



## Starling

*Virginia Taylor*

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## Starling Virginia Taylor

An aspiring dressmaker, orphaned Starling Smith is accustomed to fighting for her own survival. But when she's offered a year's wages to temporarily pose as a wealthy man's bride, she suspects ulterior motives. She can't lose the chance to open her own shop, but she won't be any man's lover, not even handsome, infuriating Alisdair Seymour's...

To prevent his visiting sister from parading potential brides in front of him, Alisdair has decided to present a fake wife. He lost his heart once, and had it broken—he doesn't intend to do it again. But stubborn, spirited Starling is more alluring than he bargained for, and Alisdair will risk everything he has to prove his love is true...

Set against the sweeping backdrop of 1866 South Australia, Starling is a novel of cherished dreams and powerful desires, and the young woman bold enough to claim them both...

## Starling Details

Date : Published April 14th 2015 by Lyrical Press

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Author : Virginia Taylor

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## From Reader Review Starling for online ebook

### Gaele says

Feeding into my love of historic romance, I'm always looking for the new and unusual to find books set in places other than England or the Americas, or even set in Regency / Late Regency period. Virginia Taylor brings a story set in the Adelaide area of South Australia in the mid-19th century in this, the first in her South Landers series, Starling.

Starling is an orphan, an aspiring seamstress with an eye for appropriate fit and a dream to open her own business where she can then afford to offer other orphans a chance at a trade. To finance her dream, she has obtained a position in the Ladies Department in an upscale shop, Seymour's Emporium. Amidst the fabrics and trims, she is noted as a solid worker with a determined and very vocal sense of what works, and that doesn't always mean she is flattering the ladies for a sale. Noticed discouraging more costly (thus profitable) options more than once, she is fired from her position, but offered one rather unusual proposition.

Alasdair is the owner of Seymour's Emporium and a bit of an uptight and rigid man. With his sister's imminent arrival, dragging along his ex-fiancé for a dash of matchmaking, Alasdair is unwilling to appear 'in need' in front of the faithless and feckless Lavender. Offering Starling the princely sum of 40 pounds to pose as his wife, in name only, for the duration of his sister's visit, this scandalous offer seems plausible as Starling was the laundress for a house of ill repute, and he believes her experienced.

Taylor has created these characters with skill and presented their backgrounds in such a way as to make the premise of a marriage of show plausible and possible, while giving the characters personalities that are solid and convincing. Starling is a lovely woman with a solid belief in right and wrong, her own sense of style and her determination to make something of herself. Alasdair needed to pull the very splintery fence post out of his rear, but once he started behaving like a man and not a spoilt and bossy child, it was easy to see how he and Starling were more alike in their hopes for the future than not. The secondary characters presented disparate agendas and dramas, and only helped to illustrate the good qualities of both Starling and Alasdair. A subtle romance that grows incrementally with each interaction, both characters and setting are clearly presented and leave you wanting more.

I received an eArc copy of the title from the publisher via NetGalley for purpose of honest review. I was not compensated for this review: all conclusions are my own responsibility.

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### Robby Dennis says

Once again, another strong female character that doesn't lack femininity and vulnerability. I love the research and details that Virginia adds to give it authenticity. Her style is a delight to read and I look forward to the next one!

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### Sam says

This story was simply and beautifully told. I love the interaction between Alisdair and Starling. Quite often I did wish she would slap him, but her calm acceptance and thoughtfulness inspired me.

## Alice says

### Australian Historical Romance

No fancy Lords in this one. And it is a very nice change, with a rich, handsome department store owner who is obsessed with a well borne Lady. A lady who turned him down to marry a rich banker, because he lacked money and birth at that time. He hires Starling a orphan, who he assumes is a whore because she had worked in a house of ill repute as a laundress. She's to act as his wife while his sister visits. His shock is intense when his original Lady love accompanies his sister. Quite a interesting mix.

Interesting hero, who's fixation leads him into trouble. Does eventually redeem himself but the heroine is honest, caring, industrious, intelligent and a virgin of course. One truly roots for her all the way through the book.

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## Katherine Bone says

Starling by Virginia Taylor is loaded with sizzling, sensual tension! This is one hot read you don't want to miss!

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## Phylis Collins says

### Wonderful story

Starling South Landers by Virginia Taylor is a wonderful story. I like the characters, they seem real to me. This is a page turner. A must read. Thanks

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## Candace says

Alisdair "Dare" Seymour is the owner of Seymour's Emporium. Starling Smith is a seamstress who works in the Ladies Department. Dare offers Starling a fee to pose as his wife during his sister's two-weeks visit. Starling can open her own seamstress shop and employ her orphan sisters with the money. During the pretend marriage, Dare and Starling's feelings for each other grow. What will they decide to do after the two weeks is over? Is there a happily-ever-after for them?

The main characters feel like friends you want to help, sometimes with a knock on the side of the head. The secondary characters are more than placeholders, especially Ellen and Maggie. Lavender is the antagonist. She is spoiled or desperate. It could be both. The author uses Lavender's name to describe her. The tone is set by the plot, while the atmosphere is built by the description. Setting is Australia, late nineteenth century. I will gladly read more of Ms. Taylor's books. This novel contains steamy love scenes.

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## **Melissa says**

[ way Alisdair treated her sexually. He was a little pushy, but never completely followed throu

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## **Francene Stanley says**

This empowering romance, set in the days when specific roles governed each gender in their respective positions, is punctuated with touching and tender arousal scenes. I was swept into the plot by the author's masterful writing. I couldn't wait to see how a naïve young woman could handle the thrusts and parries of social life, and blend into her sham role of the new wife to a wealthy husband.

Virginia Taylor balanced the emotional and practical needs of both collaborators by showing how love conquers all when partners are equal in every way bar one, namely: social standing. The plot kept me engrossed to the satisfying conclusion.

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## **Cathy Geha says**

Delightful, delicious, warm and witty – these are some of the words that come to mind after reading Ms Taylor's book, Starling. There were twists and turns within a well plotted well considered story that includes a cast of characters that were all fun except for one. And, there always must be at least one villain in a love story, right?

Alasdair made assumptions about Starling when he hired her to pose as his wife for two weeks and his assumptions manage to cause trouble throughout the novel – trouble for both Starling and himself. He has provided plenty of money, a cushy place to stay and almost all that a poor woman might wish to have but it may not prove to be enough. When the "love of his life" shows up to throw a wrench into his plans the game changes from what he thought it would be to something else entirely.

If you like a well written historical romance with attractive characters filled with strength of will and along with a cast of supporting characters that add depth to the story then this is a book I can highly recommend.

Thank you to Kensington Books for giving me this book through NetGalley to read and review.

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## **Virginia Taylor says**

Thank you all for reading, rating, and reviewing this book. My historical stories are my second love. My first is writing about my own country which people know little about. I hope you enjoy my research and my embellishments of the history of South Australia. If you sign up on my Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/AuthorVirgin...> you will be led to my website <http://virginia-taylor.com> where you can add your email address to obtain my newsletter.

## Bonnie L Marincek says

### Wonderful book

I enjoyed all the characters in this book especially Starling and Alasdair. This is a story about a young woman and a wealthy gentleman who meet and pose as a married couple each for their own reasons in life. They begin as a business deal, but over time, they come to realize that money and deception cannot replace true love.

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## Rosa says

This was absolutely one of the most disgusting books I've read so far in the year. Let me list why.

1) The constant slut shaming. I literally can't go a page without the word whore being read, which might be acceptable if this was a story written about a woman in a brothel, but that is not what is happening. Instead whore is used here to refer to women who are not virgins. Rarely is a man blamed here for his sexual indiscretions while the woman is criticized relentlessly. For example, when a maid discovers her bf is screwing said whore, the woman is painted as the unforgivable one while the man is ultimately forgiven by his gf and becomes betrothed to her. Furthermore, all the women in the novel fall into three categories, virgin innocents (who of course are seen as "noble" and "good"), "whores" (which are evil threats to the protagonist's love life and thus unworthy of character development), and women who are in relationships (and as they pose no threat to the protagonist, are able to also be seen as "good"). Furthermore, the actual sex workers (aka whores) are so looked down upon you'd think they're dirt. You know what I would like to see in a book? A woman not being shamed for being poor and working the streets, and not making light of what a difficult experience it is.

2) Starling. She is a fucking wet rag of modesty. It's so annoying that at times I wanted to just scream at her to do something that is human. Her character can be summed up as being the ultimate martyr (or as I would say, a girl who never fucking stands up for herself). For example, for 95% of the novel the male lead is under the impression that she was at one point an actual whore. Despite Starling knowing he thought this, she never attempts to actually correct him, her excuse being that "if he know I was a virgin he wouldn't hire me". Bitch please that is a weak-ass excuse. Or when the male lead is under the impression that she is "cheating" (they're not actually in a committed relationship yet) on him with a gardener. Starling knows she is innocent and that someone else is sleeping with the gardener (the girl the male lead wants to marry) , but refuses to tell him.

The conversation went like this.

GUY: why are u sleeping w/ him, whore

GIRL:ur wrong

GUY: I know u are !! (\*said angrily and with yelling)

GIRL:ok I'm am (\*said with a self sacrificing tone)

GUY: why u so mean and sleep w/ him but not me

GIRL: idk. I ain't gonna sleep w/ you.

GUY: ... (\*starts to be moody and walks away)

And this scenario where the guys mistakenly yells at her and she just takes it happens so many fucking times. I can understand this happening to a degree, but not so bloody often. Anyway, the whole point is that she is a 2D character with no spine whose existence is defined as being 'nice'.

3) The male lead. He is a fucking piece of elephant shit. I mean the first time they have sex and he realizes that this is her first time, does he apologize for all the times he called/thought of her as a whore? Or even after figuring out she didn't "cheat" on him? No he takes her virginity and offers to let her be his mistress. Like bitch sit the fuck down. Furthermore he mistreats Starling horribly, always assuming the worst of her despite seeing how she is a bucket of Mary Sue and so obviously wouldn't do the things he thinks she did. Not to mention the entire time he seduced her he had plans to marry another woman that he "loved". Excuse me if I don't find that to be sexy.

Anyway, I did not like this book. And maybe I wouldn't be so mad if I didn't see this exact thing happen over and over.

0.5/5. That 0.5 is for having a historical romance that is not in UK or America.

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### **momokaachan says**

Really well-done romance. Starling was an admirable woman, the ex-lover was beautiful and empty, the supporting cast was entertaining - A most satisfying read.

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### **Eleni Konstantine says**

4.5 stars

A well written Australian historical romance. Starling is hired by her boss to pretend she is his wife for week. Many misunderstandings abound including that Starling is a prostitute. I enjoyed reading this book because I learned more about my own hometown and state, and the characters were raw and real (even if I wanted to throttle Alasdair on more than one occasion). Will definitely continue reading this series about the orphan girls with the names of birds.

Disclaimer: While I know the author personally, this doesn't affect the star rating.

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