story, but no, it was so much more than that.

The hero and heroine are both likeable, with purpose in their lives beyond marriage and babies, and character flaws and past history. The story is also much better written than most HRs. There are one or two plot points which are fairly predictable, but the sensual, fluid writing and the way the story hung together so well were surprises to me. The plot develops at a measured pace, over a number of months, determined by the time to create the hero's Great Work, but it doesn't drag at all.

5 stars, all-time-favorites list and I'm keeping it on my kindle for sneaky re-reads.

Monique Takens says

Ik heb de Nederlandstalige uitgave gelezen : Oneerbaar voorstel - Candlelight Historische roman 862 .
Oké om dit verhaal ten volste te waarderen moet je maar even alle onwaarschijnlijkheden negeren . Dat vond ik in dit geval niet zo moeilijk want het is met een tikje humor en een flinke knipoog geschreven .

ChloeLeeNH says

Sweet book... neat premise, with her needing the facts of sex for permission to paint her naked... I like that they have to play this almost strip poker everytime she has a list of question. It gets VERY interesting sometimes. It moves quickly and I was pleasantly surprised!

Holly says

To teach at the Pettibone School for Young Ladies in Yorkshire, Emma Brimley lied on her application and said she was a young widow. This small fib lands her in big trouble when the schoolmistress informs her that the patron of their school wishes for the older girls to be taught about the intimacies of marriage. Emma doesn't know what to do then she remembers the man she shared the coach ride with from the train station. Known as "Lord Bedchambers" Emma turns to Lord Nicholas Chambers for instructions. Nicholas has a

weak leg and a passion for art that has put him at odds with his family but he loves painting and even though he's been turned down time and time again by the Royal Academy, he heads to his home in Yorkshire to paint yet another submission for the Academy's review. After his model deserts him, he's thinking of creating yet another dull landscape when Emma walks into his studio, requesting a portrait of a man's genitals. Once he recovers from a bout of hysterical laughter, he makes her a bargain. If she poses as his semi nude model, he'll answer all her questions about the intimacies of marriage. Maybe it's not very gentlemanly of him, but hey, alls fair in love and war.

This was like strip poker but with a Victorian twist. Some of the questions and answers that Emma and Nicholas came up with were really funny. The scene where Emma asks questions about oral sex was really, uh, unique. Some of the questions that she asked weren't even discussed in my own sex ed class when I was in school. This was a sweet romance that was very naughty yet very nice. Don't get this book expecting a raunchy read, though. Nicholas was in actuality a very nice guy and completely misunderstood and maligned in regards to his reputation. Without the titillating question and answer bit, this was just another gentle, loving and traditional historical romance.
