



The Harlow Hoyden

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Miss Emma Harlow hasn't earned the reputation as a hoyden for nothing, so when the Duke of Trent discovers her in his conservatory stealing one of his orchids, he's isn't surprised- charmed, delighted and puzzled, yes, but not surprised. It is Emma who is amazed. She has naturally concluded that the man reading in the conservatory must be the country cousin (who else in London would actually read?) and is quite vexed to discover that he is the Duke of Trent himself- imagine, stealing the duke's prize *Rhyncholaelia digbyana* under his very nose! But her vexation doesn't last long. For Emma is a practical young lady with a mission: to end her dear sister Lavinia's engagement to the villainous (and dreadfully dull!) Sir Waldo Windbourne, and she thinks that the famous libertine is just the man for the job. If he would only seduce her sister away from Sir Waldo.... Well, not seduce exactly, but flirt mercilessly and engage her interest. Perhaps then Lavinia would jilt the baron. The Duke of Trent is resistant, of course. Despite his reputation, he does not toy with the affections of innocents. And besides, it's not her sister he longs to seduce.

The Harlow Hoyden Details

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From Reader Review The Harlow Hoyden for online ebook

BookMaven says

UNREADABLE

Miss Emma Harlow is desperate to end her sister, Lavinia's, attachment to Sir Waldo Windbourne. Emma has a plan: Find a rake to attract Lavinia's attentions away from Windbourne. Toward that end, she approaches the Duke of Trent.

The heroine in this book would be diagnosed with a mental illness if such a person existed. In Regency times, Emma would certainly be locked up. Emma's good judgment and common sense are non-existent. Any woman who approached men in contemporary times, the Regency era, or any time, as Emma did in this book, would certainly be in grave danger of being harmed. I find this kind of stupidity to be totally unreadable. The whole premise of this book is completely unbelievable and unrealistic. It makes one wonder if this author had any knowledge about the Regency Period.

The plot is ridiculous, not funny. No Duke would get embroiled in such an idiotic scheme if he was above 10 years old. This book would not even be a good fairytale, despite its juvenile approach. Here we have one more author who tries to write in the Regency Era, while ignoring everything that makes up the fabric, social mores, and manners of said era. There ought to be a rule that these authors have to label their books "fake Regency", so us readers do not have to waste our money and precious reading time on these pretenders. Actually, there is no genre, in which I would enjoy this plot or this heroine.

Katie says

[after all, the wrong love interests must be evil, not just a bad match! (hide spoiler)]

Erin says

I have read and reviewed several of Lynn's books before this one, each in different genres. I was eager to read another, but admittedly somewhat weary of its "romance" placement. It appears other books, that I shall not name, gave me the impression that all romance novels would be more along the lines of erotica, and thus I avoided the genre all together. Don't get me wrong, I have read books with romance in them, it was just not the focus. That being said, here is what I thought of "The Hoyden Harlow":

I was taken in within the first chapter. The setting, the characters, and the language combined to make an exciting read. I fell in love with Emma's personality from the beginning, though she did bring the mind Elizabeth Bennett. The dynamic between the sisters and the poor duke was wonderful, and I couldn't wait to see what would come of the ever deepening layers of their schemes. The story brought me laughter, grimaces (in response to the story), and plenty of blushing. I would certainly recommend this for anyone who not only wants romance but substantial characters and plot to go with it.

Ruth says

There's something that really appeals to me about the heroine in a historical romance who spurns convention. The problem is that finding a book which has a butt-kicking Regency heroine but which doesn't descend into ridiculous goofiness and involve multiple implausible character shifts is trickier than you would think.

Well, this one, provided by the publisher through netgalley, absolutely gets it right! The heroine is an unrepentant troublemaker, who doesn't understand the word "no", and is absolutely determined to live her life on her terms, and yet, the social pressures of the time period aren't forgotten, and it's written well enough that you can see, almost, how she might be able to stay, just about, on the right side of Society.

The adventures of the heroine drag the rest of the characters along in her wake. You know they'll never keep up, thank goodness, and (hooray!) you know she'll never change. The other characters are actually fairly predictable (the "stiff" hero, the gauche male cousin and the long-suffering relations), but what makes this one stand out is the absolutely wonderful dialogue, both between characters and inside their heads, and not just between the hero and heroine either. The interactions between all the characters just sparkle off the page and even had me chuckling out loud several times.

So, 4 stars. I really, really liked it.

Deborah says

Silly, far-fetched and unbelievable but still entertaining.

Under normal circumstances I would never have finished this book but ultimately I'm glad I did.

Ok, what do I mean?

I'm down with a chest infection and can't concentrate on anything, I've tried loads of books but discarded them all so when I noticed this I decided a simple period romance to be just what I needed but Emma annoyed me, really annoyed me to the extent where I had to stop reading (several times) and normally that would have been the end of it but I continued on and I'm glad I did.

So what's wrong with Emma?

She's innocent and naive but also stupid, dangerous and completely lacking in common sense on top of which she's arrogant, a very dangerous combination and don't get me started on the Duke, seriously a thirty year old worldly wise man of his station.

So the story is ridiculous, far-fetched nonsense completely unbelievable and no way a representation of the time but it's a romance not a history book so I let a lot slide but Emma was way too much for me.

But as I said I continued on and I don't know if it got better or I just settled into it accepting it for what it was a silly romance but I finished it and liked it enough to give it 3 stars.

Aimee says

I love a good historical romance and this book has some great characters and a delightful plot. I loved reading about Emma from the very beginning when we meet her as she is stealing the Duke of Trent's prized

flower. She is independent, spunky, and a lot of fun. The Duke of course cannot resist her and ends up entangled in her many plots.

I was really enjoying this one until the very end. It seemed like the author felt the need to add so much intrigue and excitement to the end of the book that I found it unbelievable and it really took away some of my enjoyment of the book. Emma's adventures just seemed to be too dangerous by the end I really do not think all of the extra suspense was necessary. I really enjoyed reading the interactions between Emma and Trent and wanted more of the two of them together, not a lot of plot twists and turns.

Even though I was not a big fan of the end I still enjoyed reading this one because of Emma and Trent. They were a lot of fun and would love to read another book about their lives together.

Tami says

TSTL.

DNF.

I read a lot of reviews saying that Emma was so innocent and that this was charming and so on.

I can only say: Stupidity is not charming. At all.

It is annoying.

Emma is criminally stupid. So naïve that it really really hurts.

She risks not only her own reputation but heads off to ruin her beloved sister. For any well-bred young lady it would have been glaringly obvious why her behaviour is disastrous.

She thinks herself so clever and all-knowing, and she thinks it is her decision whom her sister marries, because Emma knows best.

And because Emma thinks that marriage is awful, her sister shall remain unwed.

What utter bullshit.

Sherri Bryant says

I became familiar with Lynn Messina's writing when I read one of her chick-lit titles in the Red Dress Ink line. In addition to chick-lit, Ms. Messina also has young adult, fantasy, paranormal and historical romance in her repertoire. *The Harlow Hoyden* is a historical romance set in the regency period featuring Emma Harlow, a woman who lives by her own set of rules and refuses to bow down to the expectations of society. She enlists the assistance of The Duke of Trent to break up her twin sister Lavinia's engagement to the odious Sir Waldo the Windbag. Her plan is simple...he will draw Lavinia's attention away from her fiancé in the hopes that she will develop feelings for The Duke and call off her engagement. Emma is convinced that Sir Waldo is a villain and cannot stand the idea of her beloved twin ruining her life. What happens next is a

madcap adventure that has Emma breaking into Waldo's home, dancing the waltz and chasing down traitorous spies, with The Duke of Trent either by her side or close on her heels.

I really enjoyed this story. Emma is a breath of fresh air and I liked her immensely. She's daring and direct and refuses to let society or her family dictate to her how a proper lady should behave. She has been given the nickname The Harlow Hoyden because she walks a fine line between propriety and scandal and she could care less. She has no interest in marriage or making a suitable match and prefers to live her life as she sees fit. Whether she is stealing a prized orchid from The Duke's conservatory or proposing outlandish schemes to break up her sister's engagement, she does so with a gusto and headstrong determination that would make most people cringe in horror. There are a few moments in the book that made me wonder if Emma's actions are too rash, but quickly remembered that is why she earned her moniker.

I thought The Duke was an excellent character and the perfect match for Emma. This period in time usually depicts men being in charge and viewed as complete masters of the universe. I enjoyed seeing The Duke agreeing to help Emma thinking he would be able to deter her, not realizing who is really in charge. Emma's twin and her brother and his wife were also likeable characters. I am hoping that Lavinia will get her own story in the future.

Overall, fans of historical romance will enjoy this offering and if you are not a fan of historical romance, but enjoy a fun and adventurous story with strong characters and witty dialogue, where villains are vanquished and good triumphs over bad, give this one a try.

Disclaimer: I received a complimentary copy of *The Harlow Hoyden* from the author in exchange for an honest review

Tali says

I was provided with a free copy of this book by NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

I don't read a lot of historical romance, so I wasn't really sure what to expect of *The Harlow Hoyden*. The story of the irrepressible Emma Harlow and her relationship with the Duke of Trent, which forms after she steals one of his orchids for her twin sister, surprised me in being fast-paced, a bit racy and thoroughly engaging. I liked all the main characters in this story for once, apart from, of course, the villainous Lord Windbourne, and although I felt like the second half of the story wavered a bit - with its sudden injection of French spies and England being in danger - I really liked see how Emma and the Duke both gradually came to terms with their own attraction, Emma's 'hoyden' reputation and how to rub along together. I have to say that although Emma was a 'modern' character in her attitude, she never felt out of place in the story's time period and it was really good to see a serious discussion about what marriage really meant for women, including Emma, in this age and how some might want to rail against its constraints a little. After reading this, I'd definitely like to read more of Lynn Messina's work as she sucked me in with this one. A fast-paced, engaging and fun regency romp. 4 stars.

Romantic Reads and Such says

You definitely can't be a stickler for the authenticity of the time with *The Harlow Hoyden* but then again I'm not reading historical romances for a history lesson. I want the romance and it delivers that in spades. It's fun

and humorous and love wins out, so who could ask for anything more!

Full review available at <http://romanticreadsandsuch.wordpress....>

(Complimentary copy provided in exchange for an honest review)

Vicki says

I have been seeing the Harlow Hoyden pop up on various places and I finally grabbed a copy yesterday. First let me say, I love the title. I love the word hoyden. It is one of the most fun words in the English language. It draws pictures that make me laugh. Secondly this girl was hilarious as I hoped she would be. Not pratfall hilarious, but so staunch in her beliefs that she can not see the forest for the trees funny.

She starts the book in a totally unseemly manner stealing from a house where she is a guest. Not just stealing as in silverware or money, but something rare and beloved. She does so in front of an audience who deems to help her so that she does it right.

Emma Harlow from that point on amuses and confounds some of the most important people in the ton. There are unknown factors sprinkled all through the book which gives it an intensity that I did not expect from the title. So I was pleasantly surprised that there was so much intrigue and mystery involved.

This is a regency book and I was ready for that after weeks of detective books and thrillers. It was the perfect choice for a late night read that kept me reading until after eight am. I think you would enjoy it if you like Dukes, Wonderful forward thinking Dukes. The Duke of Trent pushed all my buttons for a leading man. He was a willing and sometimes an unwilling participant in all manner of escapades along with the Harlow Hoyden. I was so glad I picked this up yesterday. I believe I will be re-reading it on a regular basis.

Andree says

Okay, finished this last night. And just, no.

I mean, it had fun moments. I am not denying the fun moments. And I almost suspect that I might like the sequel better, because I enjoy the idea of a botanist heroine.

But mostly Emma is so extreme. I don't disagree with the sentiments about the sexism present in that society, but her reactions are just too extreme to be believable. She might have worked better in a modern context, or if they'd somehow tweaked her situation in the regency to make the total unconcern for propriety a little more plausible. I'd believe racing a carriage down the street, not the rest. So out of proportion; seriously, this is her thought process: I think my sister's fiance is not the man for her so I will 1) try and induce a rake to seduce her away from him (how could this POSSIBLY backfire?), and when that doesn't work, 2) break into his house and search for incriminating evidence.

At no point will I say anything to her like, 1) Look, I know we're twins, but unlike everyone else, your fiance can't tell us apart after a glance, is this really the dude you want to marry? 2) He's told me that he's going to do everything in his power to separate us after your married, thinking you were me, and 3) He's also burned

the book you were writing and vows to make you give up your favourite hobby after said marriage (told me this when he again thought you were me).

And then the dramatics really kick off. Seriously, the above is only the first half. I mean, secretly!spies was telegraphed pretty heavily pretty early on, so I can't say I'm surprised (though parenthetically, I will give points for having the two spies be the brother and the fiance, and not giving into the temptation of having the male lead also in the end turn out to be a super!secret!spy - sort of novel). But it was just so... much. It was just dramatic incident after dramatic incident. The book could have been resolved about three times, before it actually was resolved. In fact, 40 pages from the end, as we started approaching a potential resolution, I started hoping there was a really long excerpt from the sequel at the end of the e-book, and that was what was requiring the extra pages, and not yet another DRAMATIC TWIST. Obviously, I was disappointed (but not surprised).

I'm not saying it didn't have some good moments, but it was also really, really irritating. Honestly, half of what kept me going was my irritation with it. It was just, too much.

Whitebeard Books says

Delightful tale with great characters with big personalities. If you enjoy historical romance with a decided twist, then this a series just for you. There's frustration of being an observer and yet in the end, well, you'll just have to read it to find out. I'm off onto the second in the series already. There is only one small shortcoming. The writing is in need of editing for missing words and words out of place and the like. Fear not though, the story is great!

QNPoohBear says

Miss Emma Harlow will do anything for her twin sister Lavinia, including stealing a priceless orchid from a Duke's conservatory- right under his very nose! Of course she had assumed he was the country cousin, but still, she stole a Duke's orchid and he wasn't at all upset about it. Emma decides that Alex Keswick, Seventh Duke of Trent is exactly the right person to help her with her PLAN. Emma has a plan to rid her sister Lavinia of her odious fiance, Sir Windbourne. Emma can't stand the old windbag and she hates the idea of losing her sister and having her sister lose her identity in marriage. Lavinia dreams of having children some day while Emma decries the married state. She plans to have Trent seduce her sister into breaking off her engagement to Sir "Windbag." Trent categorically refuses. He may be a rake but he doesn't trifle with innocents. If he won't agree to her plan, Emma will find another libertine - one who may have less of a conscience than Alex. Alex reluctantly agrees to court Vinnie but he can't keep his eyes or his hands off Emma. Emma has high hopes for a match between Vinnie and Trent, despite her own feelings on the matter. They are slow to come together so Emma decides to find something on Windbag that will cause Vinnie to break off her engagement once and for all. Little does she dream that her investigation will yield surprising results - in more ways than one.

The plot of this story is largely interesting - if not original. The addition of an added mystery plot saved the book from tedium. The faux romance between Vinnie and Trent went on way too long and was boring. The romance is very hot and steamy with lots of passionate kisses, touching and a love scene that comes at the

right moment for those characters. I found the mystery plot really unbelievable. I would think that Mr. Harlow or at least Roger would investigate the man their daughter/sister is engaged to! I also really disliked the morning after misunderstanding. It's such a common trope but I liked the way it was resolved.

Normally I can't stand crazy heroines and Emma takes the cake in craziness but she was charming and I couldn't help but like her. I felt bad for her that she had such a terrible childhood that it ruined her views on marriage. I happen to agree with her beliefs that given the time period, marriage was a bad deal for many women, especially those like Lavinia who made marriages of convenience. Emma's schemes and scrapes never failed to astonish me. I kept wondering what she would do next. She's a very modern girl running around Regency England. She's not the kind of girl that every reader will like. Lavinia is a better period heroine. She's correct in her behavior but she's still lively and has horticultural interests that most women didn't think about. She is a devoted, caring sister for all the right reasons so I fail to see why she would attach herself to someone her twin sister felt so strongly was a bad match. A little communication between them would have been nice and communication with Roger would have been better but then the romance plot wouldn't have advanced.

The hero is kind of disgusting at first, he can't stick to one mistress at a time, or maybe he's lying. He is an honorable rake who cares deeply for the people he chooses to love and who would do anything to keep his beloved safe. He is considerate and caring towards Vinnie though he isn't attracted to her. He does some wonderful things for her and they could have a happy marriage if they wanted to, or at least if passion didn't get in the way. Alex is the one with a level head trying to keep Emma out of trouble for safety's sake and not because she isn't behaving as a young maiden should.

Sir Waldo "Windbag" is worse than Mr. Collins. Mr. Collins is an idiot and Sir Waldo isn't quite that silly. His motives are so transparent I guessed right away what he was up to. It's so obvious that I kept groaning in frustration as Emma took the difficult course with him instead of the logical one. The ending of his plot surprised me a lot and I don't really think I liked it.

There are a couple of minor characters who add more comic relief to the story. There is also Sarah, Mrs. Roger Harlow, sister-in-law to the twins. She is kind and level-headed and very much in love with her husband. I would have liked her story a bit more than this one.

Maria says

Jane Austen's arguable masterpiece, *Emma*, featured a heroine who danced to her own tune, managed people's lives, and thought very highly of herself indeed. Most readers find Emma Woodhouse conceited, bossy, and rude, but I have always found her amusing. She lives life on her own terms and that is always admirable to me. Lynn Messina, a new-to-me author, has created another vexing Emma in her charming historical romance novel of manners, *The Harlow Hoyden*.

Emma Harlow also reminds me of other independent-minded literary heroines: Sophy Stanton-Lacy from Georgette Heyer's *The Grand Sophy* and Flora Poste in Stella Gibbons' *Cold Comfort Farm*. Both of those stories were laugh out loud funny and feature a pushy, managing, yet thoroughly enchanting heroine who only sees things her way and fixes bad situations.

For my full review on my historical romance and history blog: <http://bit.ly/S1c5pp>

