



Devil's Bride and A Rake's Vow

Stephanie Laurens

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Dear Reader,

Welcome to the wonderful world of the Cynsters! When I embarked on the stories of the Cynster clan, I knew they fascinated me, but I had no idea how much they would appeal to readers. This volume contains the books that first introduced readers to the glittering, glamorous, passionate, and sometimes dangerous lives of the Cynster cousins and their ducal dynasty.

In **Devil's Bride**, the head of the dynasty, Devil Cynster, 6th Duke of St. Ives, is caught in a compromising position with a governess. He astonishingly offers marriage, but Honoria Anstruther-Wetherby has no interest. Devil is convinced, yet someone is not so enthused, and accidents start to occur. Can Devil convince Honoria that marrying him will be a more exciting adventure than anything she's dreamed? And if he succeeds, will they both survive?

In **A Rake's Vow**, Vane Cynster, Devil's cousin and closest friend, determined to avoid Cupid's dart, takes refuge at his godmother's country house, where fate throws Patience Debbington literally into his arms. Vane is impressed; Patience is not. But as both become embroiled in a mystery involving ghosts, thefts, and ultimately attempted murder, Patience learns that she can place her trust in this rake's vow, because it's one that comes from the heart.

I hope you enjoy your first exciting taste of the Cynster world -- let the romance, adventure, mystery, and sheer passion sweep you away!

WARNING: The Cynsters are addictive.
Stephanie Laurens

Devil's Bride and A Rake's Vow Details

Date : Published August 9th 2005 by William Morrow Paperbacks (first published 2004)

ISBN : 9780060847524

Author : Stephanie Laurens

Format : Paperback 784 pages

Genre : Romance, Historical Romance, Historical, Fiction, Historical Fiction

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From Reader Review Devil's Bride and A Rake's Vow for online ebook

Stephanie Judice says

Wonderful regency romance. Leading man is to-die-for. All of that protectiveness and possessiveness wrapped up in a masculine masterpiece with a sweet vulnerability for his love makes the hero nearly perfect. Loved this book! Stephanie Laurens is my new favorite historical romance writer!

Carmen Pacheco says

GLORIOUS. Devil gets the Perpetual Swoon award! I will not forget this man....ever.

A Rake's Vow belongs to Vane, Devil's cousin. As soon as I'm done with Caillen's book from the League series, I am back to the beloved Cynsters!!!!

Kit★ says

The two stories, all together, I give 'em **3.5 Stars!** Finished **Devil's Bride** (7/15/12). Picked it back up to do **A Rake's Vow** on July 23rd, and finished it completely today, July 26th. We're doing a buddy read of this series in the Romance Lovers for the Challenge-Impaired Group, the thread for the discussion for **Devil's Bride** is right here. I think doing it as a buddy read helped me to like it more than I might've on my own. At first I wasn't real fond of either Devil or Honoria, they were both kind of cookie-cutter-ish, Devil a bad-ass duke, oh, and of course supremely sexy, and rakish, and clever, and etc, and Honoria the independent, don't ever want to get married type. And the way he decides that he has to marry her, to me, was really, really rushed, it was like he knew her for 2 hours and decided he was going to marry her. But as the story went on, I started to like both of 'em a little better. Though they'll never rank up with my favorite romance couples, by the end they were ok, I felt like I knew them decently well, like acquaintances I sorta cared for. I liked the mystery aspect, though I figured out the villain rather quickly. It was still a good ride trying to get the proof, and find out the reason why Tolly had been killed. I did like the steam level, and I like the author's writing style, so I'll definitely be continuing on with the series, I'm sure I'll find a couple in there somewhere that really hooks me good.

The thread for the **A Rake's Vow** discussion is here. I liked Vane and Patience pretty well, the banter and teasing was good, and the love scenes, while sometimes drawn out and purplish, were nice and steamy. The mystery in this one kept me guessing, while I was suspicious of the people who eventually ended up being the villains, it could've been anybody, and so I was never 100% sure like I was in Devil's Bride. So that was nice, I like it when I don't have it all figured out right away, gives me something to think about when I'm not reading. The relationship between Vane and Patience developed at a nice pace I thought, nowhere near as rushed as in the first book. He was still an arrogant man, but he wasn't as bad as Devil, and he even had some humor too. And he actually told Patience that he loved her! Bonus right there, as Devil never did say those three words to Honoria... I liked the way the family took Patience, and her brother Gerrard as well, in right away, accepting her and being nice to her, even Honoria with her take-charge ways. Sure, Patience was a little stubborn about the marriage thing, but for a good reason, and the way Vane proved to her that he was nothing like her father's example of a husband was sweet. I also liked the supporting characters, Minnie and Timms, and Patience's brother Gerrard, and even to some extent Patience's 'harem' and the other women in

the house. And the cat! Liked the cat. I'm glad I've finally gotten into this series, I'm thinking I rather like this clan, and I'm looking forward to getting to know them better. Will definitely be going on with the rest of the books :D **3.5 Stars!**

Donna says

Both good stories. In my opinion, the first story was the better one. Of course both heroes have the same problem - they just don't realize that the way to get their women to say yes to marriage is to admit you love them with the words: "I love you." This was my second time reading these stories.

Happy says

This book has great community reviews but none of my friends have read it or marked it to read. It's a historical romance series and I love those. There is a mystery in these, sometimes mysteries are frustrating to me--they need to be well done to keep me interested. There is supposed to be good passion in these but I'm not really sure what the innocence level of the passion is like.

HistoricalRomanceLover says

Devil's Bride (5 stars) is much better than A Rake's Vow (3 stars).

Jaclyn says

I enjoyed Devil's Bride and A Rake's Vow was even better!

Nancy says

so far not a favorite. it is something okay to read during the lunch hour at work.

very disappointed in this book. could not finish it.

Valerie Douglas says

The best of the Cynster series. A great lot of fun - domineering man meets spirited woman, falls in love, complications ensue.... but the characters were interesting.

Robin Reynolds / October Woman says

I recently joined a group on Facebook, the Old School Romance Book Club, where at the end of each month a poll is put up and members vote on which book everyone will read the following month. The book for November was DEVIL'S BRIDE. I had to hunt down a copy, and wound up with this omnibus that also contains A RAKE'S VOW.

In DEVIL'S BRIDE, Honoria is a governess. One day while caught in a storm driving back from an excursion into town, she comes across a man lying in the road. While she's investigating his condition, a crack of thunder frightens her horse and he takes off, leaving her stranded with the unconscious man. And then Devil comes riding along and happens upon them. They take refuge in a nearby cottage. The young man, Tolly, who is Devil's cousin, dies. Devil and Honoria pass the night together in the cottage, sleeping in chairs before the fire. Only to be discovered by another of Devil's cousin in the morning, and Honoria's employer. A scandal in the making.

Devil offers Honoria marriage as a way for her to save face, which her brother and countless others are in favor of. But she has no intention of marrying. She wants to travel to Africa. So she repeatedly tells Devil thanks but no thanks.

I struggled to get into the story. I liked Devil well enough, but Honoria often irritated me. Devil and his cousins set out to discover who murdered Tolly and why, and Honoria was determined to be part of the investigation, while Devil was determined that she not be. I was conflicted in my feelings. I get that Honoria was a strong female character who was unwilling to settle into the conventional life of a woman of that time. And yet I often wanted to tell her to just let the the Bar Cynster, as the cousins were known, worry about the murder mystery. Which dragged out and was uninteresting.

I think a lot of my problem was that the author's writing style just didn't appeal to me. It's very effusive and flowery, with lots of long sentences, broken up with lots of commas. It was a little repetitive at times, with paragraphs dragging out in many more words than necessary to convey a thought. And the sex scenes have to be some of the longest I've ever read. They aren't graphic, yet they are explicit.

Towards the end though I did get quite caught up in the action and was happy with how it all turned out.

In A RAKE'S VOW, which takes place several months later, Vane, one of Devil's cousins, is traveling when he gets caught in a thunderstorm near his godmother's home, so he stops in, planning to just stay the night and then be on his way. Right off the bat he meets Patience, his godmother's niece, and of course he is immediately intrigued with her. And then his godmother, Minnie, tells him that there have been a number of thefts in the household, small, usually insignificant items stolen, and there has been a mysterious being roaming around in the nearby ruins of an old abbey at night, who the household are all referring to as a Spectre. Minnie presses Vane to stay and help sort things out, and so he finds himself settling in with the rest of her house guests to investigate and figure out who is the thief and/or the Spectre.

I liked Patience much more than I did Honoria. She, too, has no plans to marry, especially not an "elegant gentleman" such as her father was, and such as Vane is. Her mother was desperately in love with her father, who did not return her affection, and Patience is determined to not let herself fall into the same type of marriage that made her mother miserable. Vane has no desire to marry either. He's a rake. Who needs a wife when you can have a mistress? And he quickly sets his sights on Patience. I also liked Vane, very much. And Minnie, and Patience's brother. And the mystery was much more interesting, and the writing didn't bother me as much as in the first book.

I liked A RAKE'S VOW considerably more than DEVIL'S BRIDE. Enough that I want to get the next book

and continue with the series. I would give the first 3 stars and the 2nd four stars, and since I can't do 3 1/2, I'm rounding my rating up to 4 for both books.

Review first posted on my blog.

Katie says

Book one of the Cynster series is still amongst my favorite romance novel reads. Certainly the main character's nickname, Devil, borders on the ludicrous. However, the cheekiness works well with Ms. Laurens witty storytelling and the sensuality of the more intimate naughty bits makes this a prime read for Regency romance-lovers.

Krista Liebrum says

I did not like Vanes story so much as Devils.....

Sylvia says

Regency

Sharon Youngblood says

I am loving this series!

Rosemary says

I read Devil's Bride years ago--Rake's Vow is second in the series.

Devil's Bride was a smart, sassy bodice ripper: steamy, not sleezy. My husband loved it, too. Rake's Vow (I'm halfway through) seems a bit more conventional Regency novel, but still worth the time.
