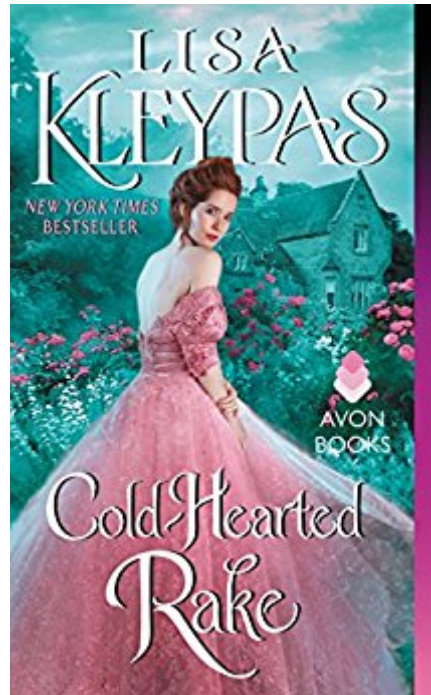


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Cold-Hearted Rake



Synopsis

Lisa Kleypas is back with a stunning new historical romance! Readers have long waited for the return of New York Times bestselling author Lisa Kleypas to historical romance—and now she's back with her most breathtaking yet. A twist of fate . . . Devon Ravenel, London's most wickedly charming rake, has just inherited an earldom. But his powerful new rank in society comes with unwanted responsibilities . . . and more than a few surprises. His estate is saddled with debt, and the late earl's three innocent sisters are still occupying the house . . . along with Kathleen, Lady Trenear, a beautiful young widow whose sharp wit and determination are a match for Devon's own. A clash of wills . . . Kathleen knows better than to trust a ruthless scoundrel like Devon. But the fiery attraction between them is impossible to deny—and from the first moment Devon holds her in his arms, he vows to do whatever it takes to possess her. As Kathleen finds herself yielding to his skillfully erotic seduction, only one question remains: Can she keep from surrendering her heart to the most dangerous man she's ever known?

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Customer Reviews

Of all the reviews I've seen so far, even the raving ones present a negative image of the heroine.

Since I've never been much for giving into the peer pressure, I thought it was time someone spoke up for the heroine. Let it be me. I won't pretend she was an easy character to like because she wasn't. But, my respect and admiration for her grew along with the progress of the story. From the beginning, she made no secret of her conviction that the way to deal with the insolvent earldom was to restore the estate to prosperity, not sell it off piece by piece. She was going to take responsibility for her three young sisters-in-law, despite having no legal or moral obligation to do so and, given the state of her jointure, limited funds to support them. Out of context, it might seem fitting for an earl's widow to tackle all these issues. But, considering that her supposed love-match of a marriage lasted three days and culminated with her husband's fatal accident, for which she blames herself, a lesser woman would have been glad to leave the place at the first opportunity and never look back. Combined with a ton of baggage (childhood abandonment issues, anyone?), it's no wonder she's barely holding up under the strain. She was right to worry about her future. Her first meeting with the new earl proves that he's the embodiment of her worst nightmare: a man cut from the same cloth as her late husband, who is bound to do more damage than good to the estate, to the sisters, and to her personally. If she did not keep the distance between them, or relinquished control of their relationship too soon, by the end of the story, she would have wound up exactly where she thought she would: in a cottage with a parting gift for an affair and no reputation to speak of.

I'm not sure if taking 5 years off from writing historical romances was such a good idea for Kleypas. Reading this makes me feel that she has had so many ideas percolating in her head for all that time that she couldn't decide what to concentrate on for this new book and just threw everything in. We don't have the proverbial 'kitchen sink' in this, but there is the retrofitting of an old house for indoor plumbing. There are too many people here and all are given short shrift in character development and there are too many little extras and period trivia that divert the reader from the main romance(s). We are treated to bits on mourning and mourning clothes and black dyes; tenants and estate management; horse training; department stores in the 1870s; differences between store-bought and tailored clothing (especially shirts); orchid growing; railroad travel; Christmas decorating; and more and more and more. It's as if Kleypas had been doing lots and lots of research on the period during her hiatus and wanted to include as much of her info as she could. Well, some readers do complain about the lack of historical accuracy in HRs but there is limit to the amount of factoids I want in a romance. What we don't get enough of is insight into the characters and their lives prior to the beginning of the book. For example, I am left totally bewildered by the three Ravenel young women and their absurdly sheltered lives (not to mention agog at the 19-year-old Tedious Twins who

behave as if they were 9). And nobody's cold-hearted here, but nobody warms my heart either. The hero and his brother, who were rather useless hedonists before the hero inherits the earldom from the heroine's late husband, obviously were actually good souls.

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