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Virginia Henley

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Some men thrive on scandal.

Lord James Hamilton, heir to the Duke of Abercorn and newly appointed attendant to the young Prince of Wales, is in no rush to find a wife and take on a more responsible life. A lover of all things pleasurable, James has earned his reputation as a rakehell of London. But when a feisty beauty piques his interest, James finds himself obsessed with learning more about her, and even contemplates making her his own.

Lady Anne Curzon-Howe has long been besotted with her dear friends' handsome elder brother, James—ever since the moment he compared her to a wild Irish rose. While Anne has many suitors, the elusive James is the only man who draws her fancy. But Lord Hamilton's rakish ways are notorious for a reason, and convincing him to love only her will be an incredible—albeit rewarding—challenge....

MORE THAN 8 MILLION COPIES OF VIRGINIA HENLEY'S NOVELS IN PRINT

Lord Rakehell Details

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From Reader Review Lord Rakehell for online ebook

Caroline says

Tedious in the extreme.

Liz F says

Review copy courtesy of the publisher via NetGalley

****THIS WAS A DNF****

****THIS IS A DNF REVIEW****

I consider myself a fan of historical romance but I did not care for this book. That's not to say that this is poor representation of the genre. It isn't. But this book just wasn't for me. I'm giving this book 2 stars because although I didn't like it, it may still be a great book.

The lead female character is Anne and I liked her well enough. She seemed very sweet and kind. She was also a very good friend, which I think is a facet that is sometimes missing in romance novels. Anne would back you up even if she didn't agree with what you were doing. Although outwardly, she was the picture of ladylike behavior, she did have some opinions that would have perhaps been considered a bit outrageous at the time. For one, she insisted on choosing her own husband. She was not going to suffer through some kind of an arranged marriage. She also wanted it to be a love match. Of course, to me, that seems pretty obvious that she would want that but I have to remind myself that back then, women were sometimes treated as property to be traded about between titled families. So I really liked Anne and thought she made a very sympathetic heroine.

James is the "Lord Rakehell" in question and I quite liked him as well! He really only halfway deserved his reputation as a rakehell. James is a lot like Anne with respect to what he'll do for his friends. One of his friends is the Prince of Wales and in fact, James was appointed to be his attendant. James likes the Prince so he takes the fall for some of the Prince's more stupid follies, which is partly why he earns his rakehell reputation. Throughout much of the book, I actually found myself feeling bad for James because he had to babysit that fool of a prince, especially when the Prince grows up to be a pretty callous and thoughtless buffoon. On the other hand, James had a hand in creating the man the Prince has become so I shouldn't have felt TOO bad for him! LOL! But overall, James was a very likeable character.

Unfortunately, I found the book to be entirely too long. Generally, I like longer romance novels. It gives me more time to know the characters. But here, it felt like there was so much emphasis on the more mundane activities and daily life of the characters. Most of the balls and every horse ride in the park was described ad nauseum. Every outfit that Anne or any of her friends wore was described in excruciating detail. Simply put, this was a story about a girl who has a crush on her best friend's older brother and as she gets older, she vows to marry him. That's it. Nothing more. I don't know that it needed to take over 400 pages to tell the story though. For me, the story could have been told in half that many pages and would have been better off for it.

In the end, I made it to about the 70% mark before I had to quit. For me, it was just too boring and focused too

much on the fashions, on minor side characters and on the intricacies of life at court, none of which, unfortunately, interested me. Again, I wouldn't say that this was a bad book. It just wasn't my cup of tea.

Cocktails and Books says

Lord James and Lady Anne, at first seem to have one sided relationship. Anne is in love with James and he for the first part of the book didn't even know she existed. That changed pretty quickly when, Anne became the princess of Wales, new wife lady and waiting. Anne and James start spending more time together.

Their relationship, is quite interesting they both speak out adventure, and do not spend too much time to society strict standards.

The story was well written, the characters were very interesting. I did not want to put the book down, while reading Lord Rakehell.

I loved how Virginia Henley used real people and real events. Just on a faster time line. After reading Lord Rakehell, I became even more interested in the people and events that happened in that time period.

Reviewed by SammySosa for Cocktails and Books

Nina C. says

More intrigue than sex. And I like my romances the other way around.

BonnieL says

The writing was tedious and boring; it IS possible to discuss people by name, without throwing in their titles too; worst of all - Edward Albert, Prince of Wales, was NEVER EVER referred to as "Teddy" by his family or closest friends - he was Bertie - when an author either can't be bothered getting this basic historical detail correct, or capriciously changes it for unknown reasons, it makes one suspect every other aspect of her supposed historical data.

Missy says

DNF at 69%. Not enough romance. This book is definitely historical fiction. All of the characters are real historical figures during the reign of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. I may not read another book by this author if all of her books are HF.

Mskychick says

1-1/2 stars

The prose is awkward and stilted

Neither the hero or the heroine engaged me. ALL of the characters felt like cardboard cut-outs.

It felt like. The book is twice as long as it needs to be because she had to cram in every darn fact she researched (which made it seem like an amateur book).

And it's boring, boring, booooooring.

My Book Addiction and More MBA says

An absolutely refreshing love story written by Virginia Henley! From the moment that Lord James Hamilton, in an effort to cheer her up, told twelve year old Lady Anne Curzon-Howe that “she was as beautiful as a Wild Irish Rose”, she was smitten. Five years later, seventeen year old Anne is posing as eighteen and having her first season, and she’s got her sights set on one man, Lord James Hamilton. When James sees Anne at Newmarket, he mistakes Anne for the mistress of Henry Fane (who is Anne’s brother in law) and approaches her about becoming his mistress. Giddy with the excitement of drawing James’ attention, Anne decides to continue the charade and meets James for a drink. Knowing that the game can only last so long, Anne eventually allows James to learn that she is actually a lady, during a masquerade ball. Baffled by the fact that while he should be raging mad at Anne for her deceit, he can’t stop thinking about having her. When his younger brother John Claud announces to James that he is going to marry Anne, James is honor bound to leave Anne alone, until Anne confines in James that she has no intentions of ever marrying John Claud. Then all bets are off. When Anne is appointed as a Lady in Waiting to the new Princess of Wales, James and Anne find themselves able to spend time together and begin a sweet, passionate romance, one that is quite respectable, despite James’ past ways. As fate seems to throw wrench after wrench into their romance, James and Anne find that they must persevere through whatever life throws at them in order to find the happiness they both know they will have in each other.

A magnificent historical romance! This novel is set during a four year time period, so the plot is fast paced and constantly moving. The characters are uniquely lovable and well written. When I first began reading this novel, I was frustrated at the slow pace and the seemingly irrelevant storyline that was beginning between The Prince of Wales, Teddy, and James. I decided to stick with it and see where the story was going and I was quite glad that I did. The background work that is laid during the first few chapters is so crucial to understanding the plot and character dynamics throughout the rest of the story. I loved the way that Ms. Henley can make real historical figures come to life and make the reader relate to those people. This novel was my first experience with Ms. Henley’s work, or any novel like it, but this book is one I could read again and again. I encourage you to pick up a copy today!

Rating: 4.5

Heat Rating: Mild

Reviewed by AprilP

Courtesy of My Book Addiction and More

Lynda Brunelle says

Virginia Henley is one of my favorite authors. She does historical romance so well! Her books are funny, sexy and she has a way of bringing history to life. With Lord Rakehell she did not disappoint!

L.A. Miller says

When I began reading Lord Rakehell I was hopeful I had found another talented author. I enjoyed the characters and the way Ms. Henley described the scenery. The storyline, though predictable was enticing and her love scenes left you breathless. So why such a low mark? I was disappointed when Ms. Henley's character fell out of the time period and began using words from today's language during several scenes. It's as if she forgot what era she was writing in and it was done enough that it hindered the flow of the story. For that reason alone I gave the writer low marks. If those corrections were made it would easily elevate my rating to a four possibly five star level.

NinaReader says

Me and Virginia Henley go way back. (I'm going to sound old here but I'm under 40...barely...I swear)

Her book "The Hawk and the Dove" was my first romance novel. It was sitting on my sister's nightstand, I loved the cover, picked it up, and started reading and haven't stopped since. That was in the early '90s. So.....we go way back and I'm very partial to her books.

If you're already a fan then you know her books are long and very immersed in lots and lots of history and details. I personally love that but some people don't. But the history and its details are what I think brings the book to life.

Another feature of her books is that she portrays strong unorthodox brazen fiery females. Who doesn't love that?

Now I will say that one of her earlier books' element that is really tamed now is the erotic hotness that was so very prevalent in her earlier works. She was my "nastiest" author for a decade there and I loved her for it! It's not so bad now but that's ok. **I'll always be a fan!**

Must Reads from Virginia Henley are:

The Hawk and the Dove

The Pirate and the Pagan

The Raven and the Rose

Seduced

Ravished

The Dragon and the Jewel

Joanne says

This book wasn't what I wanted it to be. This was WAY too historical for me, and was very slow moving.

Pretty Sassy Cool says

3 stars.

Historical fiction has long been a favorite genre of mine. For me, there are basically three types of historical fiction: the somewhat biographical story; the bodice-ripper (Fabio look-alike on the cover); and historical romance magic. Clearly, the last is my favorite by far. This one, unfortunately, does not fall into that category.

Lord Rakehell is well-written, set in Victorian England and is rife with historical characters, including the Edward, the Prince of Wales who features prominently in the narrative. The main characters, Lord James Hamilton and Lady Anne Curzon-Howe have been acquainted with one another since childhood. Lady Anne adores James from afar and becomes determined to win his heart. Well, you know how this goes. He sees her as the child she's always been to him, but she is a determined young woman and makes it her mission to show him that she's no child.

The biggest problem for me was the linear, plodding plot, and the conflict and its resolution occur much too late to give much tension to the story. It starts off slow and never seems to gain much momentum. It is filled with rich historical details and characters. Too much, though, and it results in some confusion and re-reading.

The romance is nice and there is some steam, but unfortunately it doesn't make up for the slow pace of the story. I liked the two main characters, particularly Lady Anne. She's intelligent, strong-minded and determined. Lord James was a handsome aristocrat with a relatively underserved rakish reputation. He is the foil for another well-known character and loyal to a fault, which is nearly his undoing.

So if you enjoy a more linear, semi-biographical historical romance with some nice steamy scenes, this is a good one.

For more reviews and bookish talk, visit our blog at [Pretty Sassy Cool](#)

Debbie Lester says

Virginia Henley has written many historical romance novels that have pleased fans for years. Her latest novel, *Lord Rakehell* is no exception. It is a romance filled with lush imagery, details of life at court, and a poignant romance. Henley's ability to transport the reader back in time is amazing, as well as, her well thought out plot points and her knack for character development. Readers who are looking for a good romance by a well known author need look no further, *Lord Rakehell* is just what they are looking for!

This is actually the first novel I have read by Virginia Henley, so I wasn't quite sure what to expect. Henley

has sold a lot of romances and readers have great praise for her writing. The beginning of the novel was somewhat tedious and it took awhile to get down to the romance, but once you got there, Henley did an amazing job of bringing the characters to life and giving the reader a reason to be interested in them.

Henley's writing style is very descriptive and she brings the court of Queen Victoria to vibrant life. Her characters are very well written in the fact that readers will feel like they are a part of the story, experiencing the feelings of Anne and James right along with the characters. That is not an easy feat and Henley pulls it off with style.

Lord Rakehell has a good but somewhat predictable plot. However, Henley puts an unexpected spin on it that readers will find engaging and worth their time to read. James Hamilton is heir to the dukedom of Abercorn and attendant to the Prince of Wales. He is notorious for his womanizing ways and has no intentions of settling down. But a kind word from his past has drawn the attention of Lady Anne Curzon-Howe. When Anne and James meet a misunderstanding occurs that completely changes the direction of their relationship. James mistakenly believes she is the mistress of a friend and sees no exception to his rakish ways in trying to garner her favor.

Anne lets James continue to wrongly believe that she is a mistress and not a lady for some time. When it is finally revealed to him that Anne is really a lady and an attendant of the Princess of Wales, he is so far taken with her that he is willing to give up his worldly ways to woo her. I thought Henley did a fantastic job of turning the story on its end by using a bit of psychology on the hero. Anne was offering him what he wanted in a sense, an uncomplicated arrangement. But it was anything but what he believed it would be. This was a wonderful plot point that will win over fans in a heartbeat.

Lord Rakehell may take a bit to get to the good part, but when it does readers will be glad they stuck it out and waited to see what happened. I loved Henley's descriptions of Queen Victoria's court and all of the behind the scenes facts that the reader learns about court life and the goings on in the public eye, as well as, behind closed doors. It was informative as well as entertaining and added a lot to the overall plot. There were a few instances when the heroine spoke in a more modern way than I expected, but that was a minor thing in comparison to the overall story. I thought the romance was tender and romantic and I am looking forward to reading other books by the author.

Kimberly Rocha~ Book Obsessed Chicks says

From the time she was no more than a child, Anne Curzon-Howe has been infatuated with James Hamilton. The moment the older Hamilton called the pretty young girl a Wild Irish Rose, her esteem for him multiplies exponentially. Anne and her brother Montagu were of Irish blood and undesirable to their father's purely English children by his first wife, especially the petulant half sister Emily, whose disdain for her half-siblings is epic.

Years later, the handsome rake, and heir apparent to the Dukedom of Abercorn, James Hamilton is now appointed attendant to the Prince of Wales and attending this young prince is no easy job. James finds watching over the young prince his cross to bear.

Lady Anne Curzon-Howe, now seventeen, but passing herself off as eighteen to have her coming out, still has James Hamilton on the brain and she is determined to curb his rakish ways if the last thing she can do. Even with James' younger brother John Claud following her around like a puppy dog, Anne still has her one objective. When her half sister Emily, who still has a chip on her shoulder, tries to foil Anne at every turn, she attempts to rise above consistently.

When James mistakes Anne for mistress of his acquaintance Henry Fane, who she is in fact sister-in-law to, Anne decides to keep up the charade to teach the rake a lesson. James attempts to woo Anne into an illicit affair, only to find that she is in fact an honorable lady, which totally boggles James' mind. Now he wants this young woman and he will do what he must to have her, even if it means dispensing with his rakish ways. The powers that be consistently quarrel to keep them apart and John Claud's constant presence doesn't help in creating any harmony. James tries with all his might to overcome his reputation so that Anne and her family will find him a decent suitor for her, but those outside forces chip at the unstable relationship that Anne and James attempt to build.

Lord Rakehell by Virginia Henley is an enjoyable and frustrating read. Just when the reader wants all to go smoothly a wrench is thrown in to create mayhem. Isn't that the appeal in a romance though? I mean it would be a total bore if all were predictable, and Lord Rakehell is anything but that. Once in a while I wanted to smack Anne, but then again, I had to remember that she was only seventeen and her episodes of immaturity though annoying, were understandable. James Hamilton is a dream. Handsome, intelligent and loyal, this man goes above and beyond the call of duty to protect those he cares about. I really enjoyed Lord Rakehell and I hope you will as well.

~KIMBERLY~
