



Once Upon a Moonlit Night

Elizabeth Hoyt , Ashford McNab (Narrator)

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From *New York Times* bestselling author Elizabeth Hoyt comes a delightful Maiden Lane novella that begins once upon a moonlit night—and ends wickedly, wonderfully ever after...

Hippolyta Royle is running for her life. Pursued by hounds on a cold rainy night, the heiress flags down a passing carriage and throws herself at the mercy of the coach's occupant. Whoever this handsome traveler may be, he is her only hope to escape a terrible fate. But should he agree to escort her to safety, he's in for much more than he bargained for.

At first Matthew Mortimer doesn't believe Hippolyta's story, that she's a fabulously wealthy heiress who's been kidnapped. He assumes she's a beggar, an actress, or worse. But once his new travel companion washes the mud from her surprisingly lovely face, and they share a breathtaking kiss, there is no turning back.

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Once Upon a Moonlit Night Details

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Author : Elizabeth Hoyt , Ashford McNab (Narrator)

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From Reader Review Once Upon a Moonlit Night for online ebook

♥ Rebecca ♥ says

Hippolyta has been a recurring character in this series for so long that I am surprised that she didn't get her own full length novel. But this was still very good. I missed this series and I am so glad that I finally got this and Duke of Pleasure. I will be reading that one next.

Princess under cover says

It was good. I like the “real man” type of heroes that Hoyt writes. The ones who have a temper, who might not look great (tho this one does), who curses and throws things around, maybe a bit Neanderthal like. This is one of those heroes. And I enjoyed him. Maybe a bit too rough on the first time deflowering of the woman, not that she seemed to mind, but goes with his character I guess.

The heroine I was a bit disappointed in. Not that there's anything wrong with her per se, but there was a lot of buildup from other books about her and for some reason I thought she'd be special. Apart from her recognition what a mongoose is, she's like any other British lady, not at all special in behavior Ben tho she grew up in India and (view spoiler). So heroine definitely didn't live up to the hype. And for heaven sakes! With a name like hippolyta royale she should be special!!

3.5 stars.

Bj says

4 "A Chance Road Encounter Leads to the Perfect Match" Stars for the story and 5 Stars for the narration!

Source: Library-Loan.

Caz says

Readers of Duke of Sin, the recently released tenth book in Elizabeth Hoyt's hugely popular *Maiden Lane* series will recall that one of the many nefarious plots engineered by the Machiavellian Duke of Montgomery was the kidnapping of Miss Hippolyta Royle, the wealthiest heiress in England. In that book, she was freed by the Duke's housekeeper, the enterprising Bridget Crumb, who helped her to escape onto the moors – and then we heard nothing more of her. I admit, that loose plot-thread did seem rather strange, but fortunately, anyone wondering what happened to Miss Royle after she fled Ainsdale Castle can put their minds at rest, as her fate is revealed in the novella, **Once Upon a Moonlit Night**.

She stumbles into the path of an oncoming carriage, which – fortunately – stops so that its angry occupant can ask her what the hell she's playing at. Dirty, bedraggled and smelling of sheep rather than roses, Hippolyta's assertion that she is a wealthy heiress is promptly dismissed by Matthew Mortimer, explorer,

cartographer and newly minted but improverished Earl of Paxton. He's tired from his journey home from the Indian Ocean, disgruntled because he had to make it at all and in no mood to humour a down-on-her-luck actress/thief/tart.

The first part of the novella is a road-trip romance in which the two protagonists get off on completely the wrong foot but, during the course of a few days, come to realise that perhaps there is more to the other than meets the eye. The sparks fly from the get-go and the air between them crackles with sexual tension, even though Matthew is pretty abrasive for the first part of the journey and makes no bones about the fact that he believes Hippolyta to be a whore. By the second day, however, they really start talking to each other and he starts to wonder if perhaps he's misjudged her. But before he can really make his mind up, the two of them are discovered in the yard of a coaching inn by her father who is outraged at the idea that his daughter has spent several days unchaperoned with a man, leaving Matthew with little option but to ask for her hand.

The story then fast-forwards a couple of weeks to the hasty wedding – and the wedding night – and the reappearance of a figure from Hippolyta's past who threatens to expose a buried family secret (that isn't much of a secret to anyone who has read **Duke of Sin**) which could ruin her in society.

Once Upon a Moonlit Night is an entertaining, quick read that is as well-written as one would expect from this author, but it does suffer from “novella-itis” in that it feels rather rushed, especially in the second half. The central characters are reasonably well drawn, and while Matthew is a bit of a grouch to start with, in his favour, he's the type of hero who, once he realises what he wants, doesn't dither or deny, he goes for it. But I couldn't quite work out what happened to Hippolyta, who has been an intriguing, exotic figure in the earlier books in which she has appeared. She begins this tale as spirited and able to give as good as she gets, but then turns into a wimpy damsel in distress immediately after her wedding night. She receives a blackmail note and just runs off instead of having a simple conversation with Matthew, and I thoroughly disliked the use of such an obvious contrivance to create dramatic tension.

Ultimately, this is a story of two ... not quite halves. The first, in which the author develops the relationship between Hippolyta and Matthew and skilfully brings the sexual attraction between them to the boil gets four stars, but the second, which is a bit of a let-down, gets three, hence my overall grade. I enjoyed the novella and I'm glad Ms. Hoyt took the opportunity to tie up the loose ends of Hippolyta's story, but I think it needed a bit more time and space in which to play out.

Alyssa says

This publishes on my BIRTHDAY!!!! So excited. =)

Review posted on The Eater of Books! blog

Once Upon a Moonlit Night by Elizabeth Hoyt
Book 10.5 of the Maiden Lane series
Publisher: Forever
Publication Date: July 5, 2016
Rating: 4 stars
Source: eARC from NetGalley

Warning: this is an adult book, and for the eyes of mature readers

Summary (from Goodreads):

From New York Times bestselling author Elizabeth Hoyt comes a delightful Maiden Lane novella that begins once upon a moonlit night—and ends wickedly, wonderfully ever after...

Hippolyta Royle is running for her life. Pursued by hounds on a cold rainy night, the heiress flags down a passing carriage and throws herself at the mercy of the coach's occupant. Whoever this handsome traveler may be, he is her only hope to escape a terrible fate. But should he agree to escort her to safety, he's in for much more than he bargained for.

At first Matthew Mortimer doesn't believe Hippolyta's story, that she's a fabulously wealthy heiress who's been kidnapped. He assumes she's a beggar, an actress, or worse. But once his new travel companion washes the mud from her surprisingly lovely face, and they share a breathtaking kiss, there is no turning back.

What I Liked:

Oh how this book was fun, sweet, steamy, and heartwarming! The Maiden Lane series is one of my favorite historical romance series (if not my favorite). I was beyond excited to see that Hoyt would be publishing a novella - especially when it was revealed that Hippolyta Royle would be the protagonist. I LOVE how Hoyt places Hippolyta's story.

You don't have to have read the previous books in the series to understand and enjoy this novella, but I recommend you read at least Duke of Sin (heck, the whole series, but Duke of Sin for sure). I mention book ten specifically because Once Upon a Moonlit Night starts exactly as a scene from Duke of Sin ends - with Hippolyta running from Ainsdale Castle, after Bridget rescues her and sends her away with a little money.

Hippolyta has been running from the hounds that are chasing her, courtesy of the duke who kidnapped her. She runs into the road and stops a carriage, owned by Matthew Mortimer. Matthew doesn't believe her when she says that she is Hippolyta Royle, the richest heiress in London, but he lets her in the carriage anyway. Matthew has just returned from traveling around the world; his cousins have passed away, and he has been left the earldom. But he doesn't tell Hippolyta all of that. No, he plans on dumping her off at the nearest posting in, and going about his business. But whether or not he thinks she is a beggar, he can't help but feel a little protective over her... and attracted to her. And Hippolyta can't help but feel safe with Matthew, and more than grateful. But what will happen when Matthew finds out that Hippolyta wasn't lying about who she was?

Ahhh, this novella was lovely. Usually I avoid novellas like the plague, but I love Elizabeth Hoyt and the Maiden Lane series, and there was no way I was missing Hippolyta's story. And it turned out to be so fun and so sweet!

Hippolyta is kind and a little innocent, but also a little regal. From the start, Matthew doesn't quite think she's a beggar, but he doesn't believe her when she says she's Hippolyta Royle. She is inquisitive and intelligent, and much more than a rich, pretty girl.

Matthew! He used to be Mr. Mortimer, a young cartographer. Now he is going to London to take on an earldom, and become the Earl of Paxton. Matthew is a little gruff, and he doesn't like Hippolyta at all, at first. In fact, he doesn't want anything to do with her. But something won't let him let her go.

The romance between these two is so fiery! It's a good hate-to-love romance, which I love. At first, Hippolyta is a little haughty yet desperate, and Matthew is irritated and in disbelief (but he doesn't ignore her pleas for help). It was so cute to see them go from absolute irritation and annoyance with each other, to passion and love. While this is only a novella, time does pass, enough for me to **believe** their relationship.

Half the story is spent on the road, with Matthew helping Hippolyta get to some posting in, and then Hippolyta's father finding her starts the second half. What ensues is a little bit of chaos! But I love how things worked out. Matthew and Hippolyta are such a sweet pair, passionate and caring and protective of each other.

Yes, there were some steamy scenes in this book. It's a novella, but there were at least two (maybe three?). Hoyt never skimps on those, which I love! **fans self**

Overall, this novella is totally worth the read. Hippolyta and Matthew are unlike any other couple in the Maiden Lane series - though you could say that each couple in the series is wholly unique (which is totally true!). I'm glad Hoyt decided to write about Hippolyta specifically!

What I Did Not Like:

Obviously I wanted MORE! I mean this in the best of ways.

Would I Recommend It:

I highly recommend this novella, if you're a Hoyt fan, and/or fan of the Maiden Lane series. Historical romance fans should definitely give this series a chance! My personal favorite is Duke of Midnight, with Duke of Sin slightly behind. Only slightly!

Rating:

4.5 stars. I'm rounding down to 4 stars because you all know me and my pickiness about the 5-star rating. I am such a huge fan of this novella, and this series in general!

Choko says

***** 3.25 *****

Not bad. It is a novela, so it is short and excuses the meteoric acceleration from an accidental meeting on a rainy night in the middle of the road by a bedraggled young woman and an impoverished nobleman in his carriage, who offered her a ride, to marriage... The girl is the hairdresser who ran away from an insane kidnapping Duke, and she is fortunate to run into a young, handsome and mostly honorable gentleman, who thinks she is a bagger traveling actress or a very low class prostitute. Money does seem to fix many things...

Nenia ? Queen of Literary Trash, Protector of Out-of-Print Gems, Khaleesi of Bodice Rippers, Mother of Smut, the Unrepentant, Breaker of Convention ? Campbell says

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DUKE OF SIN was probably one of the best regency romances I'd had the pleasure of reading in a while. There are two things I love in romance novels: gamma heroes & slow-burn romances. This book had both. I was able to recommend it to all my friends in good faith & was delighted to see that they enjoyed it, too!

ONCE UPON A MOONLIT NIGHT popped up on Netgalley recently & I was super excited when I was approved. It's a novella following Hippolyta Royle after she escapes from the mad duke. I liked Hippolyta in DUKE OF SIN, and was interested in seeing what her story would be like.

Unfortunately, OUAMN misses in a major way. Hippolyta is made into a foot-stomping, tongue-sticking-outting impotent heroine whose only purpose is to serve as a foil for the hero.

The hero is a jerk, who, when he happens on the scared, mud-covered heroine, assumes that she is either a whore or an actress and doesn't fail to inform her as such. She attempts to correct him and tell him that she's actually a rich heiress (totally a smart thing to do when people are trying to kidnap you for your wealth), but he just haw-haws, and continues to insult her.

DUKE OF SIN was so good that I was expecting to be a little disappointed by any sequel that came after (because it's hard to write two major hits in a row), but this just seemed like it was in a different class altogether- it was rushed, the romance was unpleasant, the hero was a jerk, the heroine was ridiculous, and somehow the characters decided they loved each other even though the hero did nothing but insult her & ogle her chest. I'm hoping that this was a fluke; the result of writing a novella too quickly and making the rookie mistake of assuming that rushed is ok in a novella.

For what it's worth, I did like the secret about the heroine even if I didn't like the way it was broached. Also, the hero has a pet mongoose, and I thought that was neat. :)

1 to 1.5 stars.

Lisa Kay says

★★★★½

♥Rachel♥ says

I was eager to pick up **Once Upon a Moonlit Night** and find out what happened to Hippolyta Royale after escaping from the Duke of Montgomery's clutches! Hippolyta was purported to be the richest heiress in England and therefore a much sought after catch, but running through the muddy hills of England have made her a sodden mess. She's not out of danger, though, because the Duke's men are still pursuing her. When a carriage comes barreling by and she jumps at the chance for a ride back to London. The carriage owner is infuriating even if he is sexy as sin!

Matthew Mortimer is home after the last couple of years sailing the Indian Ocean to step into his role as Earl of Paxton. The title sounds grand, but so are the debts that accompany it. When he comes upon Hippolyta soaked and covered in mud, he assumes she's commoner trying to swindle him out of money, but allows her to ride with them to the next town anyhow. Her demeanor and spunk in spite of her situation intrigue Matthew and he can't help feeling like he must protect this woman.

Little Hippolyta cleans up very well and soon Matthew can't fight the desire and attraction brewing between them.

This was a fun, short and steamy romance! I loved the push and pull between Matthew and Hippolyta! **Once Upon a Moonlit Night** is novella done right: a fix of romance and HEA in a short amount of pages. This is a must for any Maiden Lane fan, but it's not necessary to read any of the previous books to enjoy Hippolyta and Matthew's story.

A copy was kindly provided by Forever Yours via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

Robin says

Cold, wet, and covered in mud, Heiress Hippolyta Royle has escaped from her kidnapper and is trying to find the nearest village. As the hounds are getting closer to finding her, she flags down a coach and begs for the occupants to help her. Although Matthew Mortimer is willing to help the filthy woman travel to the next stop along the coach road, he doesn't believe her outlandish story that she is a kidnapped heiress. But when Matthew sees Hippolyta after she washes away the mud, he volunteers to take the beautiful woman to London himself.

This novella is a good addition to the Maiden Lane series. We know Hippolyta from previous books in the series. She escaped the Duke of Montgomery in the last book that we read, but we weren't told what actually became of her until this book. This was a nice, romantic and entertaining story. My rating: 4 Stars.

Jilly says

For everyone who wondered "what the hell ever happened to Hippolyta?" after reading the last book. All your questions are answered. Except, the burning question on my mind: Who the hell names their daughter

Hippolyta? That wasn't answered.

All I can think of is this:

Nuff said...

Robin (Bridge Four) says

What do you do when you finish reading Oathbringer and nothing else fantasy is going to compare for a little while? If you are me you go on a romance kick for awhile.

Hippolyta Royal has been of the outskirts of the Maiden Lane series for awhile now. In Duke of Sin she was kidnapped by our favorite bad boy and helped to escape but then we get nothing of if she made it back to London. This is that story of how she flagged down a carriage while completely bedraggled and was able to catch both a lift and a husband on the way back to London.

Matthew is pretty down to earth for an Earl. Well that could be because he has been making maps of India for years and has only recently returned to England because of his recent inheritance of the Earldom. But he knows a scam when he sees one, he is a man of the world after all and the stinky, muddy, tangled mess of a woman sitting across from him in the carriage can not be an heiress. First off her name is Hippolyta, udderly ridiculous. She should have picked a better cover story, but he will see her back to London non-the-less.

This was a cute story of mistaken identity and getting to know someone when you don't have any expectations of them due to title and station. It unfolds pretty well if fast but this is a novella so no time to lollygag on the romantic front.

My only complaint is the blackmail. It has been a continuing theme for Hippolyta in the other books that she is being blackmailed but the actual reason for the blackmail comes to light in this book and I thought it was kinda soft. Maybe in this time period "the reason" is a big deal but it didn't really seem like it and I honestly assumed that everyone one London already had some idea.

Still a fast read with a lighter tone than a few of the other books of this series and a good pallet cleanser.

Annie (Under the Covers Book Blog) says

In this delicious offering from Elizabeth Hoyt, readers are thrown back into the Maiden Lane world and are once again reunited with Hippolyta Royle. Now if you've read the previous full-length book in this series, DUKE OF SIN, then you may be familiar with Hippolyta. She was the woman who Val kidnapped and wanted to make his wife before the heroine released her. So when I say that she's been through a lot, I really mean it. The poor girl has been so strong though and I obviously had an immediate connection with her

character from the very first page.

As we see her trying to return back to her home safely, she encounters another traveler named Matthew Mortimer. He's handsome, intelligent, but also extremely wary of her. He doesn't believe her when she says she is Hippolyta Royle instead he thinks of her as a beggar and an actress, trying to seduce men along the road and taking them for all he's worth when he least suspects it.

And yet, he returns for her when he leaves her without clothes or money to feed herself, unable to bear the fact that she is alone. A romance blooms between the two, but for a short story, it's quite believable. I will say that it took me a while to get into Matthew's character simply because he was so mean to Hippolyta in the beginning. She'd been through some terrible things already that she doesn't deserve judgment from a complete stranger as well. I felt a certain protectiveness towards Hippolyta's character and that was why Matthew had so much against him in the beginning. And yet, by the end of the story, I was just in love with him as Hippolyta was.

So I would say that if you are thinking of trying this series, start at the beginning. You can happily jump into this story, however, you should read *DUKE OF SIN* first I think since that's where Hippolyta's journey really starts. I'm glad Elizabeth Hoyt took the time to write this story for her. I never thought I'd see her again, but now she has a HEA and I think out of all the characters in this series, Hippolyta was the one that deserved it the most.

Stacey is Sassy says

I thought I had to *gird my loins*...

I finished and enjoyed *Duke of Sin* with the question...*But what happened to poor Hippolyta?*...burning through my brain. When I found out that we would be getting a novella telling us all about it, I was very excited. Yesterday, I went to Goodreads to update and list it as currently reading. While I was there I noticed that there were a few less than stellar ratings. What? How could that be? It's a novella, what on earth could go wrong? Well, I didn't look at the review before starting, but I girded my loins as I started waiting for it all to fall apart.

....and waited

...and waited

...and waited

Ummm...it didn't happen. I didn't find the bad bit. I'm not discounting someone else's opinion, each to their own and all that jazz, but I'm not sure what the bad bit was. Look, it wasn't perfect by any means. The sexy times were a wee bit modern and very steamy (but who am I to question whether back in the olden days they talked dirty or not). It also all kind of fell into place a bit too easily and the characters did fall in love very quickly. BUT...I read romance to escape from reality and this little treat hit the spot for me.

Hippolyta and Matthew have a very unusual first meeting and neither of them is in a position that shows

themselves off in a favourable light. Hippolyta has escaped a kidnapping and Matthew is returning from his overseas adventures to do his duty now that he is an Earl. Matthew doesn't believe that the muddy and smelly Hippolyta could possibly be a rich heiress and she thinks he's a dishevelled and rude working man in need of funds.

The story has a touch of mystery mixed into their adventure. There is seduction and temptation that neither can deny. Both characters are also learning to have the courage to be true to yourself. While it wasn't perfect, it was a perfectly fine little story to answer my questions and give me the historical romance fix I was looking for.

I can't wait for *Duke of Pleasure* and I hope my guess is right in who the newest *Ghost of St Giles* is.

I'm an Aussie chick who loves to read and review romance, drink coffee, be a *Style Setter* and stalk David Gandy. To see more of my reviews, fashion, food and pervathons -

Sam (AMNReader) says

It was ok. Matthew and Hippolyta had nice chemistry, and the beginning of the book was fun. Then it was all squished into another 40 pages and was ultimately a disappointment. No chance for tension or for Matthew's character to be fully fleshed out.

In short, it was a typical novella. Very few deliver IMO.
