



## His Christmas Pleasure

*Cathy Maxwell*

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## **His Christmas Pleasure** Cathy Maxwell **Anything Can Happen at Christmas!**

When her father threatens to marry Abigail Montross off to a man twice her age (and with thirteen children!), she decides to elope instead with the irresistibly handsome Baron de Vasconia. She know all abut his notorious reputaiton. He is the most seductive man in all of London, but he's vowed to protect her, so she allow herself to be tempted into his bed, promising to guard her heart at all costs.

Andres believes he's entered into nothing more than a marriage of convenience with a charming and very wealthy young woman. But the days—and nights—Abigail spends in his arms soon reform this rogue. He'll do anything to gain her love—until they each discover the truth about the other and old wounds are revealed.

It's the season of miracles and passion—when love not only awakens the senses but delivers the greatest gift of all...

## **His Christmas Pleasure Details**

Date : Published November 30th 2010 by Harper Collins, Inc.

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Author : Cathy Maxwell

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## From Reader Review His Christmas Pleasure for online ebook

### Vilia says

Review from Backchatting Books

Abigail Montross met Andres, Barón de Vasconia under unfortunate circumstances. He heard her begging the man she loved to marry her and he heard her being rejected. When her father arranges to for her to marry a two times widower with thirteen children, Abigail decides to take fate into her own hands. Andres is in dire need of cash and a wealthy wife to go with the property he just scored up north is an attractive prospect.

Andres isn't really a Baron but rather the illegitimate son of one and arguably the best horse trainer in Europe. His wit, charm and good looks are all that stands between him and ruin. Peasants stole all of his father's horses in Spain and he has only a part share in a mare from his father's stable to remind him of his former life. Andres has quite a way with the ladies and one of his former mistresses has become rather... clingy which upsets the lady's husband. Andres agrees to accept a property unseen from the man in return for leaving London and never returning. He imagines that the property is really fine but reality doesn't quite meet his expectations.

Abigail has been in love with a man that doesn't return her affections for an awful long time. She finally realises that he is not worth her affections when he decides to marry her cousin even though she is available. The fiancé that her father found for her is so unsuitable that she decides to take Andres up on his offer of marriage. At least he was the first person to describe her as beautiful and see her as a person. Getting married and leaving her family was incredibly brave for someone who had been relatively cosseted up to that point but I liked her fieriness too.

The plot throws up the usual sort of complications but I was definitely rooting for this couple to succeed against the seemingly insurmountable odds. The pace was fairly quick as the couple escaped up north with Abigail's father on their heels but settled down a bit as they set about restoring the property. I really could have done with a bit more of this aspect as I enjoyed the two of them working together to make the place their own. The ending didn't have me swooning as it involved one character sacrificing everything for the other – up until this point they had acted as a team against the world and I didn't think the change in dynamics was really necessary.

This was a fun albeit quick read. Definitely worth a shot.

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### Carrie says

2.5\* The story idea was decent until almost to the end of the book, and then the author used a worn-out plot device to separate our lead characters.

The writing was utilitarian at best. The vocabulary was limited, the sentences were choppy, the dialog stilted, and almost the entire book was telling and not showing. The convenient way every detail was wrapped up in the last few pages of the book was contrived. The characters, although very likable, had no real depth.

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### **Laura says**

As much as Abigail loves her parents, she is not willing to marry the man they chose for her. Twice her age and thirteen children? No thank you. Luckily, she has a tidy little inheritance and has caught the eye of a man who truly needs it; Andres, the Barón de Vasconia. Andres and Abigail elope, neither one pretending emotions are involved, but both promising to try to make this a real marriage.

That is what I loved about this book. There were no (real, important) lies, neither pretended it was a love match but neither doing that romance cliche of "I love him but we decided it was a marriage of convenience only so now what do I do, woe is me". At every point, they are considerate and caring of each other, eager to back down unselfishly if the other needed it. It is almost surprising how little these things happen in romance novels, often the plot of the book hinges on the hero being hard headed or the heroine too shy to reveal her feelings. While the passion and tension between these two was sizzling, I was mostly enthralled by the amount that the couple acted like basically decent human beings who deserved love and worked for it.

It doesn't hurt that the whole thing was swoonworthy!

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### **Ron says**

A 25-year-old woman who's wasted years mooning over a man, only to have him announce an engagement to her cousin, recklessly accepts a proposal from a Spanish baron with a notorious reputation, rather than enter into the marriage her father has arranged for her. Andres takes her up to Scotland to elope, and then to his estate in Northumberland... which, of course, turns out to be nothing like he promised (or, for that matter, like he expected). Seemingly pushed to the brink of disaster, the couple decide to persevere and turn their convenient arrangement into a real marriage...

Cathy Maxwell's characters are engaging and their behavior plausible, although she does tend to push a little hard on explaining the emotional reactions at times (but that's probably just me and it is, after all, a romance novel). Fair warning: Only about 20-25% of this novel actually takes place during the Christmas season, but it's the right 20-25%.

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### **Heather says**

His Christmas Pleasure was not your typical romance, but I really enjoyed it. Abby was 25, facing spinsterhood, and stuck in the middle of her family's relationship with the ton. Her mother married down, but her father supplies society with funds, so while they're accepted into society, they're not necessarily welcome. Unmarried, with the man she loves about to marry someone else, she meets the Baron. He finds her refreshing, and her innocence reminds him clearly of what he lacks, but she sees in him a future built together. I'm not normally one for the "poor man" storyline, but this just flowed so nicely. Their relationship just has that "it" factor, and their struggle brought some tears to my eyes. The holiday storyline isn't very strong, so it would make a nice year-round read. A great addition to any personal or library collection.

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### **Lady Darcie Guenon says**

We first met Andres Ramigio in The Earl Claims His Bride as the silver-eyed spaniard who wanted Gillian to run away with him. Now he's back and set on winning the hand of the red-headed beauty who forever changed his life....with her fortune and her amazing heart. Andres was thinking about pulling the trigger when someone slams him down to the ground in order to stop him little does he know that his savior will also be the person he wants for his wife, with her fortune he can set his dreams into action just as soon as she gives in.

Abby Montross only has one love and he is to marry her cousin, when she waits for him in the library she never thought that she would be saving a man first. When she saw Andres with a gun pointed at his head Abby reacted by slamming him into the ground and later finding out that he wasn't going to pull the trigger, as the love of her life walks in Abby finds Andres and being to talk her love into running away with her but instead her heart is broken and Andres is set on fixing it. When her Parents decide its time for her to marry (a man with 13 children) Abby would have done anything to get out of it and that includes running away with Andres.

This story is filled with adventure, heartbreak, romance, and above all love.

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### **Fangirl Musings says**

\*I listen to audiobooks while I workout so note taking is impossible, thereby Down & Dirty Quickie Reviews are impossible. Instead, here are some words.\*

The romance was a no. The OTP fall in love off page via time jumps. The peeps were cardboard & their internal POV musings got in the way of engaging dialogue.

Book don't suck, but book don't rock, either.

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### **Vikki Vaught says**

I thoroughly enjoyed this excellent Regency romance. The characters are engaging and the plot is intriguing. I listened to the audio version and the narrator brings a delightful and lovely English accent to the character, bringing them to life. If you're looking for a heart-warming tale of love, then you will love this book as much as I did. Happy reading/listening!

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### **TheGeekyBlogger says**

Listened for Fun! (Audible)

Overall Rating: 4.00

Story Rating: 3.75

Character Rating: 4.25

Audio Rating: 3.75 (Not part of the overall rating)

### **Part of my 25 Holiday Reads for 2012**

How His Christmas Pleasure put me in the Holiday Spirit: This season I am really loving the historical reads and this is not an exception. How they met, how they connected, and the spirit of the relationship put me in the Holiday spirit.

What I thought of the Characters/Story: His Christmas Pleasure is a marriage of convenience story with a ton of heart. Almost from the beginning, you can feel the attraction, mutual respect, and start of love from both Abigail and Andres. It is the respect and trust (though yes this was tested) that really won me over. They seemed to be each other's biggest champions. I fell in love with them as a couple and enjoyed their romance.

What I thought of the audio: Narrated by Jaime Birch, I thought she did an excellent job on all the voices except maybe Andres. It took me awhile to warm up to her doing his voice. I am almost positive this was due to his Spanish accent. Otherwise, the pacing, narration, and cadence was wonderful for the story. I will listen to her read/act out another book in a heartbeat.

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### **Jane Stewart says**

3 1/2 stars. This is a pleasant feel good story. It's a Hallmark Card type of story.

#### **STORY BRIEF:**

Abby's grandmother left her a fortune to be hers upon marriage. Abby's father is also wealthy. He arranges a marriage for her to a repulsive, older man. Andres is a handsome younger man who has affairs with married women. Dobbins' wife had an affair with Andres. Dobbins offered Andres land in Northern England in return for Andres leaving London and never returning. The land is Andres' dream – to breed and raise horses. But he needs to marry someone with money (to buy horses, feed, building materials, living expenses, etc). He recently met and befriended Abby. He is honest with her about his financial need and asks her to marry him. She agrees as a way to avoid her father's arranged marriage. They elope. Abby's father is furious and chases them. When he finds them already married, he tells Abby she can't get her inheritance for three years.

#### **REVIEWER'S OPINION:**

I was moved watching Andres and Abby survive being poor. I enjoyed watching their relationship grow. There is conflict provided by the father and Abby's former boyfriend which added interest. I think the title should not use the word "Christmas." It doesn't relate to the story other than a couple of parties being held during the Christmas season. They could have been held at any time of the year with the same effect on the story.

I liked and agree with Jacqueline Jacobson's comment (a Goodreads reviewer). "the book would have been stronger if more time was spent shown them working together renovating Stonemore...showing him using his ingenuity to build a home for them."

The book has 374 pages but it's large print, so it's shorter than a typical romance novel.

#### **CAUTION SPOILER:**

One part didn't sit well with me. Abby goes to London to visit her parents. She intends to stay there until Andres comes to her to prove his love. Well, he goes to her to tell her he loves her, but Dobbins sees him which means Andres will lose the land. It was awful to me that he threw away his dream. The author wanted to show that he loved her more than his land, but it didn't feel good to me. I think he should have at least TRIED something else like come to the edge of the city and send her a message. I love seeing a "grand gesture" to prove one's love – but this gesture had an irrational and/or foolish feeling to it. I won't say more about what happened regarding the land - to leave some surprise for readers.

#### **DATA:**

Story length: 374 pages large print. Swearing language: none. Sexual language: none. Number of sex scenes: 2. Total number of sex scene pages: 5 1/2. Setting: 1810 England. Copyright: 2010. Genre: historical romance.

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#### **Jacqueline says**

My first time reading this author. I liked it. It felt pretty true to the time period. The characters did not just seem like modern people in period dress.

Pros: The hero and heroine eloped as a convenient arrangement and encountered problems and eventually her father disowns her and they have to make it without money as the hero has only a very run down small estate. Instead of giving up she sticks with him and believes in him and they work together to better themselves. Another good point is that there was not a lot of shall we go to bed together back and forth foolishness. She mentions that she would rather not sleep with him and he says don't be absurd and takes her to bed. He doesn't force her but does make her realize that it is an expected part of marriage and makes it good for her. (He is a handsome Spanish hero after all) It was refreshing to see a realistic portrayal of this aspect of marriage. Instead of false tension achieved through the use of delaying the first sex scene.

The characterizations while not the most in-depth I've ever read were good and believable. The plot also was not absurd. The love story was the only focus of the book, no spies or murderers or whatnot.

Cons: I think the book would have been stronger if less time had been spent on the build up to the elopement and more time spent showing them working together renovating Stonemore. Those were the scenes that were of the most interest to me. Showing him using his ingenuity to build a home for them.

A lovely regency and I will look up more of this author's books.

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#### **Luvmyfamily says**

My favorite in the series! I knew I would like Andres from the moment I met him. You couldn't help but want him to find someone great and he did. I thought it was a perfectly executed story. It didn't dwell on their past loves and he didn't show a lot of resentment toward Gillian (much less mention her in passing) Abby was wonderful. I loved reading about her becoming her own person and watching her stand true to Andres. There wasn't an overabundance of conflict but there was enough to keep the pages flying. I also

thought it was wonderful how she threw in some very exciting moments like how they kept getting chased on their way to get married. It was a nice twist to the neck-or-nothing-to-Gretna-Green plot that is played so frequently in these historicals.

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### **Stacie M. Ritchie says**

I put this ebook down awhile ago. I didn't like the hero at all, because he lied all the way through the first two chapters. The heroine seemed desperate and uninteresting. I didn't even finish this book. I have read some pretty bad stuff the last few months due to sleep deprivation, but this book I couldn't even finish. Do not read there are plenty of romances out there that makes you actually care about the characters.

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### **Ally says**

**Naive "children" yet somehow this was like a trainwreck and I couldn't stop looking.**

### **Read for the Historical Romance Club Christmas/Holiday Challenge. Book 3 of 6.**

**Series:** Yep

**Sexy times:** A few times. Nothing steamy.

**Plan on reading more by the author:** Quite possibly.

#### **Synopsis**

Ok so there's this guy who simply cannot win for losing and all he has to recommend him, on the surface, is his amazing good looks. Spaniard on steroids kinda thing.

(Ok, I fully realize Mr Pachal is from Chile. And I also realize I think he's hot. So there. I'm using him. Creative license.)

Anyhoo, the ladies of the Ton are falling all over themselves to get some "ahem" time with Pedro, er, Andres. Andres has a dream of redeeming his family name and he will lie, cheat or steal (or at least he has in the past) to make that dream reality. When he is handed property in a bid to get him the hell out of London and it's Ladies, he gloms right on to it.

Realizing he needs money to make this happen, he proposes to Abigail who for reasons of her own, wants off of the Ton carousel. She and her dowry take him up on this and the mad dash to Scotland begins.

There's a whole bunch of running and riding in coaches. And all the time, I'm thinking how naive are these two? Like little idiots they are.

- elope with a man known for two days
- blindly take property expecting it to be something awesome
- depend on a dowry without seeing the money
- imagine everything will work out without much forethought.

The idiot children did make it rather interesting.

**Heroine:** Amelia. Ok let me say I do not blame her for jumping on this opportunity to get out. Her dad is trying to get her to marry a fart machine.

The man she thinks she loves is going after some other debutante. And no one takes her seriously. What I like about her is her willingness to go all in. Her ability to be supportive at all times. And even when she opens her mouth and inserts her foot, she makes it work.

**Hero:** Well.....hmmmm. I've never quite run across a character like this in an HR. He spins tails and manipulates and is a dreamer and yet he questions his ability to make dreams a reality. At the same time, he's caring, and he's so good to Abby and he brings her out of her shell. AND THEN, he's a complete idiot to her. He's selfish beyond selfish. BUT THEN he's not. I'm conflicted.

**Why it did or didn't work for me:**

It worked enough to get me to read a full length novel in a day. I'm not sure what the secret sauce was and I can't tell you why I kept reading other than I had to know what happened next. This was a decent to very good read and I'm internally fighting with myself over a 3 star or a 4 star review.

Signed,

*I still think the hero needed a swift punch to the throat*

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**? Kimberly says**

Abigail Montros's life is complicated, she has been in love with a man forever, but he has not offered for her, even when her father arranged a marriage. Thankfully the man backed out, but her reputation has suffered and yet still she pines for this fop. Things are about to get turned upside down when at a Christmas party the fop announces he is marry her cousin and her father tells her he is about to arrange a marriage for her with an old man who has thirteen children! As if that is not enough she slaps the handsome Baron de Vasconia when he tells her she is beautiful. He is in need of money to secure his dreams and has been forced to leave London within three days, she desperately needs to escape her father's plan; together they decide to elope and the tale that unfolds was heartwarming.

Maxwell's characters were certainly lovable and I enjoyed getting to know them and their back-story. Abigail is strong, opinionated and never really fit in among the ton with her fiery red hair and freckles. Andres, is the second son of a Baron and born on the wrong side of the blanket, and he desperately wants to restore his families good name. While he is definitely a rogue he is also vulnerable. Side characters including the fop added to the tale and created tension.

I love tales about marriages of convenience especially when they turn into something more and Maxwell gave me exactly what I wanted. I love how she created tension, allowed the characters to grow and kept me turning the pages at a dizzying speed. The romance that developed began out of mutual respect and felt genuine. The chemistry and heat was delightful while being relatively clean. This is a feel good novel, where you root for the couple and hope they overcome. The tale flowed wonderfully with just enough twists and turns. The characters became real to me and I adore when that happens.

I recommend His Christmas Pleasure to fans of romances. While this is a historical fiction it is very character driven and not laden in historical detail. I will definitely be looking for more from this author.

Kimba @ Caffeinated Book Reviewer

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