



The Lord Next Door

Gayle Callen

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The handsome, deceiving lord was not the man Victoria believed him to be...

Victoria must wed...and immediately!

To rescue her family from financial ruin, lovely Victoria Shelby has no choice but to marry. Her options for a bridegroom are limited...until she remembers the shy servant boy next door. Then she discovers that her childhood friend is actually Viscount Thurlow—ruthless businessman, future earl, and a man whose family is shrouded in scandal!

After two rejected marriage proposals, David Thurlow needs a wife who will give him an heir, someone who will not only overlook his past but also be above reproach. Victoria is the ideal candidate—quiet, unassuming, and in desperate need of funds. But even as she strives to be the perfect wife, her calm demeanor masks a shocking secret...one that is overshadowed by David's slow, heated lessons in the art of seduction that threaten to transform a "convenient" marriage into a torrid and passionate affair.

The Lord Next Door Details

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From Reader Review The Lord Next Door for online ebook

Jultri says

General gist not bad of two neighbouring children who developed a friendship through a shared journal, yet kept physically apart as her father was a commoner banker whereas he was the only child of the earl (although pretending at the time to be the cook's son). Her family fell on tough times after her father's suicide and in desperation she sought out her old friend to ask for his help not knowing his true identity. Although shocked and initially betrayed by his lies when she found out, she agreed to marry him in name only to save her family from destitution and in turn providing him with the perfect hostess he required. The characters were often inconsistent, the flow of the plot disjointed at times and the writing rather too simplistic for my liking.

Monique Takens says

Ik heb de Nederlands talige uitgave gelezen : Candlelight Historische roman 790 - Liefde op papier . Het is erg moeilijk om een objectieve beoordeling over dit boek te geven omdat ik net hiervoor de Survivors club serie van Mary Balogh heb gelezen en zij is mijn absolute favoriet in dit genre en tja .. dan valt alles erna een beetje tegen . Misschien komt het ook door de vertaling of doordat het verhaal hier en daar ingekort is - dit boek heeft 318 pagina's terwijl het origineel er ongeveer 50 meer heeft . Ik heb goede hoop dat de volgende in de serie iets beter leest omdat de regels tekst per bladzijde van 31 naar 33 regels is verhoogd . Het verhaal is niet erg origineel en de romantiek was maar zozo . Ik geef dit boek het voordeel van de twijfel met 3 sterren .

Denise says

A little torn on how I feel about this book. It had some things I just loved, but some of it just felt off. The story is started off with 10 year old Victoria secretly writing to her neighbor, Tom. He found her journal hidden outside, so he began the correspondence by teasing her. He tells her he is the cooks son and they write in this journal back and forth until they are 16. They share all their secrets and get to know each other well although they never actually meet. Her parents have aspirations of her and her 2 sisters marrying into peerage. her family is wealthy but are not nobility, her father is a banker and they are not accepted in society. Victoria is shy and does not wish to mingle in society or marry. When her father commits suicide and leaves the family in financial ruins, she and her sisters do what they must to survive. The sisters find governess and companion situations while Victoria stays home to care for her Mother. She decides to go next door to seek out Tom to see if he will marry her. (This part made no sense to me, he was a cooks son so how could he financially help her?) She finds out that Tom is actually a Viscount and his name is David Thurlow. David wants no part of the ton as they have scorned him over scandals that were all his fathers doing. He is a business man heavily involved with the rail roads and tries to be perfect without scandal to help clear his family name. He was turned down by two peers that he wanted to marry, yet still wishes to marry as he needs someone to run the house and provide an heir. He decides to marry Victoria to benefit both of them. So yes, they marry. After the journal entries and then Victoria finding out who he actually is, well it just gets

pretty boring. For the whole middle of the book, every-night he goes to her and will kiss her, they slowly go just a bit farther even though in their thoughts they both wanted to ravish each other... It wasn't even sexual tension cause the next day they were just cold but more towards civil to each other. booooring yawn.. The last third of the book, she gets all social for his sake and starts pushing him into social events and she becomes like the belle of the ball, even though she is shy and hates this stuff, it was confusing that she just switched like that. The story wasn't bad, it just wasn't all that entertaining. I will try the next and see if the series gets better.

Ivanna Willis says

Interesting but a bit drawn out for me. I lost interest and had to force myself to finish, but overall a cute story.

Sarah says

I loved how utterly SWEET this story was! Victoria and Tom (David) grew up next door to one another. And they never meet in person they forged a friend ship by writing to one another in a journal. Years latter Victoria remembers her old friend in her hour of need and seeks him out. Imagine her shock when she discovers that Tom is not the cooks son but rather the son of an Earl, and what's this? His name is not Tom but David! After explaining his Duplicity David asks Victoria to marry him, and though she has reservations Victoria has no other choice if she plans to keep her mother and her off the street's.

And thus the story begins! This book is slow moving in time but I found myself rather captivated by the story as I watched Victoria and Davids relationship grow. Unlike most books the H&Hr didn't just fall in bed with one another, nor did she completely shun him until he decided to seduce her. Rather both agreed to wait and David took time to slowly allow Victoria to become accustom to him and the intimacies of there marriage. One might think that this would be boring, instead it rather added to the story and made ever part of there relationship more meaningful.

I highly recommend this story, and if you like it then I might also recommend Lori Wick's 'The Proposal', or any of her English Garden series.

4.5 Stars!

Caz says

I've been on a bit of a "marriage-of-convenience" kick of late, and this book definitely fed my craving! It's well-written with consistent characterisation, although I have to say that I think David's father did come around rather quickly considering the way he'd been represented throughout the beginning of the book.

Victoria is an appealing heroine, initially rather gauche in society principally due to the fact that her father persistently ran her down; but she blossoms after her marriage and shows herself to be practical and more than capable of holding her own in society.

David is, sadly, fairly insensitive to her for much of the book, although his requirements in a wife were

limited to someone to be his hostess, run his house and bear his children; and he does admit at the end that he'd been blinded by his own selfishness to the extent that he hadn't considered Victoria as a person at the outset.

Although much of the drama in the book hinges on the scandals that haunt both families (and to be honest, while unpleasant, I'm not sure that either secret would have been cause for social ostracism), and I'm not a fan of too much mis-communication in my HRs, I did like the fact that Victoria was fairly forthright about challenging David when he did something to upset her (as when his former mistress called at their house!), and that, having realised the need to own up to her family secret, she didn't drag it out or beat about the bush when it came to it.

Oh, and I liked the idea of their communicating via Victoria's diary when they were children. I'm certainly someone for whom writing can be quite therapeutic, so that was something I can sympathise with.

There are two other books in this series, featuring Victoria's two sisters, who we meet briefly here, and I'll be looking for those on the strength of this one.

Juliana Philippa says

Callen's Tudor romances are *much* better - this book failed to engage me and was lacking spark

[1844, England:]

I have liked Gayle Callen's books in the past - most recently His Scandal, Book 2 in her "His" Series - but I did *not* enjoy The Lord Next Door. I found myself wanting to skim parts of the book (which I NEVER do), especially the end and the last scene between Victoria and David where they go on and on, resolving every last thing that's been popping up throughout the book. There were some promising moments and scenes, but on the whole the book did not click for me and I would be hard-pressed to ever read it again, let alone recommend it to someone else. Callen is a talented writer and this is the first book of hers that I have disliked, so I'm just chalking it up as a fluke and moving on to her others (the two remaining books in the series seem promising ... we'll see!).

PRAISE:

- ~ The conversation between David and Victoria on their wedding night is entertaining and humorous.
- ~ It is a nice change in the genre to have the hero and heroine be the same age (they are both 26 years old when the story takes place).
- ~ Victoria's mother and David's father, who at the beginning of the book seem like they will be flat secondary characters cast in cookie-cutter roles (the silly, not-very-bright, social climbing mother and the mean, grumpy, and selfish father) were surprisingly interesting and were actually more engaging than the main characters!

CRITICISM:

- ~ David is a stern and secretive character and normally I can take my hero any way (geez, I make them sound like ice cream, lol) - laughing and joyful, serious and dour, haunted and vengeful, whatever - but for most of the book I found him inaccessible and not really all that engaging or interesting.
- ~ Victoria was even worse, IMO. Her character was not at all consistent - at times I found her to be far too boring, placid, and even weak, while at other times she showed a strength of character and will that did not at all ring true with the weak Victoria that we had just encountered a page or paragraph before. (Frankly, the

Victoria of the diary entries in the Prologue almost seems more interesting than any adult version of her that we meet!)

~ There wasn't much chemistry between Victoria and David and I couldn't really see why either was attracted to the other ... there was just no spark. Again, this was definitely a failing of the characters that Callen wrote, because I know that she is most certainly able to write great chemistry and interesting characters who complement each other (read His Scandal).

~ The premise of the book and how it begins is shaky - Victoria's family is in dire straits so she goes to see the servant boy next door ... what could he possibly do to help them? How would marrying him accomplish anything? And if the family is so badly off, why are her two younger sisters working and she's not? This is of course how she and David are set-up to meet (with David actually being himself, and not "Tom") and for the plot and marriage-of-convenience to unfold, but it's all very contrived. Normally I can easily overlook implausible plots or contrived story ploys, but since the book didn't have much else to recommend it, this just added to my annoyance and disappointment.

VERY ANNOYING QUOTE (should have tipped me off right away that I wouldn't really like this heroine):
"She had no great mission in life, as some women had, to reform society or negate poverty. She would cast little scandal on a family already brimming with its own." (p.30)

THE SISTERS OF WILLOW POND TRILOGY:

This book is part of Gayle Callen's "The Sisters of Willow Pond Trilogy." The order of the series is as follows: Book 1, The Lord Next Door (Victoria's story); Book 2, The Duke in Disguise (Meriel's story); and Book 3, The Viscount in Her Bedroom (Louisa's story).

BOTTOM LINE and RECOMMENDATIONS:

Skip it! Read His Scandal by Gayle Callen instead, or if you want to read a *FABULOUS* marriage-of-convenience book, I recommend Mary Balogh's Slightly Married, Book 1 in the Bedwyn Family series (the whole series is worth reading and if you plan to do that, I would start with A Summer to Remember, which first introduces the Bedwyn family and is a prequel, or with One Night for Love, which precedes the prequel.

Rachel says

Not very good - the main characters seemed awfully daffy when they weren't wildly inconsistent. When the hero said he "married her for her spirit" I actually wondered if the author was thinking of someone else. One or two good lines elevate this above one star.

Thenia says

A story with an interesting premise that somehow failed to engage me as much as I expected.

Victoria and David had been writing to each other as children, but the familiarity one would have expected between people who share that kind of history, was mostly lacking.

For reasons of their own that have nothing to do with affection, the two decide to marry, but David is determined to keep living his life as he has been, consumed by his business and political efforts. Victoria on the other hand strives to become the perfect wife to him, feeling guilty about the secret she's withholding

from him about the truth of her father's death, and goes out of her way to initiate his re-entry to society.

There is a slow burn between them as far as intimacy goes, as David follows her wishes and slowly familiarizes her, but all in all the two remain separate for the biggest part of the story and only solve their problems at the very end.

A little less than satisfying, yet with a few interesting elements, this is the first of three books in the series, which continues with *The Duke in Disguise*.

Fangirl Musings says

This book was a weird one for me. While I did finish the novel and somewhat enjoyed it, I found numerous issues that made the reading of this story somewhat difficult.

For starters, the hero of the story, David, was a bit difficult to understand. Essentially, he is a very stoic man, extremely rigid in his demeanor and not at all expressive at large. While I do love diverse character types, to some degree, I find characters that are given this personality can sometimes seem one dimensional. This was the issue with *The Lord Next Door*. While I eventually found myself liking this character, he was very difficult to connect or engage with.

I also found the heroine of this story, Victoria, a bit bland. For all her creativity and alleged passion in the book, she came off as being a bit dry. This was only accentuated by her "I-Must-Be-The-Perfect-Wife" syndrome/mentality throughout the book. Again, like with David, I found her to be somewhat one dimensional, and at times, dull.

My other issue with this novel deals with its structure. Aside from the fact that the ending was very obviously, and quite painfully, rushed, I also noticed the emotional scenes between any of the characters were very badly done. Sometimes they felt cliched and felt like hyperbole, and others they were rather rushed. The endearing words were used, but the phrasing occasionally felt awkward or stilted. This would not be so bad if this awkwardness were limited to just the main characters, for then it would be explained by their character types. Sadly, this occurred in several conversations among the book's sub-characters.

Ironically, after all the aforementioned criticisms, one would assume, especially after analyzing my track record with book's that disappoint, this book would have been tossed by the wayside 30 pages in. However, such was not the case, because I found myself rapidly interested in the developing relationship between Victoria and David. While sadly the book did not seem to satisfy my interest between these two individuals, it was not a complete waste of time.

I did enjoy a few aspects to this book. The fact that Callen decided to forgo the consummation of Victoria and David's wedding was an interesting change of pace. I find that sex is most definitely a very crucial turning point to a relationship, and by constructing the story in the manner Callen did, the book seemed to have more "meat," or content, to it.

Another facet I enjoyed was the unique spin this author took with such a story. I found myself rather interested in the fact that David was an industrialist, and this point did play a marginal (though forced) part to the plot. I do congratulate Callen, though, for managing to maintain my interest in the novel to complete the story. Typically, when a book irritates me past a certain level, I don't waste my time finishing it, and

when considering the issues I had with The Lord Next Door, it is very ironic that I completed this book.

Overall, it was not vastly enjoyable, but I did not walk away hating the book either.

Maddux says

This book really grabbed me. I didn't want to put it down.

I loved how this heroine WORKED for her marriage. She wanted it to succeed, and she put the work into it to see it happen.

Wonderful.

Sweet story.

4 stars.

Jen says

Really enjoyed it! Well done!

MaggieReadsRom says

The blurb sounded so promising but unfortunately the book did not quite live up to the promise.

Not that it was a bad book, just not very exciting or worldrocking, but still entertaining.

Secrets, misunderstanding and scandal rule their worlds but Victoria and David find each other in a nice average story. Their childhood fascination with each other, getting to know each other just by secret entries in a journal, grows into love despite all the scandals.

Scandals which are made bigger by themselves and which would weigh much less on their minds if they opened up earlier to each other.

But it's nice to read how Victoria's low selfconfidence is developed and strengthened by David's confidence in her and David's harsh exterior and behaviour changes when he marries Victoria.

The marriage starts as a means to an end for both of them but progresses to be strong and filled with their mutual love.

Despite the averageness of the book I'm still curious to learn the stories of Victoria's sisters, they will be told in book 2 and 3 of this trilogy and hopefully, the average start of book 1 will grow into stronger and better installements with the stories of Meriel and Louisa.

Suzanne (Under the Covers Book blog) says

Victoria is desperate. Her family is on the brink of poverty after her father's financial ruin and then death, she is barely holding the household together, and with a looming deadline for their eviction from her home she is running out of options. Her only option seems to be marriage, but her prospects have always been non-existent, now with no dowry or good name it seems even less likely. Until she remembers her childhood friend and next door neighbour who she had a secret correspondence with. Although he is only a cook's son, being a servant's wife is better than being homeless. However, Tom isn't quite who he said he was and instead he was David, Viscount Thurlow.

This is actually the second time I have read this book, I originally got it years ago and happened to find my copy of it on my kindle and decided to give it a reread. It was as I remembered, a pleasant read, with a plain Jane kind of heroine (something I love) and her romance with her much-changed and kind of angsty neighbour. It isn't a book that sticks out in the genre, which is probably why I had forgotten I had even read it, but it is a nice book to sit back and relax with.

The marriage between Victoria and David starts out pretty cold, but I love the way that their relationship gradually warms up as they get to know one another again and David begins to see Victoria as more than a convenient person to run his house. Victoria also shows a little personal growth as well, after taking on the responsibility for her family after her father's death she has gained more confidence, which gradually increases as she settles into being David's wife.

I haven't read the other books in this series yet, which go into Victoria's sisters lives, but I do plan to, The Lord Next Door was a nice start to the series and something I would recommend if you like plain Jane books or want something to relax with.

Lady Darcie Guenon says

Wow! David and Victoria are such great people that it was so sad to read about all the hardship that they had to deal with. This book shows how cruel people can be and how love can help turn that around. David was so sweet and I loved how they started writing to each other when they were just 10 (But Victoria didnt know she was writing to David she thought it was a cooks son named tom) what a great read!!
