



The Greatest Lover Ever

Christina Brooke

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Passion to last a lifetime...

The Sweetest Scandal

Beautiful, exuberant, and stubborn Georgiana Black has more spirit than sense—which she learns when an ultimatum to the Earl of Beckenham ends their engagement. Six years later, Georgie is less concerned with impending spinsterhood than with making sure her young sister doesn't make the same mistakes she did. But soon Georgie stumbles into a scandalous encounter with none other than her former fiancé. Beckenham is still breathtakingly desirable.

The Truest Temptation

Beckenham's brief engagement to Georgie taught him one thing: when it comes to a wife, he wants a woman who will do her duty and cause no trouble. When the fiery Georgie falls unexpectedly into his arms, Beckenham remembers just how lushly delectable she is. Suddenly, the idea of actually marrying Georgie is irresistible. In a battle of wills, can passion conquer pride?

The Greatest Lover Ever Details

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From Reader Review The Greatest Lover Ever for online ebook

Carol *Young at Heart Oldie* says

The Westruthers series is a spin off from Ms Brooke's popular Ministry of Marriage series and features four cousins, Jonathon, Earl of Davenport, Marcus, Earl of Beckenham, Xavier, Marquis of Steyne and Andrew, Viscount Lydgate, all intent on avoiding the parson's noose. Jonathon succumbed to cupid's dart in *London's Last True Scoundrel* and now it's Marcus's turn.

How I imagine Marcus

"Beckenham's a dark horse, mark my words. It's the quiet ones you have to watch."

How true these words spoken by Jonathon Westruther in *London's Last True Scoundrel* turned out to be. Marcus, the eldest of the four cousins, has always been the level-headed, dependable one but, in the previous book, we get a hint of just how devastated he was when Georgie broke off their engagement. In his cousin Cecily's words...

"...you must know he's still eating his heart out for that dreadful creature."

Marcus knows it's his duty to marry and produce an heir but he wants a countess who will perform her duties without any fuss, leaving him in peace. Someone, totally unlike his former fiancée, the impetuous Georgiana Black. He decides to seek Xavier's advice on suitable candidates but arrives to discover one of his cousin's notorious parties in progress. When Xavier tells him that an unknown woman has claimed his protection, he finds himself involved in a scandalous encounter with none other than his former fiancée.

How I imagine Georgie...

Six years ago, Georgie's beauty and vivacity drew men to her like bees to nectar and she enjoyed playing the femme fatale and relished the power it gave her. Only Marcus refused to play her little games and she had lost the only man she ever wanted. Her parents were furious when they heard she had jilted Marcus and her father punished her by changing his will leaving all his un-entailed property in Gloucester to Georgie's half-sister, Violet.

Georgie had refused all subsequent offers of marriage, subduing her impetuousness and devoting herself to seeing Violet settled and happy. Then she intended to set up her own household with the monies left in trust to her by her father. When she discovers that Violet is attending a masquerade party at the Marquis of Steyne's house, she knows that her sister risks ruining her reputation. Whilst searching for Violet, she finds herself at the mercy of the notorious marquis and insists she is under the protection of the Earl of Beckenham. Locked in one of the empty bedrooms, she is desperately searching for a weapon to protect herself when the door opens...but it not the marquis standing there but her former fiance, Marcus Westruther, Earl of Beckenham.

I loved the romance between Marcus and Georgie...so full of heady sexual tension, passion, wit and charm. I'm sharing a few memorable moments.

In a London ballroom, she was as exotic as a bird of paradise among a gaggle of geese.

~~~~~

*Her mouth dried as he reached up a hand to loosen his cravat, flick it open, and pull the long strip of linen from around his throat. Then he walked over to the washstand, where a pitcher of water and a basin stood as if ready for guests.*

*“Take your clothes off,” he said to her over his shoulder. “I’ll be with you in a moment.”*

~~~~~

He couldn’t be in the same county as Georgiana Black and resist her siren’s lure.

~~~~~

*How could the strength and warmth of him feel so utterly perfect, when everything else was all wrong?*

~~~~~

His whole spirit lifted, soared high and bright. Filled with an extraordinary sense of rightness, even as the flame of his passion for her burned ever brighter.

~~~~~

*That kiss was incendiary, lascivious, thoroughly consuming, everything he’d dreamed.*

~~~~~

I enjoyed seeing the more playful and seductive Marcus emerge when he is with Georgie while she is now free to be true to her passionate, sensuous nature. I liked that they were both willing to acknowledge the mistakes of their youth and I love Marcus for appreciating the real Georgie behind her beauty and cherishing her.

There are some lovely funny moments in this book like the amusing scene where Marcus and Georgie have to rescue his rather inebriated group of prospective brides from the grotto or Lydgate’s humorous comment when Marcus is going through the list of potential bride candidates.

Beckenham glanced up from the list. “Doesn’t madness run in the Maxwell family?”

Lydgate ran the feather of his quill between his fingers. “Eccentricity, yes. Madness, no. Never fear. Miss Jennifer Maxwell doesn’t seem to have a tendency to wear a flowerpot on her head instead of a hat or anything like that.”

I do love the scenes between Marcus, Xavier and Andrew...the witty banter and the obvious familial affection. You know that they have each other’s backs covered

This was a delightful ‘second chance at love’ romance and there is an excerpt from *The Wickedest Lord Alive* which definitely makes me want to read Xavier’s story. Not long to wait because it is released on July 1st.

REVIEW RATING: 4.5/5 STARS

The Westruthers series so far (click on the book cover for more details):

This review is also posted on my Rakes and Rascals blog:

<http://rakesandrascals.wordpress.com/...>

Landra Graf says

This is probably my 2nd favorite Christina Brooke book. She's become an auto-buy author for me. Her stories are so wonderful and very original with delicious enemies-to-lovers tropes and arranged marriages. This book was no exception and I can't wait for the next one. The Westruther boys are going down.

Lady Day says

This story had potential, especially at the beginning, but that faded away. It was very different from the first book in the series.

I did not like the Hero. He was too narrow minded and a constant brooder. If it had not been for the audio version, I don't think I would have finished the story.

Next, the author wrote the majority of this story in narration format and introspection. Not very much dialogue, therefore the story moved at a slow pace.

Ishara Dasruth says

A charming story about the studious Beckenham and his former fiancée. This book had a different feel to the others and had a lot more introspective detail. I really do enjoy a second chance romance and this one was beautifully written. Initially I didn't like Georgiana but as you delve into the story her behaviour is explained and you actually want her to find her HEA. An enjoyable read?

Jackie says

3.5 Another well-written, character-driven regency from Brooke, one with clear feminist sensibilities. My favorite part:

Her evil genius made her push him to acknowledge it. She wanted, suddenly, to get him as hot and bothered as he'd made her in the villa that night.

That's what Delilahs did, wasn't it? Or was that a Jezebel? She'd never paid an awful lot of attention to the words men used to describe the women who held power of them.

Anger flared again at the castigation. *Delilah. She'd tempt him, all right. She'd make him surrender his power to her, just like Samson did. (223)*

It struck him that she didn't know her true worth or she wouldn't fling herself at him like this....

"Don't behave this way. It isn't honest. It isn't you."

That's what had always inflamed him, he realized now. He wasn't jealous of any of those men who slavered

over her body, extolled her beautiful face. He'd been angry at her for holding herself so cheaply as to flirt with them, for seeking to manipulate men with the only power they allowed her.

What they never saw was the strength, the wit, the godawful temper, willfulness, the compassion and courage that made up the woman. They never saw past her spectacular looks. (225)

Mary says

This was one of the most enjoyable books I've read in awhile. The characters grab you right away and the story is fast paced and intriguing. Throw in some hot sex and a wonderful epilogue and you've got the perfect book.

Marcus and Georgie were promised to each other for years and then circumstances caused the break off of their engagement. This books starts off six years later when they again cross paths. The path to romance is rocky and complicated, but as in all good romance novels, love wins out.

Helen says

This is a must read book MS Brooke will transport you back to the Regency with the most wonderful of heroes Beckenham he is so controlled and sticks to the rules of the ton after his bethroal is broken by Georgie Black Beckenham goes his own way away from the Ton while Georgie who is known for speaking out stays quiet as well for 6 years. Until Beckenham decides that he needs a wife and goes to one of his cousins to get help this is where the adventurous and sensual journey begins after compromising Georgie Beckenham must do the right thing but Georgie is stubborn but of course so is Beckenham. Loved this one you will be up late and turning the pages it is sensual and romantic and the Westruther family are such great characters that add to this awesome story :)

Annie says

I've read all Christina Brooke's stories and this is my favourite so far. I loved the tension between hero and heroine as they face each other again after so many years, both fighting their feelings and trying to pretend it's not attraction and love they experience. There's wit, passion, emotion, fantastic romance, terrific writing and of course men in boots. Highly recommended.

Shelleyrae at Book'd Out says

A charming regency romance, The Greatest Lover Ever is the second book in Christina Brooke's 'The Westruther's' series, a spin off from her Ministry of Marriage trilogy.

Six years after his broken engagement, the Earl of Beckenham determines it is time to take a wife, he knows exactly what he is looking for, "a countess who would do her duty without fuss, who was prepared to lead her own life...A wife who would create no dramas...A wife who would leave him in peace." In short, a woman nothing like his former betrothed, Georgiana Black. But when he encounters Georgie in a

compromising circumstance at a scandalous house party thrown by his cousin, his honour demands he ask for her hand and suddenly he can think of taking no one other as his bride...

I really enjoyed this romantic story of a couple with a second chance at love. Brooke skillfully portrays the attraction between Marcus and Georgie, even as they both continue to try and deny it and the pair generate plenty of passion and emotion when they are together.

Georgie is wilful, fiery and impetuous but I found her a likeable heroine, even more so as she recognises some hard truths about her own behaviour. Marcus is prideful, stubborn and stern, but I liked that he doesn't want to tame Georgie. As to whether he deserves the title of 'The Greatest Lover Ever', his seduction of Georgie certainly suggests he is worthy.

Though this is a genre I rarely read I was impressed by Christina Brooke's storytelling and writing style. The Greatest Lover Ever is an engaging historical romance full of wit, passion and love.

Ebony McKenna says

Another sensational, sensual Regency novel from Christina Brooke, who has become an auto-buy for me. Her Ministry of Marriage series of connected but stand-alone romances are gorgeous and sigh-worthy from page one right through to the finish.

The Greatest Lover Ever is a story of second chances and redemption. Heiress Georgie Black throws away her future with Lord Marcus Beckenham, mostly because she enjoys riling him up too much, but also because she's so infuriatingly stubborn. Marcus is as stubborn as they come as well, so when the two of them go toe-to-toe in a pre-wedding argument, he calls her bluff and calls off the wedding.

Seriously stupid move on both their parts, but if they had realised from the start how perfectly matched they were, there wouldn't be a story, would there?

Cue several years later, Georgie and Marcus have done their level best to keep their distance. Neither has properly moved on. And by moved on I mean married other people. Georgie has tried to keep her life uncomplicated by refusing all other offers of marriage, yet this has only made her fodder for gossip amongst the haut-ton (gossip being the Regency version of Facebook).

The two of them have a lot of growing up to do, and here is where author Christina Brooke is at the height of her powers; showing us how Georgie and Marcus mature and acknowledge their feelings . . . and also accept the unpalatable truth about their personalities.

I adored this insight into Georgie's state of mind when she sees Marcus again: "Oh, God, it was awful and humiliating and . . . and wonderful to see him."

The writing is gorgeous and shot through with witty bon mots: "Beckenham wished now that he had not let his temper get the better of him with Pearce. A duel might cause talk, and he needed to avoid providing yet more fodder for gossip about Georgie. He also wished to avoid getting his brains blown out, but that was a separate issue."

Pearce is the baddie; He's one reason Georgie and Marcus can't get their act tother, but their biggest obstacle is not other people but their own sheer pig-headedness.

Step by step, Marcus and Georgie evolve from stubborn, proud and wilful semi-enemies; fearful that that surrendering to love will result in loss. As they soften their opinions of each other and grow into fully realised, self-aware people, they understand that love is not surrender but a win for both of them. By loving each other they can gain the whole world.

I received an advance reader copy from Net Galley, in exchange for an honest review.

Monique says

This is the first title I have read by this author, and although I was reading the 2nd book in the Westruthers series, I didn't feel that I was missing much of the backstory so as to feel lost in the novel. Interesting tale of Georgie and Marcus, and so much misunderstanding about their relationship. I enjoyed how their relationship once more developed, with each realizing that they really couldn't keep apart, even though they tried. Looking forward to reading more titles by the author.

Jennifer says

What do you get when you have feisty, passionate, stubborn characters and lots of plot twist, a Christina Brooke novel! The author does a nice job of conveying a Regency Period feel in her work. Witty dialog and an interesting hero and heroine make for a winner with the fifth book in her Ministry of Marriage Series.

Feminista says

promiscuous hero...

Sammy Loves Books says

Georgiana Black

Tin says

Marcus Westruther, the Earl of Beckenham, is known by most ladies as a great lover, but, to one lady, Georgie Black, he is known simply as Marcus, the one who got away. They grew up in neighbouring estates and had been engaged from a young age and both moved with a comfortable certainty that, someday, they would be married and live happily ever after. When the time came, however, they had not counted on how age would affect them or how London society would change them, and so, two people who have always

gotten along now find themselves at odds with each other.

While his cousin Jonathon's story was about a man finding his way back to life, Marcus's story is about finding his way back to love. The idea of a "one true love" is the prevalent theme in this story and Marcus and Georgie were lucky enough to have found it. One would think that this couple have been favoured by destiny: good looks, wealth, estates that would be united by their marriage, but, the more powerful message that Christina Brooke's story sends is that love takes *more*. It is a lesson that would take Marcus and Georgie six years to learn.

From the first chapter, one already gets the idea that their encounters seem a bit repetitive and tedious from the way Georgie anticipates Marcus's reactions to her behaviour and she braces herself from it. It's a vicious cycle where Georgie would behave scandalously, and Marcus would chastise her about it, which would lead Georgie to act even *more* scandalously out of spite. It was quite frustrating to read this, especially as these scenes are interspersed with Marcus's own recollections of the Georgie he knew -- and I think this was the point Brooke was trying to make. *Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it.* Marcus could not make sense of Georgie. He knows he cares about her deeply and knows that she is just acting out because he knows the real her. But he can't figure out how to deal with this Georgie. History does repeat itself, when, after six years, the original players that set forth the terrible argument that caused their broken engagement all find themselves in the same place and in almost the same situation.

It was painful and bordered on irritating seeing the interaction between Georgie and Marcus and I couldn't decide who I was more annoyed with: Marcus and his pompous ways or Georgie and her rebellious ways. I think both of them needed to change their attitude a bit if they were going to have their happily ever after.

When their engagement is broken, it comes as a source of relief, but also a cause of much heartache for the two of them. *Now what?* They've live their entire lives knowing they would be together -- their future *was* fixed ... and, now, suddenly, it isn't. For the next six years, both exist in a half-life, without acknowledging it: Beckenham avoided balls, fearing he might encounter Georgie there and Georgie retired to the country, waiting to reach her majority and gain her financial independence. Both pretended that they were no longer affected by the other -- but they were not fooling anyone: everyone around them knew that they were still battling the aftereffects of each other.

Oh, God, it was awful and humiliating and ... and wonderful to see him.
- Chapter 1

* * *

The intimacy of standing here in a bedchamber with the Earl of Beckenham as he performed his ablutions made Georgie ache for what might have been. If only she hadn't been so rash, so stupid. If only he'd loved her. If only he'd understood.

She knew a corrosive, blinding hatred for those women who had enjoyed him.

He belonged to her. He always had.
- Chapter 2

This story felt like an unlit firework, full of potential energy, full of unrealised passion -- it is a small, silent, seemingly harmless thing -- held in one's hands, one is keenly aware of the explosive light it can make once it is lit. You could feel it in every interaction between Georgie and Marcus: the attraction between these two is undeniable. It is baffling how two people who share the same love for the land, for horses, for the outdoors and for each other could clash so frequently.

It would take a house party, with some of London's most eligible ladies (including Georgie's sister) to help the "star-crossed" lovers. (Are they star-crossed? I'm not really sure because all of what stands between the two of them is internal.)

Georgie's sister, Violet, is a subplot in this novel -- and I felt a bit misled by the sinister tone of the letters that Violet was exchanging with her good friend. It hints at a man that Violet has been secretly meeting and one wonders who this is, that Violet could not openly claim him as a suitor. I can't say that the author presents one relationship as a foil for the other, because I didn't feel it to be that way. What Violet's mystery does is contribute to the already-heightened sense of anticipation in this story: the feeling that something is going to happen and soon.

Brooke works on building up the reader's (and her characters') emotions in this story. I was holding my breath for a long time, just waiting and waiting and wondering if this scene or the next would be "the moment" when things would fall into place for Marcus and Georgie, but, when the moment finally came, I felt a bit disappointed -- that's it? The lightbulb moment comes too subtly and too quickly that, if you blink, you might miss the implication of that moment. Still, it was a beautiful, heartbreaking moment. (Read Chapter 15)

While Marcus and Georgie do get their happy ending, I can't help but wonder beyond the story -- Georgie really affected Marcus all those years and his cousins really haven't warmed up to her. Georgie will continue to be beautiful and draw attention to herself (even when she doesn't mean to) and I wonder if their marriage will really solve that problem.

Did I enjoy this story? Yes. Did I enjoy this as much as I enjoyed Jonathon's story? No. Will I continue to read this series? Definitely yes. The next instalment features Xavier, the Marquis of Steyne and the teaser for his story at the end of Marcus's book is amazing.
