



A Novel Seduction

Gwyn Cready

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When snobbish book critic Ellery Sharpe screws up at Vanity Place magazine, her boss assigns her the ultimate punishment: write an ode to romance novels, a genre she considers the literary equivalent of word search puzzles. To make matters worse, he hires her sexy former party boy ex, Axel Mackenzie, to shoot the photos.

Axel really wants the project to succeed. For one, the magazine will double his fee if he convinces strong-willed Ellery to write a story no woman can resist. Besides, getting Ellery to fall for romance novels might be just the push she needs to believe people can change...even him. At his sister's advice, Axel gives Ellery a copy of Kiltlander, a much-adored romance whose warrior hero is utterly irresistible.

To her dismay, Ellery finds herself secretly falling in love with the story — and with Axel, who's drawing his own lessons from the book's compelling hero. With her carefully crafted image of herself crumbling and her dream job on the line, will Ellery risk it all to make the leap from tight-lipped literati to happily-ever-after heroine?

A Novel Seduction Details

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From Reader Review A Novel Seduction for online ebook

Kaetrin says

3.5 stars

Why I read it: Mandi from Smexy Books recommended this one to me a while back and I picked it up on special from Dymocks a while ago. Of course, on special still meant \$9.99 but I was having a "support your local bookstore" moment.

What it's about: (from Goodreads) When snobbish book critic Ellery Sharpe screws up at Vanity Place magazine, her boss assigns her the ultimate punishment: write an ode to romance novels, a genre she considers the literary equivalent of word search puzzles. To make matters worse, he hires her sexy former party boy ex, Axel Mackenzie, to shoot the photos.

Axel really wants the project to succeed. For one, the magazine will double his fee if he convinces strong-willed Ellery to write a story no woman can resist. Besides, getting Ellery to fall for romance novels might be just the push she needs to believe people can change...even him. At his sister's advice, Axel gives Ellery a copy of Kiltlander, a much-adored romance whose warrior hero is utterly irresistible.

To her dismay, Ellery finds herself secretly falling in love with the story — and with Axel, who's drawing his own lessons from the book's compelling hero. With her carefully crafted image of herself crumbling and her dream job on the line, will Ellery risk it all to make the leap from tight-lipped literati to happily-ever-after heroine?

What worked for me (and what didn't): No prizes for guessing what "Kiltlander" represents :) Referenced too, is an historical (I'm not sure what that was based on, if anything) and a paranormal romance/urban fantasy too which is kind of a cross between the Black Dagger Brotherhood series (except with a Sisterhood, which was refreshing) and Twilight. The book stands as a defense of romance novels, while at the same time taking a gentle poke at some of the more outrageous aspects. The scene where Ellery and Axel are testing the contortions required for some of the sex scenes are pretty funny. I mean, who hasn't wondered "can they really do that?" at some stage during a love scene? :D

There are quite a few scenes which had me smirking actually. Ms. Cready has a witty way with words:

"Mm-mmm," the sociologist said, making that uniquely Scottish sound that seemed to mean anything from Interesting to I don't believe you to I think I may have left my iron on. The woman at the newsstand in the train station had made the same sound when Ellery had told her they appeared to be sold out of the New York Times.

The present-day story takes about a week, but is interspersed with sparing but revealing flashbacks from Ellery and Axel's previous relationship. The flashback scenes showed the sparks the couple had, their initial attraction and passion for one another and then its implosion. What was nice was that I saw it from both sides and could see Axel's regret and his baffled dismay at their final confrontation. Parsed out that way in the story, it was a very effective way of showing me their connection and helping me believe that with the experiences of 5 years in between, that they could get to a HEA in only a week.

I'm not super fond of the euphemism "bud" for clitoris - it's a little twee for me. But I did like a lot of the descriptors used in the novel - like this, when Ellery is describing Axel's boyfriend qualities:

He was a dating iceberg - the sort of boyfriend who looks great on the surface but has the power to sink any relationship with the dangerously bad behaviors hidden underneath.

Axel is charming and gorgeous and talented and, he's had a revelation that he needs to grow up and be present for Ellery and not just flit about. Ellery is uptight and snobby about books but during the course of their week researching the story from hell, she has her own revelation and realises that the literati can learn from genre fiction (who'd have thunk?) and loosening up a bit and letting people in is a good thing.

I like second chance at love stories and what I particularly liked about this one is that both Ellery and Axel made mistakes and owned them and changed so that I could believe in their ultimate HEA. I did wonder a little by the end whether Ellery was shouldering a little too much of the blame. Maybe this was something about the order things were presented in the book, but it seemed she did a bit more apologising than he.

What else? For a funny novel, this has some surprisingly serious themes - a defence of the romance genre runs strongly through it and acknowledgement that romance readers aren't ugly, fat, lonely women with no fashion sense who couldn't get a man any other way. I liked this in particular:

Despite the heroine's betrayal, Ellery knew things would work out between the two: That was, after all, the essential nature of romances. Yet, she couldn't imagine how they could overcome such an obstacle and in fact found herself unable to believe it was even possible. And so, with the tension between the lovers at least as strong as that between Ellery's critical eye and her reader's eye, she found herself once again drawn into the story."

This is one of the joys of romance novels for me. I know there will be a HEA (there had better be!) but those special books - the tension of how well, a good author can keep me on the edge of my seat with that.

I would have liked more in the end of just how Ellery was going to manage her career and I'm not entirely convinced that her "compromise" wasn't (at least somewhat) caving (getting back to my earlier comments regarding her level of "blame" for the problems in their earlier relationship) but overall, I enjoyed this one and I certainly believed in the chemistry between the couple.

Grade: B-

www.kaetrinsmusings.blogspot.com

Juliette Cen says

Un peu désolée face à ce roman publié en France sous le titre "à l'eau de rose".

L'histoire avait tout pour me séduire, mais j'avoue avoir été déroutée d'entrée de jeu par le style de l'auteure.

Il m'a paru décousu, brouillon, et son introduction ne m'a pas passionnée. Et je ne pense pas qu'il s'agisse d'un problème de traduction.

Au fil des pages, l'envie de connaître la suite s'est émoussée.

J'aurais peut-être dû persévérer, mais avec le nombre de romans que j'ai dans ma PAL, celui-ci ne mérite pas que je m'y attarde plus longtemps.

Lecture abandonnée, donc.

Dekaydreader says

Very enjoyable - also the first (only?) book of Gwyn Cready's that doesn't involve time travel, although it does refer obliquely to perhaps the best time-travel romance ever, *Outlander*. (C'mon; Kiltlander? Jemmie Forster and Cara? Why not just go ahead and call it what it is? Is there some rule against admiring someone else's work by name?) Once again, I find myself torn that a professional writer can make so many grammatical errors, although I suppose using one of today's word-processing wonders that sneaks in and swaps out your words for something it finds preferable to what you typed might account for some of it, especially if you do your writing on an Android device or iPhone... (Prostrate vs. prostate: should there be anyone intelligent, literate, well-informed, and English-speaking that doesn't know the difference?)
--- "Penguin on Me"---

Clemence D says

romance sympathique qui alterne entre complexité des personnages principaux et quelques clichés typique de la comédie romantique.

J'ai bien aimé l'effort qu'a fait l'auteur pour approfondir les personnages, et ne pas juste nous balancer des clichés ambulants.

A noter cependant le style un peu brouillon et décousu de l'auteur dans certains passages donnant quelques lenteurs à l'histoire qui pourraient gêner certains.

Lisarenee says

'But this review--a beautifully constructed Stinger missile aimed at the recent memoir of Bettina Moore, head of Pierrot Enterprises, the world's most successful romance novel publishing company, and the darling of the publishing world--carried razor edged pomposity about as far as it could go.

Moore's estimation of her impact on American culture is as overstated as her dress on the book's cover. If romance novels are, as Moore says, "candy conversation hearts that speak to the soul of a woman," let's hope future instructive aphorisms include "There's more plot in the phone book," "Romance Novels: Publishing's Answer to Farmville" and "get a Library Card!"

There are many things that a journalist needs to do to be good at their job--investigate the story, use credible sources, check facts, etc. Perhaps another item should be added to the list--know who your boss is sleeping with. Yes, when Ellery Sharpe wrote her most current article that ripped Bettina Moore to shreds she had no idea her boss was having an affair with the woman. This is one instance when the gossip around the water cooler could have come in handy.

Now, as punishment for writing such an article, her boss has hand picked her next assignment which is specifically designed to torture her. She must write a positive article about the impact romance novels have on women. While most would not see this as a real form of punishment, Ellery has never understood what other women see in romances. To take the punishment one step further, her boss has enlisted her ex-boyfriend Axel Mackenzie, to be her photographer for the article.

This was a very fun tongue in cheek sort of book that pokes a little fun at the romance genre. I guess if you can't laugh at yourself then who can you laugh at? I will admit to loving romance novels, but my friends and I do occasionally crack up at some of the things included in them. The supposedly two fictitious books that were to be the highlight of the article Ellery was to write had me laughing. One dealt with men in kilts and the other with vampire romances--two of my favorite types of romances. I almost felt like Gwyn knew me. Could she secretly be one of my friends on Goodreads whom I've never met? lol Seriously, the book *Kiltlander*, which Ellery ends up liking, sounded suspiciously like *Outlander*. I enjoyed that while the romance, *Kiltlander*, was very different from Axel's and Ellery's relationship, there were some similar messages--*"Without forgiveness, there is no love. And in the end it is worth every hardship."* (said by a character with a German accent) and *"There's more to a happily-ever-after than 'happy', and you've just got to get there on your own."*

Despite the fun Ms. Cready had with the romance genre, I truly loved the two main characters she created for her story. Ellery was a bit too serious and needed to loosen up a little. She is the type of person, however, who tends to take things to the extreme. One of my favorite lines was from Axel. He sent Jill, Ellery's sister, a photo of Ellery from the night before after she'd gone a little wild. With it he included the following statement, *"Never tease your sister again: See what it leads to:"*. I laughed so hard. You'll have to read the book to find out what that picture contained.

Axel was an easy character to love. He seemed to have grown up since he and Ellery last dated. The status reports he sent his boss had me laughing and shaking my head. Slowly, as the story progressed, we found out what went wrong between the pair. I was surprised to learn some of it Axel was finding out about for the first time as well. I liked how even though the relationship seemed irreparable at the beginning, Axel couldn't help but try to look out for Ellery. He'd never truly gotten over her. *sigh*

One of my favorite non-spoiler Axel scenes:

"Open bar," he said. "They just announced your company's picking up everything."
"I can think of one thing I'd like them to pick up," she said, and leered at the hem of his kilt.
"Ah, ah, ah." He waved a forbidding finger at her, and she gave him a big smile.
Someone had set up a tip jar, and the woman pushed a bill toward it. "There's ten pounds in it for you if you tell me what's worn underneath."
A white-haired gentleman sitting at the far end of the bar snorted, and Axel sighed, dropping the dirty pint glasses in the suds. "Nothings's worn, I assure you. It's all in perfect working order."

Axel and Ellery are definitely meant to be together and are good for each other. The heat between the two seemed to singe the pages. On the Lisarenee Romance Rating Scale, this one gets a **STEAM** rating - too hot for a fan, but you still have a handle on things. You should use extreme caution when reading a book with this rating in public. People may inquire as to why you look flustered and flushed and are grinning from ear to ear. Overall, I gave this one **5 out of 5 roses**. I felt this was a delightful blend of humor and romance. If you're looking for a book to put you in a good mood, I highly recommend this one.

Shannon (Giraffe Days) says

Ellery Sharpe writes high-brow book reviews for *Vanity Place* magazine in New York, but her witty, contemptuous review of the memoir of romance publisher Bettina Moore has her boss, Buhl Martin Black, seeing red. He's just started an affair with Bettina, so for punishment, and to appease Bettina, Black gives her a new assignment: write an ode to romance. It's a suitable punishment: Ellery thinks romance novels are drivel and not worthy of serious consideration; but also, unknown to Black and almost everyone else in her life, Ellery is a top contender for a new publisher job, and an article that takes romance novels seriously will ruin her chances.

To top it off, Black has assigned her ex-boyfriend Axel Mackenzie as her photographer. Axel still has a thing for Ellery though they broke up in Pittsburgh five years before. But Black offers Axel more money if he can get Ellery to write the article he wants, and Axel has a dream of buying his friend's microbrewery. So he gets Ellery three romance novels and plans their itinerary: a trip to Pittsburgh to the real Monkey Bar, where Bettina Moore's big selling paranormal romance novel, *Vamp* is set; then on to London to meet a romance reader's group and interview a couple of university professors on the topic.

Along the way, Ellery and Axel do little to fend off their mutual attraction, fuelled perhaps, on Ellery's side, by the romance novels she's now reading. The journey doesn't just enlighten Ellery to a side of being human that she never really considered before, or show the merits of romance novels, but forces her to confront the reasons why she broke up with Axel, and what she really wants in life.

This book is really an ode to Diana Gabaldon's *Outlander*, which Cready acknowledges as the book that inspired her love of romance novels. So one of the three books Axel gives Ellery is *Kiltlander*, starring Jemmie Forster and Cara, and throughout *A Novel Seduction* are snippets of *Outlander* and, for the third book, Cready used one of her own: *Flirting with Forever*. I wasn't sure whether *Vamp* was representative of one book or paranormal romance in general. Essentially, this is a book romance lovers will really appreciate, and Cready did a good job of explaining why we love romance, and the value to be found in it, with her usual humour and intelligence. I love the discussion Ellery has towards the end with a German sociologist at Edinburgh University, Dr Albrecht, which may be obvious but is still fun and satisfying to read:

"So you think [romance books] are literature?" Ellery said, grabbing a stray carrot.

"I suppose if you were going to eliminate them from the hallowed world of literature, it would be for their overused plot drivers; the central conceit of characters overcoming impossible odds to fall in love; and happy endings--"

"Exactly."

"--in which case you'd have to eliminate Chaucer, Jane Austen, Dorothy Sayers, and half of Charles Dickens as well."

"But wait," Ellery said, thrown for a loop, "what about the sex?"

"You're right. Toss out Shakespeare, Toni Morrison and Philip Roth too."

"But--"

"The characteristics you identify with good literature - unadorned, complex prose, dark themes, moral ambiguity - are constructs of the twentieth century. And," she added with a sly smile in Ellery's direction, "very male-driven." [p.250]

I loved how realistic Ellery was, and also how I could identify with her reluctant appreciation of romance

novels - because it reminded me of me, and I'm sure a lot of women will identify with her if they, too, always dismissed romance novels, found one they loved, and then struggled to reconcile their intellect with their enjoyment. Some genre fiction are more "acceptable" than others - notably, the ones men enjoy like science fiction and mystery/crime - while the others, we have to constantly defend our liking for.

Ellery's well-paced introduction to romance novels, her resistance to taking them seriously, how she ran and hid in the loo to feverishly read a bit of *Kiltlander*, is reminiscent of those stories, movies especially, where the heroine learns to let her hair down - figuratively and literally (it's a common and effective device in films for the uptight heroine to start off with a very controlled hairdo, and by the end of the film her hair is wild and free and relaxed and so is she). It wasn't until Ellery heard her own old arguments against romance echoed back at her by the publisher she's hoping to work for that she realises how wrong she'd been, and how much her thoughts have changed.

And then there's the corresponding romance - or re-ignition of - with Axel. We get chapters from both Ellery and Axel's perspectives, interspersed with short chapters from a few minor characters, and Axel was another wonderful, realistic, fun character. He also grows during the story, and he has none of the annoying tics of many romance heroes - he's fresh, real, and very sexy. He felt like a good mate, since Ellery had dibs. Flawed, honest, and easy-going, he's not a rehash of Cready's previous heroes but a man in his own right. There could be nothing worse than a romance novel extolling the virtues of romance novels that is itself poorly written and full of clichés: *A Novel Seduction* is extremely well-written, an ode to romance novels that maintains a high degree of freshness through its engaging characters and a plot that *moves*.

This is an intelligent, fun and funny romance novel for the intelligent, fun woman who enjoys her romance and isn't afraid of it. It's also the romance novel for those of you who've yet to try a romance novel because you're sure they're just bodice-busting drivel full of historical inaccuracies, impossible sexual positions, weak character development and tired plots. Yes, this is like reading a romantic comedy, but it's a really *good* romantic comedy.

And it *really* makes me want to re-read *Outlander*!

rameau says

A this point I ask myself why did I wanted to buy this book in the first place. Why didn't I take the first geolock warning as a sign and just forget it? Why did I go through the trouble of getting another online ebook shop account to spend money on this?

Oh, right. It was the cover.

The premise helped too. A literary snob who learns to appreciate romance novels. In a romance novel. You have to appreciate the poetic justice there. And on a theoretical level this story works. *Cready* builds a love story between two people who have history together and shows how they've learned from their mistakes and grown up. In practice however it all falls apart. *Cready* tries to do much.

To successfully show how much Axel has grown over the years he and Ellery have spent apart, *Cready* throws in a handful of flashback chapters to illustrate exactly how things went wrong the first time around. She shows Ellery and Axel in love but not quite ready for a mature relationship. Although I'd rather have had all those past indiscretions come about through dialogue between the couple, it works. Both Axel and

Ellery become fuller characters through those scenes. Had this just been a story about two old lovers reconnecting, *Cready* would have had a winner in her hands.

Unfortunately, Ellery's journey to journalistic enlightenment comes through three specific romance novels of which two play a significant part in the story. Instead of writing two stories within one, the author is juggling four. None of the plot threads feel complete by the end of the book. The paranormal romance within a romance kickstarts the plot but is soon forgotten in the pits of a bra pyre and the historical homage to *Outlander*—though *Cready* calls it *Kiltlander*—threatens to overtake the frame plot. I admit that over time I've become biased against *Gabaldon's* series but I maintain that *Cready* would have been wiser to invent a romance to connect all the romance readers around the globe.

On top of all this, the story relies heavily on one of my least favourite romance tropes: Miscommunication. Ellery never told Alex why she wanted to break up all those years ago and he never told her he knew anyway. She's not telling him about her new job offer and he's not telling her about his upcoming career change or the espionage it's forcing him to do. Eventually, they do talk about these things but then it feels rushed and uneven. I am convinced that Axel has changed, that he is ready for a serious relationship, and maybe even that he's earned a second chance with Ellery. However, I'm not convinced she's earned his trust and a second chance to have a family with him.

On top of these big picture problems there were the smaller failings too. There were the unfortunate euphemisms and expressions as well as the slightly off emphasis on tone. *Cready* missed a perfect opportunity to turn the sexism from the beginning of the book on its head when none of the molested, kilt-clad men thought to ask if that's what women go through every day. No one thought it's wrong and shouldn't happen.

Yet, I didn't hate the book. How could I when a (German) character, confronted with the idea that love and a happy ending make a romance novel somehow a lesser form of literature, said:

“—in which case you'd have to eliminate Chaucer, Jane Austen, Dorothy Sayers, and half of Charles Dickens as well.”

‘But wait,’ Ellery said thrown for a loop, ‘what about the sex?’

‘You're right. Toss out Shakespeare, Toni Morrison and Philip Roth too.’”

Alexia Chantel says

A romance novel is so much more than just a romance novel. It is an escape, a way to explore, a history lesson, imagination at its finest, a description of the values we want our men to have, relationship advice and even sometimes what you need to get your blood pumping.

All of that and so much more is what Ellery struggles to accept and describe in her quest to unlock the answer to why people (not only women) read romances. *A Novel Seduction* gives you answers along with plenty of humor and a happy ending.

Ellery and Axel found each other 5 years ago only to lose each other. A perfect fit in every way except for the timing. They just needed time to erode away the edges so they could slide into place with each other. The

journey they take to finally realize that the sharp painful points have smoothed is one full of laughs and pain. As it should be with a history like theirs, if it's worth fighting for it's going to be a hard fight.

This book uses references (names and titles have been changed to protect the innocent) of popular romance books. If you have ever read a love scene and scratched your head over the logistics of it Ellery and Axel are right there with you, only they have each other to use as props. Or if you have ever wanted to go visit a site featured in your favorite book you may be jealous of where these two get to go. If only we could see the pictures Axel collected on their trip. Of course some may have to be edited or blacked out. Reading this will have you laughing out loud, unable to stop yourself from doing so.

If you are a fan of romance books, specifically *Outlander* by Diana Gabaldon and the *Twilight* series you will love reading *A Novel Seduction*.

Review posted on Reading Between the Wines blogspot:
<http://readingbetweenthewinesbookclub...>

Susan says

What a fun book. Ellery is the book critic we all love to hate - the one who puts down romance novels and those who read them. At the start of the book, she has written a scathing review of the memoir of a romance publisher. Unknown to her, her boss is sleeping with said romance publisher and he is not happy with what she wrote, as it has put him in an awkward spot with his lover. He decides that the only way to fix it is to have Ellery write another story, this one from the other side of the issue.

Ellery is not happy about this assignment. She had other plans for her next article, one that would put her on the top of the list for a new job. This one is liable to make her a laughingstock in the business. To top it all off, her boss has assigned Ellery's ex as the photographer for the job. Alex really needs this job to work out. If he can get Ellery to do the job right, he'll get a bonus that will enable him to make a move into his own dream job. So he gets some advice from his sister and a bookstore clerk on books that will convert Ellery to a romance lover.

This is where it really gets fun. The books he picks are a Regency style historical romance, a *Twilight* style vampire novel published by the maligned memoir writer, and a wildly popular book called *Kiltlander*. Ellery starts out with her nose stuck firmly in the air, but thanks to Axel and some location work, her opinion slowly begins to change. Axel also takes the opportunity to show Ellery that their feelings for each other are still there. There are some flashbacks to their previous relationship, showing what was right and what eventually went wrong. Parts of the story told from Axel's point of view show that he's changed and wants another chance with her.

Their trip starts with a visit to a bar set up like a location from the vampire novel. Ellery has read some of it with her prejudices still firmly in place. Thanks to a little too much to drink, she finds herself slipping into the story, and behaving in a very uncharacteristic manner. Ellery's inhibitions get crushed by the alcohol and a need to show Axel that she can still have fun. I loved seeing Axel try to take care of her while at the same time trying to make his own dream come true. The attraction between them starts to flare back to life, but Ellery resists.

From there, they travel to London, setting of the historical romance. Ellery has read some of this one also, and surprises herself when she begins to enjoy it. They hit up some of the locations, one of which brings up some dark memories for Ellery. She's stunned by the depth of the emotions it has brought forth, and Axel's attempts to comfort her. There are some guilty feelings that also come out, having to do with something from their past, and she has to decide how to deal with them. There's a really funny scene in the hotel room as she and Axel "discuss" some of the descriptions of lovemaking in the book. That evening she has a meeting with a romance book club, another eye opening experience for her attitude toward romances. Kiltlander is the book under discussion, and the similarities to Outlander are obvious. I loved seeing Ellery's responses to the things she's reading and hearing, but she's still fighting hard to keep her original attitude. It is here that Ellery's future and Axel's past collide, in the person of Ellery's competition for the new job. Axel's feelings being what they are, he tries to protect Ellery, and ends up getting himself into trouble with her because of it.

Their final destination is Scotland, to speak with a sociologist about romance novels. This lady also lives near one of the iconic locations for Kiltlander, giving Axel and Ellery more chances to connect with the story. Her conversation with the sociologist batters away at her prejudices. In spite of her growing appreciation for romances, Ellery is still fighting against writing the required article because of the effect it could have on her job opportunity. Her attempt at a compromise article is a disaster and causes problems with her boss, Axel and the potential new boss. I loved seeing how Ellery finally sees the light and what she does about it.

I loved the resurrection of the relationship between Axel and Ellery. Through the flashbacks we saw that they were not really ready for the strength of their feelings. Axel is older than Ellery and set in his bachelor party animal ways. He cares for her, but he's not prepared to change his lifestyle. Ellery is still fairly young and idealistic. She has her plans for her future and wants Axel to be part of it. But something happens that shows her that maybe he doesn't feel the same way and she starts to pull away, eventually breaking off the relationship. Six years later, forced to work together, they will also have to face their pasts. Axel has had a life changing event that shows him that it is time to make major changes. He knows what he wants them to be, he just has to find a way to make it happen. His work with Ellery could be part of it. He also wants Ellery back in his life, but he's not sure how to make it happen. I loved seeing him reading the romances and trying to use the heroes as role models, though he is also confused by some of the things he sees as contradictions. It looks like he's making good progress until something happens that makes him question whether he knows her at all. Ellery is fighting her feelings for Axel from the beginning. The attraction is still there, but she doesn't want to risk her heart again. She isn't convinced that he has changed. But the more time they are together, the more she wants to give in. She starts to think that she hadn't been fair to him all those years ago, and when he steps up to help her with a problem with her sister, she finally admits her feelings. I loved the ending and how everything worked out for them.

SOS Aloha says

A NOVEL SEDUCTION is a Farmer's Market for romance readers - it offers something delicious for all taste buds. It is a humorous parody of romance tropes that yields very funny one-liners. It is a loving tribute to how romance has touched readers of all ages, genders, and nationalities. It is a clever rebuttal to literary criticism. It is also an escape that needs no justification. Finally, it is a contemporary romance with a dash of self-discovery, self-acceptance, and self-empowerment. At one point in the story, Ellery was so absorbed in reading a classic romance that she didn't want to put the book down. But she did to address another pressing issue. At that point in the story, I found myself in the same situation - I didn't want to put the book down but I had to make dinner for my children. The moment the food was served, I returned to this page turning story.

If you read ebooks, down load this book NOW. Lock yourself in a room and bring a hankie for the tender moments. Do not drink water as you will laugh out loud throughout the heroine's journey. If you read print books, call every store in town to find it, as you don't want to wait for it to come in the mail.

Pocket provided the book for review.

I have no doubt this book will develop a "cult following" like the original classic that inspired the cover. Should that happen, I would like it on record that I have been to Cairnpapple and it is magical. So is this book.

Jess the Romanceaholic says

This is a Quickie Review. For the full review (and giveaway through 11/4/11) please visit The Romanceaholic.

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Author's Website: <http://www.cready.com/>

My Source for This Book: Gift from the Publisher

Part of a Series: No

Series Best Read In Order: N/A

Steam Level: Steamy

FULL of tongue-in-cheek references to some of the most popular romances today, with hints of Twilight, Outlander, and pretty much any regency romance ever written, this book was an absolute blast.

I am about to admit something that will probably lose me some followers — I didn't like Outlander. There. I said it. Now, don't get me wrong, I can definitely see the appeal of both the hero and the book as a whole, but for me, there were too many of my pet peeves running rampant throughout it for me to love it. Even so, however, I really enjoyed all of the obvious nods to Outlander in *A Novel Seduction*. From a red-headed virgin hero named "Jemmie" instead of Jamie, to a time traveling married woman named "Clara" instead of Claire, it touched on everything that was appealing about the story, and explained it in a way that even those hesitant to read romance could relate to.

In the end, I think that was one of the best parts of the story — watching a heroine who thought that romance novels were absolute drivel read only by women whose sex lives were non-existent fall in love with the genre in spite of herself. While a lot of the dialogue in the book was pretty much "preaching to the choir", as anyone reading this novel is already a fan of the genre, it was fun to see in a heroine the very excitement that we as readers are overcome with when presented with a romance novel that we just love.

Don't get me wrong, the relationship between Ellery and Axel is satisfying, but ultimately I think I enjoyed picking apart the romance genre even more. From trying out different positions as they're written in romances (because let's face it, when the hero's a foot taller than the heroine, sometimes physics simply get in the way of a good time), to sneaking in a few minutes of reading your favorite romance when you think no one is looking, to getting into hours of discussion with other fans of one of your favorite books, all of it was so true to life that I think it will be hard for any fan of romances to not be able to identify.

Overall, this was not only an enjoyable look into the romance genre as a whole, but a satisfying romance between two people who were truly meant for each other, but who had previously let small differences get in the way of true love.

A very solid 4/5 Stars.

Valérie says

Le thème de cette histoire est une bonne idée et ne pouvait que me plaire forcément puisque l'héroïne Ellery Sharpe est une critique littéraire pour un magazine très snob, elle a une opinion très négative sur les romans d'amour et à une fâcheuse tendance à regarder de haut les lectrices de ce style. Manque de chance suite à un article au vitriol sur une auteure en vogue, son patron lui impose un article (je vous laisse découvrir pourquoi) où elle doit faire amende honorable et mettre en valeur la merveilleuse lecture que sont les romans d'amour. Pour une critique littéraire qui ne pense qu'à interviewer John Irving vous imaginez bien que c'est l'horreur absolue.

Notre héroïne va donc partir à la rencontre des lectrices accompagnée d'un photographe Alex qui se trouve être son ex-petit ami. Celui-ci accepte la mission car non seulement il a besoin d'argent pour réaliser son rêve mais il a l'arrière pensée de reconquérir la jeune femme. C'est lui aussi qui va avoir la bonne idée de lui faire découvrir la romance en lui achetant trois livres quelle devra lire absolument et en lui proposant de partir sur les traces de ces livres qui les conduiront en Angleterre et en Écosse.

Je reconnais que j'ai pris un grand plaisir aux monologues d'Ellery sur les romans et celles qui les lisent, l'auteure mettant dans sa bouche toutes les réflexions caricaturales que j'ai pu entendre sur ce genre avec beaucoup d'humour et de métaphores assez drôles. J'ai également trouvé les deux héros plutôt sympathiques, alors qu'est ce qui a cloché ? Eh bien désolée mais une romance pour moi c'est une histoire d'amour, c'est la chasse, la séduction, des émotions, des sentiments et là eh bien pas grand chose. Je n'ai ressenti aucune connexion amoureuse entre les deux, aucune alchimie, il y a une scène de sexe des plus étranges dans un musée qui est plus bizarre que sensuelle, à se demander si ces deux là sont vraiment attirés l'un par l'autre.

En fait sur les 400 pages et des poussières, vous avez à peine une cinquantaine sur la relation, par contre si vous avez lu le premier tome de la série de Diana Gabaldon " le chardon et le tartan " et que vous êtes fan ,vous ne serez pas déçu car un des trois livres choisis est celui-ci donc vous avez des passages entiers du livre: un véritable hommage. Si j'avais voulu relire ce livre (qui d'ailleurs est en bonne place dans ma bibliothèque) je l'aurais fait.

Au final il y avait une belle occasion de créer quelque chose d'original autour du genre romanesque, l'intrigue aurait pu être percutante et sexy avec une snob littéraire devant écrire sur le genre romanesque et en venir à l'aimer, mais l'auteur est passée complètement à côté.

Meagan says

I wish I could go with a 3.5. I really enjoyed reading this, but I think the primary appeal for me was the thinly-veiled homage to *Outlander*. It's a rare reader who tries *Outlander* and doesn't love it, and Gwyn

Cready uses that fact for all it's worth in this book. And it's had the inevitable result of making me really want to read *Outlander* again. Or at least watch the show...

There's also a fun storyline of the snobby literary reader being convinced about the joy and value of romance novels, but I honestly don't think it's going to change anyone's mind. (Not least because the argument itself is hidden in a romance novel.) But it's fun nonetheless.

The one thing I couldn't quite get past - the Americanisms. The book has a Londoner discussing spanking using the word "fanny." Which, as we all know when we're nerdy Anglophiles, means something very different in England than in the US. But it's a small complaint about an otherwise lovely diversion.

Oh - and side note: I really hope that Kate and Duncan get/got a book...

Mandi Schreiner says

Ellery Sharpe is a literary critic for the magazine *Vanity Place*. After she writes a scathing review about the memoir of Bettina Moore, the head of Pierrot Enterprises (the world's most successful romance book publisher), not everyone is happy with her. Especially her boss, who just so happens to be sleeping with none other than Bettina Moore. To appease his lover, Ellery's boss demands that she write an article about how wonderful romance books are, especially Pierrot best seller *Vamp*.

Ellery is stunned. She expected her next article to be about John Irving, not some silly romance book. In her eyes, she is an educated, serious writer and romance books are beneath her. But she doesn't want to be fired. Although she is being wooed by a bigger publisher, and hopes to join that company, they are waiting on one more piece by her, and now that her next piece is supposed to be about romance books, this makes her very nervous.

The photographer assigned to her for the story also gives her a headache. Axel Mackenzie is a very accomplished photographer who was in a pretty serious relationship with Ellery about five years ago. But with Axel partying just as hard as he worked, and Ellery not letting him fully into her life, the relationship disintegrated. Although Axel enjoys his work, his dream is to own a microbrewery, and he is very close to making this happen. He just needs a little more money. When Ellery's boss promises double his fee if he can help persuade Ellery to write this article about romance novels in a very positive light, Axel can't refuse. So Axel buys *Vamp*, a historical romance, and he picks up a very popular Scottish time-travel romance book with hopes that Ellery will attempt to read them. They decide to first travel to Pittsburgh where *Vamp* is set, and then off to London and Scotland to shoot and interview people. And hopefully Ellery will be inspired to write this article.

A Novel Seduction by Gwyn Cready is such a cute book! This book is definitely for the romance readers. And not only because it is a romance book, but because it celebrates what romance books are all about.

Ellery experiences firsthand the fluttering in her belly when she reads an intense scene, the connection with the characters when she can think of nothing else but what their fate will be. And, most special, the camaraderie she finds with other romance readers. I don't think I needed Ellery to become a champion for romance books to like her character, but I did enjoy her enlightenment ... especially as she reads *Kiltlander*.

Yes, I said *Kiltlander*. With the hero Jemmie and heroine Cara, who time travels back to Scotland. Of course,

this is really Outlander by Diana Gabaldon with Jamie and Claire — one of my all-time favorite books. Ellery is "forced" to read it, and she starts to fall in love with the book. Big time. Throughout the book we get many scenes between Jemmie and Cara, and with Ellery and Axel in Scotland to interview people for the article, it is a really fun inclusion.

The romance is nice, too. Axel and Ellery were already in a past relationship — so that sexual tension is still between them. They just need to get past the issues that broke them up in the first place. Axel needs to show he has grown up and given up his past behavior, when he abused drugs and alcohol. And Ellery needs to let Axel fully into her life and stop keeping secrets. I really enjoyed these two together.

A Novel Seduction is not only a fun romance, but celebrates why we love romance books. This book had me smiling the whole time.

Rating: B

Kati says

original review posted at Romancing Rakes

From the moment I read this: "Romance Novels: Publishing's Answer to Farmville", I fell in love with this book. Ellery Sharpe is a bookish snob. She thinks romance books are utter drivel and trash but after ripping the head of the most successful romance publishing company Bettina Moore a new one, her editor isn't too happy (as in he's sleeping with her. Men!).

This book is not only an ode to Diana Gabaldon's OUTLANDER but to the romance genre in general.

Top 10 Reasons to Read This Book:

- 1. Ellery Sharpe-** Literary critic, thinks romance books are a waste of time, has a baby sister who she practically raised, Axel's ex, very driven. Ellery's revelations about the romance genre and the books she's reading had me laughing and muttering to myself--'See? You can't just write off romance.'
- 2. Axel Mackenzie-** Freelance photographer, beer drinker, half Scottish, looks delicious in a kilt, Ellery's ex and did I mention he's Canadian? He wants to buy a brewery and the only way he can get the money is to partner up with Ellery and push her towards writing the article with the same passion when she writes literary pieces.
- 3. Monkey Bar-** Supposedly the entrance to the underworld of Vamp so it's a total tourist spot. Ellery wants to prove her sister and best friend wrong, she **can** have fun. She gets drunk, crosses the monkey bars, takes her shirt and bra off, makes out with a random guy, makes out with Axel, all the while thinking she's taken a pill (courtesy of Axel) that's put her on this bender.
- 4. Lessons learned from romance books according to Kate (Ellery's bff):** 1)Forget money and looks. Without honor, you've got nothing. 2)The only heroine of any worth is one who makes things happen for herself. 3)There's nothing more fun than an unruly hard-on.
- 5. Kiltlander-** It's OUTLANDER but Jamie is Jemmie and Claire is Cara. This makes me want to finally read my copy.
- 6. Vamp-** Ah yes. The latest book by Bettina Moore in which empowered vampire women kick ass and take names. Readers of the book are divided into Teams. Sound familiar? This book has your typical paranormal

elements: human turned vampire hero, kick ass heroine, a journey into hell (both figuratively and literally), an evil villain and a secret that must be kept from humans.

7. Kilts- I mean, what is a book without a Highlander in a kilt? Axel and Ellery's travels take them to the site mentioned in *KILTlander* and Axel is talked into wearing a kilt.

8. Sex positions in romance books: Seriously, this part is pee in your pants hilarious. After Ellery reads a sex scene in one of the books, she starts to wonder how limber the characters must be or if the position is even feasible. Haven't you always wondered how a 5'2 woman gets it on with a 6'2 man? (What is it with historicals putting the man a foot taller than the woman anyway?) Does it really work? What about standing on one leg and hiking up the other, wrapping it around his waist?

9. Buhl Martin Black- Ellery's boss at Vanity Place who is diddling Bettina Moore and makes Ellery write a three thousand word essay about the positive side of romance. Plus, he's married. And not to Bettina.

10. Lessons learned from romance books, according to Axel: 1) Women love them. 2) If a woman doesn't love romance novels, she still loves romance. 3) Just talking about romance with the cashier at the bookstore earned him a phone number. 4) Kiltlander helped him score with a girl back in college.

It is like the kitchen sink of romance books. Almost everything you find in your categorized romance books, you'll find it in this one. This book has everything: opposite personalities, the bff there for the comic relief, the sister who helps and doesn't hinder the story, the slimy ass hat of a guy bent on winning no matter the cost, the whiny mean girl, a road trip (okay, country hopping), a hero who has a secret which the heroine assumes the worst, a heroine who has a secret which cost her the man she loved, a story of second chances, a secret baby, men in kilts, a rowdy bar, readers split into Team [insert character name here] or Team [insert opposing character name here] (you know which books I'm talking about), hilarious secondary characters and the list goes on and on.

FAVORITE QUOTE: "'Would you be flattered or offended if someone described your nipples as 'musket balls'?"

The unpacking stopped. She gave him a curious look. 'I'm going to have to say no one's ever asked me that before.'"

OVERALL: Now I finally want to crack the spine on *OUTLANDER* er, at least pull it up on the Kindle, to see what I'm missing. Yes, Gwyn Cready has made me see the light. Gwyn Cready's writing is sharp, witty, entertaining, laugh-out-loud until you cry and slightly pee in your pants funny (not that I'm admitting to the last part), very refreshing and pegs the thoughts of non-romance book readers that I know. The interaction between Ellery and Axel is explosive yet sweet and fun. The banter between the two had me snorting and getting weird looks from strangers. (I swear I have got to stop reading romance books in public.) It was quite the journey watching Ellery go from romance book skeptic to slightly confused as to why she's got feelings about Jemmie and Cara to fully embracing the genre. Would it be blasphemous to say that this book is **my KILTlander**?

book provided by Ayelet Gruenspecht from Pocket Books for review
