



She Whom I Love

Tess Bowery

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Love would be simpler if it came with a script.

Marguerite Ceniza dies on the London stage each night, but her own life has barely begun. The ingénue is on the prowl for a lover, but while she burns with desire for Sophie, a confession could ruin their decade-long friendship. In the meantime there are always men vying to be her patron, and square-jawed, broad-shouldered James Glover can't help but catch her eye.

Sophie Armand has been a lady's maid for too long, and she's sick of keeping secrets. Her hidden scripts and the story of her birth are only the beginning. Her nights are haunted by desperate thoughts of the beguiling Marguerite, and of James, the handsome tradesman who whispers promises of forever into her ear.

James has the kind of problem a lot of men would kill for—two women, both beautiful, both sensual, and both willing. Sophie wants marriage, while Marguerite's only in it for fun, and choosing between them isn't easy.

What's the worst that could happen if he secretly courts them both?

Their romantic triangle is complicated in the most delicious way, until a shadowy figure from Marguerite's past threatens to destroy the budding relationship—and their lives.

Warning: Contains a lady's maid with secret desires, a corset-maker who knows his way around a woman's body, and an actress who never has to fake it.(f/f/m) Rated for adult audiences only.

She Whom I Love Details

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From Reader Review She Whom I Love for online ebook

Shira Glassman says

What a wonderful Regency poly ménage with happily ever after! Childhood girl friends who realize they're in love have also both been flirting with the same man. When they discover the overlap, they put their plan into action and the next thing James the Corset Maker knows, he's got two girlfriends. *She Whom I Love* is a perfect and quintessential example of something I've seen mentioned often these days: "wouldn't it be nice if some of those love triangles became triad fiction instead", because the plot sort of starts at a classic love triangle setup and then goes merrily in its own direction. For those who are looking for diversity *within* bisexuality: Sarah is bi, whereas author Tess Bowery said I surmised correctly from her period-appropriate descriptions that Meg is bisexual homoromantic.

More squeeing in list form, because I'm lazy today:

-the first confession of mutual love between the two women was everything I want in a historical f/f--no internalized homophobia, a feeling of utter wholesomeness and emotional purity in its approach to sexual intimacy between women. It read very 'love story' rather than erotica.

-ALL THREE of the romantic leads are *working people* who *do things for a living*. In a historical romance, that's a gift.

-Negative loose ends got tied up in an unexpectedly positive way, which was not only satisfying to me as a sugarbucket but satisfying to my feminist impulses

-the author made sure she wasn't writing a falsely white London

-there was an actual plot with adventure, and villains to fight, as opposed to the romantic arc being the entire rising and falling action, with elements of ladies rescuing ladies.

-a lot of the conflict comes from everyone trying to figure out how to make sure they're being treated with as much respect as they deserve as human beings despite living in a class system that denigrates actresses or people born of sex workers, rather than bullshit manufactured conflict and misunderstandings.

-the two women had really clearly defined contrasting personalities, with Sarah as the pragmatic and responsible one and Meg as the exciting foil

-Sarah is a playwright in what little spare time being a lady's maid affords her, and even the made-up play within a book made sense and sounded interesting to me

The book did make me yearn more for historical f/f *without* a dude in it that had the same feel--wholesome sexuality, pretty dresses, intense emotional connection, and nothing of persecution beyond a passing mention of "let's not get caught"--but I check LGBT presses a lot, and I'm optimistic. :)

Rose A says

I was really excited to read this after having enjoyed the first book in the series and particularly because of the greater focus on female characters. Sarah and Meg were my favourite part of the story and I thought their

relationship was really beautifully and realistically drawn. They complemented each other very well and stood out really well as individual characters. I also loved the insights into Sarah's world as a ladies maid and her writing and Meg's theatrical background. Where I came a little unstuck and why I am only giving this review 4 stars rather than the 5 which the writing itself definitely deserves is because I found James hard to warm up to. I really liked the ending and the way he eventually developed but for a large part of the novel I just did not find him particularly attractive or a necessary part of Meg and Sarah's lives. However, he did eventually prove his worth and I can see how the final arrangement works for the characters, even if James does not do much for me personally. The way a polyamorous relationship was built up to in a period appropriate fashion was fascinating to read and ultimately satisfying. As for the minor characters, I loved Cecily and Grace and am looking forward to reading Grace's story soon!

This is a really unique series from a very talented author and I would really recommend this book!

K.J. Charles says

I am really, really liking this author's work. The problems of artists scraping a living, dependent on whim and patronage, the problems of servants denied a personal life and able to be sacked on a whim, the threat of poverty and desperation just around the corner: these make a really solid grounding for Bowery's Regencies. Which isn't to say these are heavily political, but that, no matter how fairytale the romance might be, it has its feet very firmly on the ground.

This is a f/f/m menage, and I have to say that I did not love the m part of that for much of the book. But I did like the way he switched from seeing himself as the centre with two women wanting him, to realising he was one point in a triangle. I loved their relationship, both sexual and intense friendship. And I really hope there are going to be more books in this world.

Julie Barrett says

I read a lot of ménage romances, but sadly I haven't come across many with f/f interaction, so I was very happy to discover this one. *She Whom I Love* is a F/F/M historical romance set in Regency London. History is not my strongpoint, so I've no idea if it's historically accurate or not, but I found it a fascinating and entertaining read. I really liked the fact that the main characters were all working class instead of members of the aristocracy, which is unusual in this type of story. All three characters had many layers to them and were interesting to read about. The storyline was intriguing with lots of passion, secrets and emotion.

James is a stay maker with a problem - he's fallen for two totally different women, and can't decide between them. Marguerite is a flamboyant actress who's looking for fun, and Sophie is a lady's maid who's looking for marriage. What James doesn't know is that Marguerite and Sophie are close friends - and they both want to be more than friends. This complicated love triangle turns steamy until danger looms in the form of someone from Marguerite's past.

The three main characters were all likable, although I initially wasn't sure about James as he seemed to be stringing the girls along. But believe me Sophie and Marguerite were more than a match for him and able to stand up for themselves! The chemistry between all three of them was hot, and I really enjoyed reading their love scenes which were wildly passionate. This is quite an unusual story, and I would definitely recommend it to readers who enjoy historical romances with an erotic twist. *She Whom I Love* receives four out of five stars.

I received a free copy of this book in exchange for a honest review.

A W says

(Possible Spoilers)Every now and then I'll find a book that genuinely amazes me this most certainly being one. I was lucky enough to receive an Advanced Reader Copy(ARC) of this work from the author and from opening to finale this was a pleasure to read. It comes across clearly that the author not only researched but immersed herself in the time period. She has succeeded in creating a rich world and a fascinating view into the not to distant past and populates it with wonderfully distinct and original characters. Each detail from the chemistry shared between characters to the downright sinful intimate scenes was fantastically woven together. The story is suspenseful, humorous, and in the end makes you think of where our society is and where it was not that long ago. Very much recommended.

Kitty Kat says

This incredibly sexy tale of Sarah/Sophie, Meg and James is a well told story set in Victorian London. I enjoyed the set up of the story, the tantalising titbits of information regarding the three main characters. The love triangle between them seems doomed to failure and I found it hard to decide which way I wanted it to go.

Jealousy and an intriguing back story have dramatic consequences for all of the main characters and those close to them. The story flows well and tension mounts more and more as the tale unfolds. I found myself wondering where on earth the author was taking me.

The depiction of the lives of women in Victorian London was fascinating. One was either a wife, a servant or out on the streets in some fashion. I really felt for all of the women depicted. They really had little choice or control over their lives.

This is a very hot and steamy book and not for the faint-hearted. It is very descriptive and intense. I really enjoyed reading it and hope there are more stories to come!

I received a copy of this book from Inked Rainbow Reads in return for an honest review.

YAFGCRich says

I was lucky enough to get to check out an ARC of Tess' sequel to "Rite of Summer" and what a joy it was.

"She Whom I Love" surpasses "Rite of Summer". It'd be hard to say the stakes are higher in this book but the story and steamy romance and erotica were complimented by a wonderful addition of some action/adventure elements.

The characters are deep and layered and all of them lovable especially the somewhat childlike Meg. Ah Meg. Ah charming, sweet and wonderfully, acerbic and quotable Meg. Like a glimpse into another time with fascinating and enlightening details into the day to day lives of historic professionals.

The highlight for me was the climactic action scene, though it was all over just a little too quickly. As one who's practiced a bit of historical fencing myself I appreciated some of the details added that made it feel

more real to me.

If you liked "Rite of Summer" watch for this awesome addition to Tess' series (Two vaguely connected books is a series, right?). Not a sequel to be sure, but there are a few familiar faces in this terrific stand-alone story. Here's hoping there's lots more to come!

RoloPoloBookBlog says

She Whom I Love by Tess Bowery

Book #2: Treading the Boards Series

Source: Purchase

My Rating: 4½/5 stars

My Review:

Marguerite (aka Meg) Ceniza lives her life as she sees fit! As an actress, Meg gets to play a variety of roles that allow her to play out her need for attention in front of a receptive audience each and every night. Meg has no interest in marriage or children or generally being tied down but she is interested in being loved and cared for. Sophie (aka Sarah) Armand is far quieter and more reserved than her best-friend, Meg and has a great deal of interest in being married, having children, and being loved and cared for. Though the two women are wildly different, they have long been friends and most recently, have become lovers. Though their affair will most certainly bring them both pleasure, it won't bring either of them the security of marriage and family.

James Glover isn't a wealthy or titled man but he does have a respectable income thanks to his stay/corset designs. His work is beautiful and finely crafted and certainly appeals to many women among London society. With his financial future virtually assured, it is now time for James to settle his personal future. Unfortunately, James can't quite decide between two women, Meg and Sophie, which causes him to devise the most ill-conceived of plans, he will court them both, make Sophie his wife and keep Meg as his mistress. What could possibly go wrong here??? Within days of settling on his plan, James is found out and the two women take the most delightfully delicious and sensual revenge on him for his trickery. (FYI: This is one of the best scenes in the book ?) Never in his wildest dreams would James have imagined not only having both women but both women being willing to share themselves with each other as much as with him. What could possibly go wrong here???

As these things tend to go (says the girl who has no first-hand knowledge of such things ?) the initial stages of the love triangle are filled with shared naughty moments and promises of never abandoning one another. But Meg, Sophie, and James are all still human and their respective situations don't lend themselves to making things more permanent. Meg doesn't want something permanent but wants both James and Sophie, Sophie to love her and James to care for her financially. James fears he will lose Meg if he follows his heart and proposes marriage to Sophie and fears Sophie will step aside if he shows too much attention to Meg. Sophie has a comfortable position as a lady's maid and fears losing both Meg and James due to the responsibilities and duties demanded by her job. Clearly, the three need to have a serious talk but, as with any good book, they choose to keep their feelings and fears inside until everything falls apart.

Of the three, Meg has always been the most reckless, the most careless and has relied on Sophie (among others) to bail her out of her messes. Her most recent mess is the direst she has ever faced and with Sophie and James so very, very mad at her, she has no choice but to get herself (and James's sister) out of the

dilemma. Mind you, the dilemma isn't simple or small but large and dangerous and it will take everything in Meg (and maybe a few surprise rescuers!) to right the wrongs she has created.

The Bottom Line: Bowery is finding her stride with *She Whom I Love* and I thoroughly enjoyed the naughty little period piece. Of the group, James and Sophie are my favorites with Meg and her selfish, flighty ways coming in a distant third. To say the trio has an unconventional arrangement wouldn't even be in the ballpark and it is the unconventionality that makes this read so exciting. Sophie and Meg are opposite sides of the same coin making it impossible for James to decide on just one woman. The women's willingness to share James and themselves leads to some delightfully naughty scenes and shared intimate moments. The drama the trio find themselves embroiled in is just right for this read and doesn't drag on for long. Ultimately, *She Whom I Love* is a romance that does have a HEA that I found to be most satisfying.

P.S. Though you don't have to have read book one, *Rite of Summer* to enjoy *She Whom I Love*, I would recommend reading them in order. There are a few little details in this second book that relate to people and moments from the first book.

Jill Sorenson says

I saw this cover on twitter and clicked so fast I almost broke my finger. I can never find f/f/m stories!! I absolutely loved the first half - 3/4. I rarely read Regency historicals anymore (I think this is Regency...) maybe because very few feature working class characters, like this one. The hero is a staymaker--really. And he's no dandy. Apparently making stays is part art, part manual labor, and he makes a good living. The first heroine is a ladies' maid, pretending to be French, writing a play in her spare time. The second heroine is her best friend, an actress. We get authentic, interesting details for each profession.

My favorite part of the story was the banter between Sarah (the maid) and James (the staymaker). Their dialogue is delicious. She claims that he's the only man mentally *dressing* women with his eyes, rather than undressing them. Ha. The writing is superb and the characters are charming.

Sarah's friend Meg is the vibrant, dramatic type, well suited to the stage. Both women have always pined for each other, in secret. They begin an affair at the same time James decides he'd like to court Sarah. The only problem is that he's also pursuing Meg as a mistress. He's not an experienced scoundrel, however. He's just a lovelorn staymaker who finds himself in an emotional bind with two equally appealing women. They discover what he's doing and "punish" him with some sexy revenge. Soon the three are involved in a very unconventional romance.

There's some upstairs-downstairs drama at Sarah's work, secrets are revealed and James makes a hash of things by implying that Meg is a strumpet. It's all very juicy, until the focus shifts to some intrigue and danger involving his little sister, which drags on for the last 1/4. This just seemed to delay the romantic resolution unnecessarily. I wanted more of an exploration of the menage relationship and more of that sparkling dialogue.

Overall it's a very strong story, sexy and unique and well-written, much better than most of the f/f/m I've read. 4/5

Ruthie Taylor says

~~I received a free copy of this book to read and review for Wicked Reads ~~

This is an entertaining read set in a time where women of any class had to use their wiles to get what they needed, and love was very much the casualty. Not so here - two women who have known each other forever manage to combine the two, or is that three, to aim for a real HEA. It is not an easy course, but one which clearly has much merit.

The detail of the times are threaded into the story carefully, building the dramatic elements effectively. The characters grow naturally and develop throughout the story, which feels very intimate. The romance both explodes and also seeps into the trio, much more sincerely than the relationships that are around them. It is a clever book, as it sets up a whole world in which the reader becomes invested, as well as being laden with intense chemistry between three fascinating people. The scene where the women reveal to James that they are known to each other is extremely sensual.

If you like period romance and are happy to indulge in voyeurism of an FFM trio, this will be a very enjoyable read!

Stevie Carroll says

Previously reviewed on The Good, The Bad, and The Unread:

I've written before about how rare it is for me to find a story in which poly relationships work the way I've seen in real life. Finding a story like that in a historical romance, where the setting and characters also felt in keeping to me seemed an impossibility. However, I was tempted by this book's blurb and its implication that the relationship between the two heroines was at least as important to the plot as those between each of them and the hero. So I jumped straight in, not having read the first book in the series, and I'm very glad to have done so.

Sarah and Meg have known each other since girlhood, when they were both saved from less than ideal family situations by an older woman who ensured they received an education and far better choices in life than many of their peers. Both have adopted more exotic sounding names: Meg in order to pursue a career on the stage, and Sarah to gain employment as a fashionable 'French' ladies' maid. The women are still close, but neither has dared confess the true extent of her feelings to the other. Meanwhile, both are also unaware that they share a male admirer.

James makes and fits ladies' corsets for a living, although his desires to lead the fashions rather than sticking with well-accepted designs that are hampered by the senior partner in his enterprise. The sole guardian of his younger sister, James hopes to find a suitable wife – much like the maid he encounters on a regular basis – but is tempted by Meg, whom he knows is looking for a new protector but not for a husband.

When the women realise that James has been courting both of them, they set a trap for him, but it turns out that all three are suited – if they can only find a way to make the relationship appear respectable. Meanwhile,

James' sister longs for excitement and hopes that her brother's new friends will provide her with more opportunities to see the world beyond their London townhouse.

This book has a fabulous set of main characters and a great supporting cast of allies and adversaries. Much of the conflict within the relationship stems from the sheer lack of role models for James to base his behaviour on – which means he makes a mess of things a few times – while the big conflict is external to the three and results from Meg's refusal to entertain the wishes of a local villain. The finale of that subplot had me genuinely worrying how things could be made to work out for all the good guys, but the resolution was highly satisfactory.

A series I shall definitely be catching up with and then keeping up with.

Highlyeccentric says

This was... such a disappointment. I LOVED the concept, I loved the set-up, loved the array of characters and the investment in working and middle class characters. Unfortunately, the sex scenes were painfully cliché, and it... perhaps this is what people read menage for? Things that collapse into all threesome, rather than delicate individual axes? It felt like Bowery was /trying/ for a poly romance but mostly got stuck on hot (to her? I hope?) threesome action.

Also the solution to the whole thing was screamingly obvious, and the girls should have negotiated for it from the start - in fact I thought they were. Consequently the feelingsdrama seemed ridiculous.

Chasia Lloyd says

~BEST M/F/F RELATIONSHIP EVER??? I THINK SO!~

Previous stories I have read with poly relationships have always had some kind of imbalance. One person is not all the way into the arrangement or someone is only there for sex, for example. Tess Bowery's "She Whom I Love" is a delightful read of a man and two women who love and desire each other completely.

James is not the most typical of historical romance heroes as far as professions go - he is an apprentice to a staymaker who caters exclusively to older, wealthy women. He has a lot of heart, finding himself torn between two women while struggling to raise his little sister. He starts off the book with plans to deceive the heroines, but fortunately for him, they quickly show him the advantages of being completely honest.

Sara is an abigail for one of James's clients with a fraught past. She is bursting with dreams of becoming a playwright, but she is the most grounded and sensible of the trio. She serves as the moral anchor of the story.

Meg is an actress with an appetite for fine things paid for her by patrons. Her friendship with Sara goes way back, and she knows from the start she loves Sara passionately. She believes herself to be incapable of loving a man with the same fever she loves Sara though she enjoys sex with men, and it is she who suggests the open relationship among the three as a way to keep Sara's heart and, well, James's body.

The bedroom scenes are phenomenal, and the romance and excitement in the spaces between love scenes are just as wonderful. The book emphasizes the importance of honesty in any relationship, and it is one of the

best books I've read this year.

e-ARC provided by NetGalley

Jaylee says

A really well-done polyamorous triad set in the 1800's. The historical setting was spot-on, the characters were vibrant and unique, and the story didn't play out as a pile of obvious tropes. It was nice, refreshing, a super fun read and a great romance.

I will say that I wasn't expecting as much erotic content as was in this book. This is definitely an erotic romance, with entire chapters devoted to lengthy sex scenes. They were well-written and the author doesn't overuse euphemisms or anything distracting, but I'm just not here for lots of erotica, so I found them distracting and skim-worthy. But that's just me and my own tastes. :)

I actually really loved Sarah's employer's arc, and Cecily and James' relationship. And Grace. I want to see Grace again. Each character has their own dramas and subplots that weave together with the romance plot line to make them their own well-rounded people with lives and interests and personalities.

I really, really enjoyed this. It gave me a lot of warm fuzzy polyamory feelings.

If you're looking for solid romance featuring non-monogamy, give this one a read.

Kameron says

(request submitted by author for an honest critique)

Now this was a hot erotic tale. Two ladies, best of friends, take the plunge and take their friendship to the next level. Let me tell you what folks, that monumental turning point was HOT, HOT, HOT.

It was tastefully erotic.

If that first love scene wasn't exhilarating enough, James enters the picture.

You see, he was courting both woman (one as a wife, the other his mistress) and, unbeknownst to him, they were lovers.

Instead of yelling and throwing things, Meg came up with a deliciously wicked act of revenge. Bound him to a chair while he has to suffer and watch them make love in front of him. I know the guys reading this will agree that was the purest torture imaginable. I tip my hat to you, Tess!!

As with any story, you expect drama and Tess delivers that as well (insert the villain Baron here).

The lovers do quarrel (as expected) but when they need each other, love prevails. I mean, you can't have a true love story without a HEA. Right? :)

Heart Rating System - 1 (lowest) and 5 (highest)

Score:  1/2

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