

Chapter 1 : Passion and Pleasure in London - Avon Romance

PASSION AND PLEASURE IN LONDON has moments of anticipation, moments where I was anxious with uncertainty, and moments of hilarity. Most of all, it had romance between the two main characters and I could not have asked for a better story.

Outside London Summer Temptation came in many forms. The shine of a gold coin, the taste of fine whiskey. A fine woman with eyes the color of expensive dark chocolate. Rory Jameson knew temptation. And he liked chocolate. Buried in the smoke and noise surrounding him, Rory watched her, intrigued by the womanly shape her cloak failed to hide. Everything about her brought to mind a night of sin. Over the rim of a shot glass of smooth Irish whiskey, a smile slowly tugged at his mouth. He had finally found something worthy of his interest in this backwoods hamlet. Rory was a man who enjoyed his vices. And he had no intention of doing so. At least not tonight. A combination of luck and fortitude got him this far in a profession that fed its young into the gristmill just to see what came out on the other side. He relegated those thoughts to the back of his mind as he relaxed in his chair and felt it creak beneath his weight. He sat in the shadows near the opened window, his legs casually crossed at the ankles. Soft leather riding boots hugged his calves. Her hood slipped slightly to her shoulders revealing her profile and he wondered for a moment at her age. His eyes narrowed as he watched her exchange, her gloveless hands animated as she spoke, the movement of her lips drawing his eyes to her mouth. Arousal pressed against the fine black wool of his trousers, which he found damn hard to ignore. His mind noted that everything about her seemed out of place in this crowded public room filled with a medley of drunken men, footpads, and slatterns, yet no one accosted her. In fact, the burly barkeep currently eyed Rory, something of which he had just become aware. The air around him grew chilled. Amused by his interest in the local entertainment, Rory tipped back the shot of whiskey, liberating his conscience as he set the glass on the scarred table next to the half-empty bottle. He stood, removed a coin from his pocket, and flipped it into his shot glass. At two inches over six feet, he had to duck his head to avoid bumping the low-hanging gas lamp. And it was as novel as it was discomfiting. He wanted to know who she was. The mammoth rack of antlers above the oaken door seemed to frame the quiet drama of his exit in her mind as she stood hidden within the confining shadows of the storage room. She dropped the curtain, shocked as awareness of him shimmered through her veins like an electrical current. The man was a stranger, an outsider yet there had been something familiar about his lazy smile. And the race of her heart had nothing to do with the frantic reason that had brought her to this inn tonight. A solid thud of the door sounded behind Winter, and she turned to greet the older woman who stepped into the room. A soiled apron clung to Mrs. Winter had known both Derwoods her entire life, and always felt safe inside the walls of this inn. She is with Mrs. Father Flannigan had found her asleep atop the grave. Winter scraped a hand through her unbound hair. Tears suddenly filled her eyes. She disliked showing emotions and took great care to keep them walled most of the time. But tonight had been too close a call. Smythe could do with the company as her husband just recently passed. Besides, ye take too much on yerself. Derwood patted her like a babe and Winter laughed at the incongruous thought that it would be perfectly natural to burp. The baron would lock Mam away. She had never even danced a waltz in public. Please, I need to be getting back to Perry before he and Robert get into their usual mischief. Perry and Robert are in full character tonight. Derwood bustled out of the room. Barrels and crates filled the airless storage room. She touched a barrel as if it were an old friend. This place had been like a second home to her since her father died. Though on paper, Winter Ashburn might be the great-granddaughter of a duke, she never let herself think any more about how things used to be when her father was alive. She focused these days on how to keep her life running as smoothly as possible. Not a single high-minded elitist stepped forward to stop the baron from taking her beloved Everleigh. In her mind, aristocrats and nabobs--aristocrat wannabes--were notoriously worthless, and a wealthy reprobate might find his pockets considerably lighter before leaving the boundaries of this hamlet. And just that fast, her thoughts returned to the dark-haired stranger whose eyes had boldly assessed her in the pub. Maybe it was the music coming from the other room as the fiddler took up his bow and a jaunty tune drifted back to her. Like the shadow of a great bird slowly spreading its wings, the

stranger began to fill her thoughts. Or maybe he had been at the back of her mind all along. In persona, he embodied every aristocratic attribute she despised, but somehow she sensed he was not like the other gentlemen of her narrow acquaintance. But there was something familiar about him. Idly folding her arms beneath her cloak, she narrowed her attention to the white-washed livery and surrounding paddock. A full moon picked out the mist rising silently from the ground and the fleeting shadow of a spotted hound. Had the stranger already ridden out of the yard? An odd sense of loss fell over her. Derwood returned carrying a basket filled with goodies. Ye tell Master Perry and that scamp, Robert, I said so, mum. Derwood opened the back door to the crisp night air. Then hie yerself home. No good ever comes on a night with a full moon. She followed the familiar sound of laughter and discovered her brother with his friend behind the livery. He had been too young when their father died to remember the celebrated Ashburn stables. Her brother turned at her approach. Wearing a pirate eye-patch, Perry still managed to see the white basket in her hand first. He and his friend Robert were dressed in their swashbuckling costumes. They liked to leap from trees and terrorize the unsuspecting at the most inopportune time, sending animals and people screaming. Her errant brother already had to make restitution to Mrs. Perry ran to her and, with the instinct of a growing eleven-year-old, ferreted out the pie. Derwood had wrapped it. But then what was a little dirt to two rambunctious boys dressed up like Blackbeard and Henry Morgan? Robert displayed a coin. She had been teaching both boys their letters and had taught Robert especially to speak with better syntax and less verbiage. As if reading her mind, and ever conscious of her approval, Robert swallowed. Gisette offered to tup him for less than six pence and the chap turned her down flat. Suddenly the two boys were best friends again, planning how to spend their newly acquired wealth, her presence entirely forgotten in their gluttonous orgy as they discovered the roasted chicken in the basket. Anyone who had grown up within a hundred miles of London would know how to find Granbury Court, which meant the man who had inquired, was not from this part of England. I want you both to start home. When she turned in the doorway of the stable, she saw them walking toward the woods. She was not one to chase after the identity of any man, but neither was she content to live with a curiosity burning through her mind. Adjusting the hood of her cloak, she entered the stable. The pungent smell of straw, aged leather, and manure touched her senses. Oil lanterns hung from a post at each end provided dim light. She peered up and down the narrow aisle, listening, but heard no one present. Moving toward a bay stallion in the last stall, she kept to the shadows. The horse was a beauty with long legs, a full chest and glossy coat, a thoroughbred of stellar bloodstock. Whoever the stranger was, he knew horseflesh. This stud was worth more than most common people would ever see in a lifetime. The bridle and saddle boasted the highest craftsmanship. Wanting to get near the valise attached to the cantle, Winter eased cautiously into the stall all the while crooning softly.

Chapter 2 : Passion and Pleasure in London (Charmed and Dangerous) by Melody Thomas ()

"Passion and Pleasure in London" by Melody Thomas is just such a novel. It has a dastardly villain with a witchy daughter that both receive their well-deserved comeuppance at the hands of our hero and heroine who then live happily ever after.

Her latest mark is none other than Rory Jameson, the rake who dared mistake her for a lady of the evening. Winter has stolen from her fair share of scandalously handsome men in the past. He will make Winter repay what she took so shamelessly. But her kiss sets his soul on fire and now he will never be satisfied until he has made this alluring temptress his own. Customer Book Reviews Wow! By Bookworm on Sep 11, This read deserved much more than 5 stars. From the moment of their very first encounter on the first few pages of the book, I was completely wrapped up in this story. I enjoyed the dialogue and the wit between these two. I enjoyed the conflicts they each faced throughout the story and within themselves. But most of all, I loved the way he loved her. I think I fell a little bit in love with him myself. He is dark, he is dangerous, he is incredibly sexy and he is passionate about Winter. I also enjoy the way Melody Thomas writes a story. She does not bore with descriptive details but what little she does offer, and the way she does it, makes everything come alive. A very well written story. GREAT By Avid Reader on Sep 27, Another good book - sit back and enjoy from first page to the last, it kept my interest, well written and, well, other reviewers gave the story line, I will only repeat it was worth the purchase, worth the read 5 Bookmarks from Wild on Books! Forced to live frugally and in genteel poverty, this former toast of London has lost her love for the nobles with whom she used to socialize. When the only people who would help her were the tenants and the villagers, Winter decided then and there that she would not forget about their loyalty. And she is highly successful in this endeavor until the night a man is attacked and wounded. Bringing him to safety, Winter does her best to ensure his recovery. This is the night her life changes. Rory Jameson is a secret liaison for the British government. His missions over the years have brought many thieves to justice for the Crown yet he has taken a leave of absence. Someone wants Rory to die and they are willing to do anything to achieve that goal. The suspense and intrigue kept me on edge and more than once I found myself wanting to skip ahead to see what happened in the story. Rory and Winter were unlikely lovers but I think that is what made them so well matched. Most of all, it had romance between the two main characters and I could not have asked for a better story. Melody Thomas ups the bar on magnificence and I wish her all the books marks I have to give! However, outside of London he stops his work temporarily at the request of his sister to visit his estranged dying grandfather to make a final peace. On the trek to his family home someone attacks and wounds Rory. Former toast of the Ton Winter Ashburn takes the wounded aristocrat to a cottage so he can heal. Winter remembers Rory as the rake who thought she was a fallen woman. Still she is attracted to her patient and him to her. As they fall in love, Winter worries her actions could cost her mother and brother plenty as the family patriarch her odious Uncle wants the half gypsy dead. This is an engaging Victorian romantic suspense, which readers will enjoy from the first stolen kiss until the final kiss with a bit of a mystery and a lot of romance in between. The story line is character driven with a strong lead couple and a deep support cast. Harriet Klausner Plenty of passion but also plenty of pride and stubbornness too By Melissa on Oct 17, Sometimes a heroine is just a little too much for a little too long, a little too prideful, a little too angry, a little too stubborn, a little too guilty. Heroine Winter Asburn falls into this category. She has had a tough life, her father is dead, her mother suffers from dementia, she is raising her brother and a local orphan, she has been abused and she has lost her home to her evil doing uncle. She meets hero outsider Rory Jameson at the local Inn, kisses him and then steals his wallet. He follows her but is waylaid by robbers and shot. Feeling guilty, Winter nurses this man back to health but frets because her brother and his friend were at the scene of the crime. Rory likes the tart tongued Winter even though she is secretive and bristles whenever he is around. There is not a lot of background on Rory and I wished there had been a little more history other than his father and grandfather were not on good terms. Rory has a cousin who was in line for the title and who also had a tendre for Winter. His cousin is suspicious of Rory and equally suspicious is Rory of not only his cousin but also of the Baron who has land adjoining his grandfather. Could

one or both of them be behind his shooting? Winter and Rory begin an affair that was a little surprising from its inception because they make a conscious decision to become lovers rather than the two falling into a physical embrace and being overcome with passion. Winter has major trust issues, but her biggest obstacle is her anger and when she refuses a more honorable suit from Logan, he calls her on the carpet for her deep anger and cowardice. Winter has nursed her bitterness for years and is astounded that Rory recognizes and resents it, whereas the villagers rather embraced her past hurts. It is this last third of the novel, which really kept me interested in this woman. Rory was kind, generous, but also not very informative with the heroine about his past. He had trust issues too. Finally, there is a mystery in this novel as to who would want Rory dead. I have to admit I almost forgot about that angle of the story and when the person is revealed I was a bit startled. It took a long time for me to become really interested in these characters and the plot, mainly because Winter always had the same reaction around Rory of irritation and distrust, then a kiss or two then back to her not liking him. Enjoyable Read By Retsmile on Sep 28, This was an enjoyable read for me but I thought it could have been great with a little more polish. I felt as though there were some parts that were disjointed and other parts not fully explained - e. The ending was just not tied in well to the happenings of the story. It was just a bit jumbled for me. Maybe less focus on descriptive details and more on explanations Maybe a better editor would have helped with the polish. Note to editor - p. Both lead characters are well developed and you get a good sense that their relationship lead gently to them getting together. Most romance books trip over each other and instantly are in love. Rory and Winter were forces that countered balanced one another. My only disappointment was they really glossed over Rory background concerning his parents. A page or two would not have been remiss. This is a keeper. Review By Lisa Jagmohan on May 23, Good read Mrs Thomas is excellent at taking us to a different world I would read this one again and again Somewhat disjointed historical romance By Helen Hancox on Dec 08, When Winter Ashburn finds herself talking to a toff in a stable whilst pilfering from his saddlebags, little does she realise that a few hours later she will be nursing him back to health from a serious head wound. Rory Jameson, the rake who is also the Earl of Huntington, is planning to pay a short visit to his grandfather and then get on with life. But Rory and Winter have some kind of connection and Rory finds himself drawn into helping renew the estate, as well as seeing more of Winter. But there are people about who have nefarious plans, there are secrets from the past and someone may be trying to stop Rory. This book was an oddly disjointed read with the narrative flow rather lacking. The title seems rather a misnomer as the story took place in a small village near Henley and not in London and our characters regularly spoke American rather than the English of the s. Over and over again. The Momentous Event was flogged to death. Do something besides talk about being waylaid and the implications of said waylay, I felt like telling everyone. Add a Book Review Book Summary: This particular edition is in a Mass Market Paperback format. It was published by Avon and has a total of pages in the book. To buy this book at the lowest price, Click Here.

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