



Forbidden (The Company of Rogues Series, Book 4): Regency Romance

Jo Beverley

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". . . romance with mistaken identities, wicked villains, strong women and men who are strong enough to accept them as equals." ~*Shamim Morani*

The death of her husband freed Serena Riverton from life as an abused sex-object. Now, her brother plans to sell her to another vile man.

This time, Serena flees, but finds herself stranded and near penniless. When a passing gentleman offers help, Serena accepts, and develops a new plan: become a rich man's mistress so she can leave at any time.

Believing herself barren, Serena initiates a passionate encounter with her rescuer. However, Francis, Lord Middlethorpe is already committed to a sweet-natured lady. He finds Serena refuge with an elderly relative, and must return to his life. Then Serena discovers she's pregnant.

They have no choice but to marry, but assailed by Serena's scheming brothers, Francis's appalled relatives and Serena's painful past, is there any hope for the loving future they both seek?

From The Publisher: Author Jo Beverley is known for her consummate attention to historical detail that wisks the reader back in time to a near first-hand experience. Fans of Regency romance and historical British fiction set in the 19th century, as well as readers of **Jess Michaels, Mary Balogh, Christi Caldwell, Stephanie Laurens, Madeline Hunter** and **Mary Jo Putney** will want to read every book by Jo Beverley.

Please Note: Story contains references to the heroine's sexually abusive first marriage that some readers may find disturbing.

"Any woman would be able to understand Serena's horror... and her inability to trust" ~*Romance Reviews Today*

"Nobody does Regency better than Jo Beverley." ~*Rendezvous*

"Ms. Beverley breaks just about every rule in the book and makes us beg for more in this enthralling love story." ~*Romantic Times*

Forbidden (The Company of Rogues Series, Book 4): Regency Romance Details

Date : Published October 1st 2013 by ePublishing Works! (first published 1994)

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Arlenis Ljónshjarta says

No me gusto. Los diálogos fueron estúpidos. La historia prometía pero término decepcionando mucho. La verdad que esperaba más ya que el libro tres de la serie me g mucho. Pero este fue patetico. Ningún personaje me gusto realmente y sinceramente termine de leerlo por in.erc.ia no por placer

Writerlibrarian says

Better than Unwilling Bride and as good in a different way as Christmas Angel. This novel of the Rogues series is actually the first one Beverley wrote years before she was first published. Francis, Lord Middlethorpe is a quirky and unusual male lead for a romance novel. I liked Francis for his honesty, his drive and his goodness. It's not true that good guy finish last. Not in this case. Serena, I dislike that name, is more of a classic romance heroine, bad brothers, rotten, wicked dead husband but Beverley succeeds in making us care about Serena or at least get a glimpse of understanding of where she comes from and what drives her behavior. One plot device is a bit clumsy (involving Francis' mother) but it introduces one secondary character that I am really looking forward to read about Lady Anne Peckworth in Hazard. We get the usual Rogue suspects moving the plot along: Nicolas, Lucien, Beth, Blanche and we get a peak at Miles and Felicity story coming up in Dangerous Joy

Cecilia London says

A remarkable book. I followed it up with An Unwilling Bride, which is an equally stunning read. Both of them stayed with me for days.

Dangermousie says

ummm, it was better than St. Raven? Heroine is a widow of evil dude who kept her in sexual slavery, and she decides to escape her evil brothers who want to sell her to another man like that, runs into hapless hero and rapes (about it more later) him, seeking to become his mistress, she gets preggers, they marry, discover true love, barf barf the end. Part of my problem with this book arises from the fact that I recently realized I hate the set up of 'a person is forced to marry another.' There are some exceptions (both are forced to marry the other and equally do not want it, or the person forced to marry actually does want it) but they are slim. But a much much bigger part of the problem is that the heroine rapes the virgin hero!!!! I mean - WTF! He rescues her from the road she is wandering on, they are stuck sharing a room, he scrupulously doesn't touch her or shows any interest in that sort of thing, she decides she needs a 'protector,' so she assaults him when he is asleep, and by the time he wakes up, she is almost done bouncing on him, if you know what I mean. Did I mention the hero was a virgin because he was fastidious so no hookers or adultery, plus did not want to have any unwanted children (oops, heroine fixed that! barf!) She has no idea if the man she assaulted is married or courting or whatever. Even if he is the singlest person to ever live, he did not give his consent. Hello,

rapist!!! Hero even thinks she as good as raped him, but since he is a man *roll eyes* and she is hot, he is 'oh, OK.' And then he is stuck marrying her because she gets pregnant and everyone treats him as the villain and she keeps her mouth shut. And he tries to be a good husband and I am supposed to root for them? I mean - WTF!!!! I wanted the heroine to be run over by a carriage and hero to grow a spine and pick someone sane next time. Ugh. Beverley, you are this close to being dead to me.

Ilze says

Borderline keeper for me. Detested the heroine's brothers and the hero's mother, as well as the never-ending miscommunication and misunderstandings between all of the main characters. On the other hand, I couldn't put it down ...

Kody Keplinger says

This is my favorite in the series so far.

Francis is a fantastic hero. He's sweet and loving. He's also a unique hero of this genre because, we find out early on, he's a virgin at the start. On the otherhand, the heroine, Serena, is far from innocent. She's been in a very unhappy marriage since she was 15 to a man that used her. Usually in this genre, its the hero with experience and the heroine that's an innocent. The twist here, discover at the start of the book, is really interesting.

Serena is a dark character. She's been abused on some horrible ways, leaving her confused and damaged in her relationship with Francis. Sometimes she's very childlike. I loved how complex she was. And her relationship with Francis is slow but complicated and sweet.

I loved this book. Francis isn't my favorite of the rogues (Miles and Nicholas probably have that position) and Serana isn't my favorite of Beverley's females (Beth and Blanche have that spot) but this story is my favorite. Different, complex, and intriguing. I loved this one so much.

Anna says

Loved this book! A really different twist on the usual Regency period romance--featuring an experienced woman and an inexperienced man. Serena found herself in a desperate situation and her path crossed that of Francis, Lord Middlethorpe, one of the Company of Rogues who is known to readers of the series. This one kept me up to finish--I had to see how their story worked itself out, as well as an additional story line of a related relationship. Looking forward to seeing how this couple fares as the series progresses. Glad I discovered Jo Beverley!

Carol Storm says

Serena -- vulnerable and voluptuous. Francis -- fearless and innocent. Jo Beverley takes all the traditional male/female roles in a romance novel and turns them upside down. She is the cynical seducer. He is the

virgin with principles. The sex is unbelievably hot, the emotions raw, the ending real and believable. This is an all-time keeper of a book, as well as being one of the rare historical romances that completely rejects formula.

Cecilia says

A marriage of convenience story (yay) with a fairly nice beta hero (yay) but the heroine has a super traumatic backstory of being married at a very young age to a sadist (no yay). The depressing backstory comes up again and again and again with all sorts of sickening detail and ugh. I found it more depressing than the final scene where it all gets sorted out could alleviate.

Jacob Proffitt says

Fourth in the series and yeah, you probably need to read the rest. Having done so, you know mostly what to expect, which is sad because this one has some interesting twists on gender expectations that didn't really pan out very well.

Which isn't *really* true, I suppose. The twists are interesting and Serena and Francis are engaging people for the most part. I mean, having the guy be a virgin and the girl have all the leet skillz was an interesting way to go for the genre/era. Even more so in that she wasn't so much widely experienced as she was singularly trained (by a fortunately-now-dead husband who wanted a sex slave more than he did a wife). And yeah, that's as icky as you'd expect and Beverley does a fantastic job giving it the weight it deserves and the consequences to work through.

Unfortunately, everything else was stupid beyond all reason. The plot was stuffed with untimely coincidences and miscommunication and poor assumptions. Seriously, if Serena and Francis had taken a few moments to talk periodically, much of the plot would have disappeared. Beverley doesn't draw any single instance to the pain point, but pouring in so very many of the contrivances made the book feel, well, contrived. It's a shame such promise was compromised by such pedestrian hokem pokem, but that's how it felt to me.

Now, I half expected Beverley to rescue this one with a knock-out ending, but while she sort of *does*, she precedes the climax with a period of stupid that was wholly beneath Francis. His histrionics were unwelcome and unwarranted and I couldn't help thinking Serena needed to kick him around a bit before going all goeey. Instead, things got a bit awkward and prosy and then make-up/out. Sigh.

A note about Steamy: There are a few more explicit sex scenes than usual in this one (three or four), but they are much shorter and have a lot fewer fireworks than usual. This is largely because Serena sees sex as a skill/work, and finds little satisfaction in it. This is handled extremely well and I loved how Beverley contrasted sex with intimacy and coupled that with Francis' inexperience on top. It was wildly well-done and I'm sad it wasn't part of a much better plot/story.

Elis Madison says

Serena Riverton, a new widow, is determined not to marry again. Her first husband was quite enough for one

girl, thank you.

So when her greedy, heartless brothers inform her that they're offering her in wedlock (or maybe out of wedlock; since she's barren, they might get higher offers from men who want a mistress than those who need an heir) to the highest bidder, she has no choice. She runs, taking only the few coins she can steal without detection and the clothing on her back.

Francis, Lord Middlethorpe, is working up the nerve to ask his dear friend Anne to marry him when the letter arrives. The missive is from a man he's never met—a tutor of all things—telling him to ask his mother for the truth, or the stranger will tell it instead. Francis uses this as an excuse for an abrupt departure, and heads home to ask his mother what this is all about. Caught by surprise, Mum blurts that the author of the letter has been blackmailing her. And Francis, a guy who needs some drama in his life, ignores his mother's fevered protests and rushes off to confront the blackguard.

Desperate, Mum dashes off a quick letter to her lover, advising him to run like hell, and sends it by the quickest horse in the stable.

En route, Francis (you guessed it) happens upon Serena. She refuses to explain what she's doing walking on a road that's miles from nowhere after dark, but clearly she needs help. And while she's mouth-watering gorgeous, she doesn't make a great first impression. Her fortunately deceased husband liked to humiliate her and as a result, her gown (and indeed her entire wardrobe) is indecent and soaked in Eau de Bordello. But ever the gentleman, Francis talks her aboard his curricule; he'll at least see she gets to the next town safely.

That's when the amazingly well-timed storm hits. It's so bad it's picking up boulders and hurling them at people's heads. Well, OK, I exaggerate—a little. It is still really, really bad, and the pair *has* to seek shelter at this creepy farmhouse where everybody has Biblical names and lust in their hearts. Ever the protector, Francis claims Serena's his wife, the better to keep the uber-religious patriarch from kicking her whorey little ass back out into the hurricane.

So, *of course* they end up sharing a room. A tiny room. With no floor space to speak of. They've no choice but to share the bed.

Serena, meanwhile, has been thinking, which is never a good thing for a heroine in a panicky moment. What's she going to do now? Marriage? Off the table. But what does that leave? Governess? The education she received from her husband was hardly the sort doting parents would wish to have bestowed on their precious little chits. Companion? The instant she's recognized as "Randy Riverton's" widow, no decent lady would have her. She's soiled goods, just by association with her creepy pervy thankfully very dead hubby.

But there is one thing... One time, her husband brought a noted demimonde, Harriet Wilson, to an ~~an~~ ~~orgy~~ party at the country house where Serena was kept isolated. Harriet sought Serena out and told her that with her looks she could easily leave her husband and make her own way as a courtesan. At the time Serena had thought she preferred the horror of her marriage to dishonor. But now? She has to eat, right? And at least mistresses have the option of walking out, Serena reasons. And they can demand money up front to keep them once their looks go south. And her auspiciously dead husband certainly gave her all the training she'd ever need for the job.

Why not? And this guy in bed beside her seems like a likely chap. So in the middle of the night, she "offers her services." Problem is, Serena was just 15 when she was sold off to the perv, and she hasn't the first clue

how to actually seduce a man. So Francis basically wakes up from what seemed like one of "those" dreams to realize that he's no longer...
(I'm not kidding. He really was one.)

Francis is appalled. He had a jolly good time of it, but he still feels used. Serena, once she realizes that not ALL men like what her husband taught her, is mortified. She apologizes and assures him that there will be no consequence. Her husband's physician, years ago, pronounced that she was barren. So that's that.

Of course, it isn't. They end up "having" to marry, and since they don't know each other very well, and she has all the reason in the world to distrust men, and he has all the reason in the world to think she's a ho who might just have trapped him in marriage, the rest of the story is filled with lots of misunderstandings, fake blackmailers, actual blackmailers, alleged and actual thuggery and completely dumbassed deductions and accusations. It all winds up with a huge, climactic (in more ways than one) and very hard-won HEA.

It's a great read, though I kinda wanted Serena to throw a lot more stuff before she was done being furious at the end.

OH, and this book has one of the funniest seduction lines I've ever seen. Page60: "If you wish, you may mount me." {{oooh, baby!}}

And one of the most awkward adverbs I've ever seen. P48: "Two brawny young men... rose *surlily* to their feet and clumped out." This was sort of like finding a frog in the punchbowl, since Beverley is otherwise such a gifted writer.

Alba Turunen says

Este libro me estaba gustando bastante hasta el final, pero las últimas 30 páginas me han hecho replantearme seriamente su puntuación. Mentiría si dijera que no me ha gustado, sí lo ha hecho, pero el final me ha parecido muy forzado e inverosímil, no me he creído la actitud de los personajes, ni su forma de solucionar sus problemas y sus diferencias, suena como si la escritora hubiese estado deseando terminar el libro y no sabía cómo, y le ha salido un batiburrillo de emociones que no casan con el carácter de los protagonistas.

En cierto modo, "Pasión prohibida" se parece bastante al primer libro de la serie "Una boda impuesta", pero en éste caso la protagonista, Serena Riverton, es la hermosa viuda de un noble menor que la compró a su familia con tan sólo 15 años para hacer de ella su prostituta particular. La enseñó las maneras más sórdidas del sexo para complacerle, pero sin recibir nada a cambio, sólo recibió maltrato, desprecio, humillación, y lo que se esperaba de ella, obediencia y sumisión. Una vez viuda, y libre de él, los sórdidos y asquerosos de sus hermanos, pretenden venderla de nuevo a otro hombre, igual de horrible o peor que su marido. De éste modo, Serena escapa de casa, y es así como conoce a Francis.

A Francis le conocimos en el primer libro como el mejor amigo de Nicholas Delaney. Francis es un hombre honorable, podría decirse que el perfecto caballero. Precisamente por ser el perfecto caballero, y el hijo obediente, es como acaba conociendo a Serena, y después por cómo terminarán unidos, asumiendo las circunstancias que se les han presentado. Su matrimonio empezó forzado, siempre con la sombra del difunto marido de Serena, y el deseo de Francis de poder complacer a su esposa, pero como digo, ha sido una relación a ratos hermosa, pero en otros momentos ha habido frialdad, tiranteces, y sí, muchas desavenencias

y malentendidos. La verdad, lo estaba disfrutando hasta los dos últimos capítulos, donde me parece que todo se ha embrollado irremisiblemente. A pesar de ello, no me ha afectado como para que deje la serie, no. Seguiré con ella, pero en un futuro, espero que no muy lejano, para no empacharme tanto.

Julie says

I had a really, really hard time liking this hero. He didn't have many redeeming qualities and treated the heroine horribly, which made the romance difficult to buy into. Definitely not a book I would read again or recommend.

Dueep Jyot says

I began the book halfheartedly and the sheer gag factor kept me going for the first few chapters. When the virgin hero is raped by the heroine in his sleep because she wants to be his mistress and she is barren, groan number one. I know when she is going to turn up pregnant. She does, right when he is going to offer for suitable maiden. Surprise, surprise. So still gagging I turn to the end. He is hit by her, he belts her back, she hits him again. Hurrah for domestic peace. So she has 2 brothers who are slime who look at her with lust because hey she isn't their sister at all, but that is in the end. Lusty thoughts are in the first chapter... Definitely an unhealthy imagination. Yeah. The hero's widowed mum has been sporting with a young tutor so she tells her son that toy boy is blackmailing her for a cool 10 grand. Huh?

I had forgotten that this writer had written a series about a girl whose father had got a ho to deflower his daughter so that he could tell society his daughter was not chaste. This writer's sick imagination is fascinating. One star because we don't have a zero rating.

Janet says

I don't think I can do this book justice. It's so unusual: a virgin hero, an abused widow on the run -- how cliched does that sound? The hero is a crack shot, one of the Company of Rogues, Nicholas Delaney's best friend. Serena is both complicated and simple: a young woman possessed of a sultry beauty capable of "shooting an arrow straight to a man's heart", she wants to be a wife and mother. Her tart interior monologue is wryly humorous, the advice Francis receives from Nicholas and Lucien is vintage ... there's a wild horse race ... Blanche is back. One of my favourite books.
