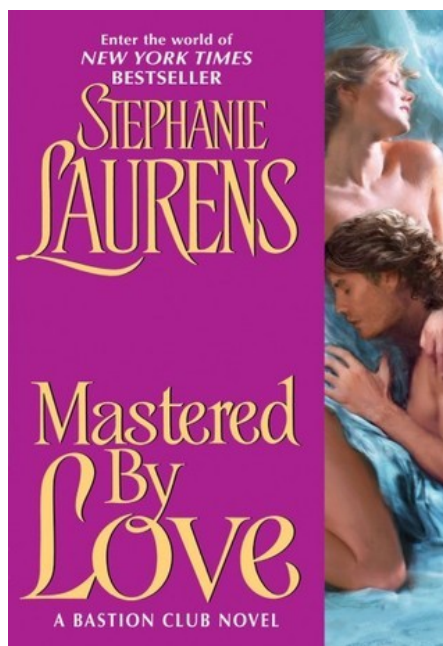




Mastered By Love

Stephanie Laurens

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The men of the Bastion Club proved their bravery secretly fighting for their country. Now their leader faces that most dangerous mission of all: finding a bride.

As the mysterious leader of the Bastion Club known as "Dalziel," Royce Varisey, tenth Duke of Wolverstone, served his country for decades, facing dangers untold. But as the holder of one of England's most august noble titles, he must now take on that gravest duty of all: marriage.

Yet the young ladies the grand dames would have him consider are predictably boring. Far more tempting is his castle's willful and determinedly aloof chatelaine, Minerva Chesterton. Beneath her serene façade lies a woman of smoldering sensuality, one who will fill his days with comfort and his nights with sheer pleasure. Determined to claim her, he embarks on a seduction to prove his mastery over every inch of her body . . . and every piece of her heart.

Mastered By Love Details

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Download and Read Free Online Mastered By Love Stephanie Laurens

From Reader Review Mastered By Love for online ebook

Penny Watson says

Review for Mastered by Love by Stephanie Laurens

(ETA: I read this and reviewed it on my blog in August 2009. For some reason, I did not post this review at Goodreads. This review is way harsh, since I was horribly disappointed. But I would like to add that I still adore SL as an author, although this is definitely not her best work).....

Nooooooooooooo! Why, Stephanie, why?????

OK, to say that I am massively disappointed by this book would be an understatement. I have enjoyed the Bastion Club series quite a bit, although the last one (The Edge of Desire) was not my favorite, and some of them have felt repetitive, not unlike the Cynster series. However, Dalziel, the head of the spy organization in this series, was a really cool character. Dark, mysterious, brilliant, loyal. I was super excited for this final installment of the series. Finally, Laurens has a character she can really sink her writing chops into. Develop a cool story line with intrigue and danger. Create an amazing heroine who can match Dalziel with her intensity and cleverness. Did Laurens do these things?? Nooooooooooooo!

Here are the reasons this book is in dire wall banger territory....

First of all, I realize that Laurens is recycling the same story and the same alpha male characters over and over again, but this time it has gone too far for me. A Fine Passion dealt with the exact same theme....father dying, coming home to take over the family estate, heroine already there running the show, etc. etc. I mean, come on!!!! With Dalziel's history, could Laurens not come up with something a little more interesting or original for a story? Jesus H. Canola. Also, right from the onset of this book, Dalziel comes off as a jerk. He wants to bed Minerva (whose name sounds like a shrivelled up ninety year old grandmother!) to "slake his terrible temper"????? What the....? He basically is a horny, self-absorbed ass. This is the incredible character who has saved countless lives, sacrificed so much for his men and country? I am so not buying this.

Also, reading Laurens' sex scenes is like chewing on a hunk of cardboard. Tasteless and boring. I just skip over them, frankly. They are all exactly the same, nothing original or sexy whatsoever. If the sex scenes in a romance novel are not sexy, this is basically the kiss o' death for the book. There is absolutely no spark, no chemistry here at all. It's pathetic. Dalziel is supposed to be so masterful, brooding, dark....should be easy to project these qualities into a sex scene, but it is not happening.

The worst disappointment is the story line. And it had so much potential. Laurens could have developed a dark and dangerous plot for this amazing character, but instead she plucked one of the most boring plots known to mankind. His dad died and he has to take over the dukedom. Some days he checks out bridges that need to be repaired. Some days, cottages that need to be repaired. Oh My God! This is the master spy leader!!!!!! And Minerva is no better. A competent chatelaine??? Great, wake me when it's over.....

And the unknown traitor!!! We have been waiting to discover his identity for so long....and he turns out to be a cuckoo cousin of Dalziel who is completely psychotic and babbling. What a bunch of horse shite. There is no way that this babbling buffoon would have been brilliant enough to avoid discovery during the war. And the worse part? Does Dalziel get to save the day? Nooooo.....Minvera, chatelaine extraordinaire, whips a knife out (which she just happens to have strapped to her thigh during her wedding day!!!!) and takes him out while Dalziel stands there. Criminy. I am close to freaking speechless, and as you know, that is a rare occurrence in Penelope land.

I am most flabbergasted that many people think this book is good. I seriously cannot fathom it. I am usually pretty forgiving with my reviews and grades (grade inflation is alive and well at Penelope's!), but this one is too disappointing for me. Stephanie Laurens had the potential for something very cool here, and she totally blew it. Since my worst grade is a C, that's what it's getting. I will no longer shell out the big bucks for her hardcovers, and I'm hoping that her new series (The Black Cobra Quartet) will pump a little bit of life back into her books. But I'm not holding my breath. I am keeping Stephanie on my favorite author list since I still adore her older books, both the Cynster series and the original Bastion Club series. Oh please, please Stephanie....I hope you recapture the old magic again! Sigh.

Grade: C

A Very Sad Penelope

Julie (jjmachshev) says

From Stephanie Laurens first 'Bastion Club' novel, I've been fascinated by Dalziel. Finally, in "Mastered By Love", I get his story and it's a doozy. Why and how he became a 'shadow' in society and head of the British spies makes for a wonderful read and the woman he falls for is not at all what he expected. And for Cynster fans, Devil makes a few appearances!

Minerva has been the chatelaine of Wolverstone Castle for many years now. Informally adopted by the Duke's family after the death of her parents and raised with all the privileges of their name and family, she's never forgotten what she feels she 'owes' them. She was always fascinated by the heir, Royce, and her life lost color after his banishment. But deathbed promises are no small matter, and Minerva promised BOTH of Royce's parents (at separate times) to stay and help Royce settle into the Dukedom after his long absence. Of course, one of his first tasks MUST be to ensure the succession and once he marries, Minerva plans to leave. If she can only keep her heart safe until then!

Royce...how strange to use that name again after all this time. But oh, this is NOT how he imagined returning home would be. His plans were already made, but his father's sudden death means his learning curve will be steep and painful. How could he have forgotten Minerva? Well, in his defense, he doesn't remember her looking like THIS! But he knows his duty and it's to marry some cold, dutiful peeress who will breed his heir and a spare and then live their own life without bothering him. But after seeing his Bastion Club operatives find love and happiness, why does this plan seem so wrong? And even if he changes his mind, can he convince Minerva? And don't forget, there's still that last traitor to catch!

If you enjoy Laurens' writing style, you'll love "Mastered By Love". She does tend to be a bit wordy (!), but I still mainline her books as soon as they're released. This one may not be my favorite Bastion Club book, but it's close. Royce is such a complicated character and his relationship with Minerva is every bit of everything he had coming. Their attraction and the dilemma of tradition resonate on every page. Laurens can write breath-taking love scenes, if a bit long, but then again, sometimes longer is better, eh?

I was a bit disappointed with the sideline story of the last traitor. For something that played so largely in earlier books, it seemed a bit of a sidenote here. The majority of the book is ALL about Royce and Minerva and the danger of the traitor is really only expressed towards the very end and wrapped up fairly quickly. Dalziel/Royce's 'wooing' is not to be missed and even with its quirks, this book will go on my keeper shelf with the rest of the Bastion Club series.

Chitra *CJ* says

"Mastered by Love" is the story of Dalziel aka Royce and Minerva.

When at last the leader of Bastion club, Royce Dalziel Varisey, 10th Duke of Wolverstone, returns home after years of fighting for his country- he does not expect that he'd be faced with Dukedom due to his father's passing, or that he would find himself violently attracted to his determinedly aloof chatelaine, Minerva Chesterton.

Initially thinking that the attraction is one sided, he watches her from afar while learning to take control of his land and people- however a kiss changes equation and he sets out to seduce the lady whom he initially wanted as his mistress, but soon knows would make the perfect wife.

What a fantastic end to this series.

The serious and brooding Dalziel found his perfect soulmate in the strong and determined Minerva, who matched his passions as well as sense of determination.

The couple was well suited, very high on sex drive and it was fun to read their inventive lovemaking scenes. Emotionally, both opened up quickly and I liked Royce's determined pursuit of Minerva, and her ability to return the feelings truthfully.

There was a subplot involving a spy and a family traitor, and a lot of matrons/meddling sisters/Devil shows up too- but all added to make this an entertaining read.

SWE (view spoiler)

4.25/5

Katherine ??? says

Buku ini mengecewakan sekaligus membuat saya gila krn terbakar. Penasaran knp saya bilang terbakar? Selama pengalaman saya membaca HR walau yg bergenre HR erotica, gak ada yg sebanyak di buku ini semua gaya berhubungan intim dikupas scr detil.

Sayangnya "panasnya" itu tidak diimbangi dgn perkembangan plot cerita maupun karakternya. Alur cerita super lambat dan datar, repetisi sudah gak terhitung (saya sering skip-skip bacanya). Mana tebal banget bukunya, tapi tanpa pd intinya cerita bergulir. Sudah gitu, musuh antagonist nya muncul spt cameo. Gak jelas knp, mengapa, apa sebab dia memusuhi Royce. Sbg seri terakhir Club Bastion, saya mengharapkan Royce Varisey aka Duke Wolverstone menawarkan sesuatu yg unik dan jauh lebih menarik drpd yg sblmnya. Yah, apa boleh buat saya cuma disajikan adegan seksual bab demi bab plus narasi inkonsistensi dari Minerva, sbg heroine yg paling sok jual mahal (tetapi sekaligus paling murahan dlm menyodorkan tubuhnya).

Saya tidak suka jika seorang heroine dideskripsikan "saya tidak akan menyerah pada pesona si Duke. Saya akan melawan dll dsb". Eh blm ganti bab, disosor, dicium, digerayangi langsung menyerah pada nafsu birahi. Konyolnya lagi setelah ber-ranjang ria, selalu saja bilang bhw hal ini tidak mengubah apapun. Saya tetap tidak mau dinikahi dsb (Hello!!! Ini novel HR loh. Zaman Regency. Loe gak dinikahi dan sudah diperawani, gak gila saja sudah hrs bersyukur).

Utk si Royce, saya juga gak bisa berkomentar banyak. Tadinya saya pikir dia bakal jadi hero tercerdas di serial ini. Tahu-tahunya kagak juga. Kelebihan Royce cuma pada kejantanannya yg super besar dan teknik bercinta yg super piawai saja. Chemistry pasangan ini juga seperti dijodohkan rada maksa. Saya malah mendapat kesan Royce ini pria pemalas utk mencari dan mengenal calon istri. Drpd susah-susah dan ribet, lebih baik menyambar si Minerva saja yang sudah ada, tersedia dan bersedia. Cukup sekian review omelan

saya.

Kaetrin says

I picked up the Australian release (which I thought had a nicer cover but I couldn't find a picture during my browsing so this is the one you get) at Target when I was away and was pleasantly surprised by this one. The last few offerings from Laurens have been a bit ho-hum for me. Too much saying the same thing. In different ways. In short sentences. Over and over. Again. Repetitively. Maybe I'd had just enough of a break between her stories to enjoy this one. No, on second thought, this was just a better book. I liked it so much better than the previous few I'd read (including the 2 of the Black Cobra books I listened to on audio). It wasn't quite a return to the heights of Devil's Bride but it was up there. Thinking back, the other books I've read of hers lately all had the trope where the hero didn't want to admit his feelings to his lady because of some lame and weirdass belief that would make him somehow vulnerable. Frankly, I'm over that as a plot device (if I ever bought into it). Refreshingly, this one is where the family history is that the Varisey's don't love - aren't capable of it (Oh noes! I'm channelling Laurens!). And, while that's (of course), a load of old cobblers, the hero believed it and so did everyone else in the book's world and it wasn't that he didn't want to or couldn't admit it once he recognised it. So, extra points for that. I quite liked Royce and Minerva and I really enjoyed this book. B

Katie(babs) says

The former leader of the Bastion Club, Dalziel, has returned to his childhood home after the death of his father. Dalziel is the new Duke of Wolverstone and has been estranged from his family for sixteen long years. When he discovers Minerva Chesterton residing at Wolverstone castle as its chatelaine, he is pleasantly surprised. He barely remembers Minerva as the young girl who used to follow him around. Now she is an attractive and intelligent woman and one Royce would like to get to know better.

Minerva will not be romanced by the likes of Royce. She is very much out of his league and he must marry an established woman that can run his household. Yet, Royce thinks Minerva would be perfect as his wife despite the fact that she runs from him at every turn. Royce will not be denied. He is use to getting what he wants and he wants Minerva. When it comes to a man like Royce, former spymaster, Minerva won't be able to keep Royce from seducing her into his bed.

Mastered by Love is the final book in Stephanie Laurens Bastion Club series. I was anxiously awaiting Dalziel's story because he was such a mystery in the previous books of this series. Dalziel is a typical Laurens hero, the kind of hero her readers have always enjoyed, but after so many books they seem to have a strange sense of déjà vu, I would have to say that Mastered By Love was a big disappointment. The majority of this book is very cut and dry with the reader being privy to Royce's internal musings about his angst over his father and his desires to get under Minerva's skirts. Again, this has a strange sense of been there, done that.

Minerva is a spunky character who is very much Royce's equal. She acts as a proper young woman of her station but the moment Royce's smoldering eyes touch her body, she is lost in his spell. We have seen this before in a Laurens' novel; the heroine will fight tooth and nail to deny the hero, and after many long winded scenes of kissing and touching that go on for countless pages, the heroine finally succumbs to the touch of the lusty hero.

Once upon a time I found Stephanie Lauren's writing and books to be some of the most luscious reads on the market. Mastered By Love is a very pale comparison to what was once great writing by an author who made historical romance the best it could be.

Those who are still fans of Laurens will probably not mind the long winded paragraphs of internal dialogue and longing from both the hero and heroine. I for one could not keep an interest and was close to not finishing.

Maura says

All in all, I wasn't that disappointed in the conclusion of the Bastion Club Series. Part relief that it's finally over and part satisfaction in Dalziel (Royce's) personality. Of course, there were some minor disappointments and those lovely cliches that I'm not terribly fond of - Royce fits one...the guy who was brought up to believe that he is genetically incapable of love and so resists promising love to the woman that he actually does love. If that makes sense. And of course, we're back to the Bastion formula. And honestly, after what I perceived to be the disaster of the last book, which broke formula, I was rather relieved to be back to it.

So Dalziel, at last, is the last member of the Bastion Club who needs to marry. He comes home and encounters his chatelaine, Minerva, who he knew when he was growing up and before he was exiled. He has some instant hots for her, but she's really good at hiding her hots for him. And so it goes for about 20% with no chemistry or anything. Then, he discovers her passion for him and it's non-stop sex from there on out. But he has to convince her to marry him...which following formula, is not going to be an easy task. In fact, I'm fairly certain that this exact same plot was lived out by different characters in a previous Bastion book. Because Royce finally gets Minerva but then realizes by having her in his bed it is now 10x more difficult to convince her to marry him. Perhaps I liked that book and that is why I'm okay with the repetition. And of course, there's still the identity of the *last traitor* to be discovered.

So I know we were always told that Dalziel/Royce was dangerous and bad ass. It was a bit disappointing to realize that it wasn't danger so much as it's just a vicious temper and a tendency to stomp about. Still, he was pretty delightfully broody and I kind of liked it that way instead. Minerva was pretty decent too, given that she is nearly identical in form to all the other Bastion heroines. I am a little confused though how the daughter of a Lieutenant is considered well-born enough to marry a Duke. Then I was also a bit disappointed by the *last traitor*. Turns out (view spoiler) So that was disappointing. I was also disappointed in the lack of reveal of (view spoiler) So despite having read this book already but with different characters, I guess I still kind of liked it. Maybe it was broody Dalziel that I really liked.

Travelover says

I adored MASTERED BY LOVE. A 10+. This is a man who sacrificed a major portion of his life for love of country. That is remarkable for anyone to do! He deserved to be happy at the end. I think the cover is romantic & sensual, & the epitomy of what Dalziel/Royce would look like - Stephanie Laurens repeatedly told us he looked younger than his age - that he had dark eyes, dark wavy hair and a fierce temper he controlled in public. He wanted to be more than what historically had been for members of his family - he wanted love, he wanted to give love. He was determined to make a difference - to take care of his people and make better lives for them. I didn't want the book to be devoted to the traitor - I wanted it to be devoted to Dalziel/Royce - and it was! I wanted to know what he gave up and how he dealt with it while he "hid away"

in plain sight - and Laurens delivered. We learned how ducal homes operated at that time in history and how he set out to change things - to "modernize". He was a true Renaissance man. Minerva was his equal in every way - in bed and out. And they had some of the hottest love scenes I've ever read. Well done. I would love to see more of their romance in follow up books - not just "visits" - but MORE of their lives together with whatever children they may have. Frankly, I couldn't put the book down, I've re-read it several times. And I love Stephanie Laurens VERBAGE. Too often the English language is butchered and scenes are rushed by other authors. But she excels at setting up a scene and how a character thinks and feels. I highly recommend the book.

DemetraP says

I've been working my way through the Bastion Club series by Stephanie Laurens. The basic plot is the hero of each book finds the woman he's head over heels in love with and wants to marry, then convinces the woman she should marry him.

With these books you get a historical romance with crazy in love heroes who don't even look at another woman.

I just finished the last book, book #8, Mastered by Love, and it was the best by far of the series. Each of the Bastion Club members worked as a spy during the war with Napoleon. Their commander, Dalziel, has been very mysterious and never even told them his real name throughout the previous 7 books.

So I was eagerly awaiting the commander Dalziel's book while reading the earlier 7 books. I love a mysterious, dangerous hero.

I loved Mastered by Love. There was such emotion in this book. The hero was dealing with ending his military career and going back to his "civilian" life.

The heroine was very strong and I loved how she stood up to him and even manipulated him a few times (he knew she was doing it but admired the attempt)

I just loved their romance. It was fun, it was hot, and you spend a lot of time in the hero's point of view so it was great to hear what he was thinking about her. It was also great to have a heroine resist the hero and not just immediately fall into bed with him.

I really enjoyed this series. I read a lot of historical romances and this book, Mastered by Love, ranks toward the top.

I did like the earlier books in the series but the final book with Dalziel is my favorite of the Bastion Club series.

Jenny E says

This was the second book I tried to get through by this really popular author... I haven't been able to finish either completely. I read 13 chapters of this one and then skimmed the rest. It's so weird. I just cannot understand her popularity. Her writing style is super annoying to me - with lots of phrases - within phrases -

that don't really add to the sentence - within the same loooong sentence, and I have to reread because I get lost within a phrase within a phrase...and don't get me started on the commas!! Plus, the H/h was poetic about the same damn thing numerous times, and they're not very much dialogue. These books could be 100+ pages shorter.

Anyway, this author is not for me. I just never have read a romance novel where the actual writing style annoys, but she has a lot of popular books, so obviously it must be my issue!

LaFleurBleue says

Luckily I knew from another review not to expect much regarding the last traitor's subplot. Even with the warning, I was surprised at how this subplot was handled. It did not feel right at all - the bright and evil genius turned suddenly into a crazed maniac. That was way too easy as a way out and not worthy of either opponents.

However the almost entirety of the book dealt with the romance between Royce and Minerva, Royce's coming to grips with his inheritance, with the truth of his failed relationship with his parents and family, and with him trying to define from scratch his future life. There were a few very moving moments with much deeper and darker emotions filling him in that what Stephanie Laurens usually writes about. And to my surprise, those darker thoughts worked really well and felt real.

Their romance has nothing really new in terms of story line, but for me, it just worked out right and I really could feel the growing feelings each felt for the other.

Last qualms - this book could have done without the melodramatic swansong on the last traitor and I would also have appreciated less interventions from the awful haughty pretentious Letitia, that I hated so much in her previous book and hoped never to see again, just to stumble across her over and over again.

Olga says

Me ha encantado el libro, es como esperaba que fuera la historia de Amor de Dalzie jejeje, Minerva me ha conquistado con se mezcla de saber hacer y su fogosidad!!!!.... me he derritado con sus escenas de amor y hasta me he reido con algunas partes del libro... un verdadero 10 a este libro... LO RECOMIENDO!!!!

Monique Takens says

Quote page 368 Piatkus publication - No ! No , no , no , no - how could this have happened ?

There were no proofreaders , friends , family or an editor who told S. Laurens that this would just not do as the last and very anticipated book of the Bastion club series ?? Unbelievable !!

jenjn79 says

There were some parts of this book that I really enjoyed, but on the whole, I found it to be a rather

disappointing conclusion to a pretty good series. It ended up being nothing like I thought it would be and nowhere near as engaging as the past book in the series.

Series note: I hesitate to say that this book could possibly be read on its own. The story does deal with past events of the series and utilizes past characters, but the plot and romance itself are pretty self-sufficient. So I think a reader could probably read it as a stand-alone and not miss too much. But...saying that...to fully understand everything you'd want to start back at the beginning.

Mastered By Love, eighth book in the Bastion Club series, is the long awaited story featuring the mysterious Dalziel, aka Royce Varisey. Royce was the only son of a large dukedom, but then he decided to work for the government, managing a network of spies. It went against everything his father believed in and so he all but disowned Royce. Royce defaulted to an alternate identity, Dalziel and worked for many long years helping to defeat France and Napoleon. In that time, he's had no contact with his former life. And now, just as he's resigned his commission and made plans to talk to his father, he finds out that his father has died suddenly, leaving Royce the new Duke.

He travels to his ancestral home to assume the reigns...and finds himself a bit out of his league. He's been gone so long, been apart from social norms, that's he's struggling to fit back in. His chatelaine, Minervera, who he's known since childhood, is a huge help in settling him in. And she has also unknowingly sparked Royce's lust.

It soon becomes apparent that Royce will have to marry sooner rather than later in order to secure the dukedom. And the only woman that draws him is Minerva. He'd planned to follow in his father's footsteps by marrying a proper lady then taking a mistress, but Minerva has him thinking otherwise. She's making him feel things he's never felt before. Only now that's he's made up his mind on what he intends to do, he has to convince Minerva that it's what she wants as well.

I've been waiting to read Dalziel's - Royce's - story since I first started reading this series. Who was he? Why was his identity such a secret? Who was the last traitor? How would it all work out? I was dying to answer all those questions. Royce was just so interesting and I wanted to know more about him.

Well, I got the answers to the questions, but the story left me wanting. It wasn't anything like I expected or hoped for. Mostly it was rather drab, boring and repetitive.

This series, up to this point, has fallen more into the Historical Romantic Suspense category than pure Historical Romance. Each story has had a romance as well as a suspense plot typically dealing with ferreting out a government traitor. The stories were engaging, multi-focused, and romantic. I really enjoyed that the books were that way.

This book had only the romance going for it. Which is the biggest reason I found it disappointing. Coming into this book, there was one last aspect of the suspense element of the series that needed to be addressed: who was the final traitor? So I was thinking, expecting, that this book would be about Royce tracking down the last traitor and meeting his soulmate along the way, as well as assuming his rightful place in society.

Well, I was wrong to expect that. The whole traitor thing was mostly just a minor detail of the book. It hardly got any attention at all and was more of a sidenote than anything else. For something that was such a huge deal throughout the series, it was really weird and dumb to have it reduced to almost nothing. And because of that, the book had almost no suspense element at all. There was a smidge, but not enough to give the book that "what will happen next?" feel. I just found that so disappointing. I wanted a lot more out of this part of the story.

Aside from that, I found the book to be rather wordy and too full of narrative at times. Not enough dialogue

and interaction. I got bored reading pages of long paragraphs.

The sex scenes were rather steamy and some might say bordering on explicit. Which was a plus, in my opinion ;) But they were also rather numerous. Once Royce and Minerva do the deed for the first time, it seems to be all they do. After the first few times I started skimming the scenes because it got boring and repetitive.

Even so, I enjoyed the romance between Royce and Minerva. Like the other heroines in the series, Minerva was a strong, feisty girl and not some silly simpering miss of the time. Her interactions with Royce were enjoyable to read and reading how the two slipped into love was great. Their personalities worked well together.

Really, that (the romance) was the only part of the book that mostly worked for me. Everything else came up lacking. I had been looking forward to this book so much...and to get this? Just a total and complete disappointment. If I read this book as a stand-alone, without having read the past books in the series, I'd have probably liked it a lot more. Maybe given it 3.5 stars. But having read the past books, and having come into it with a lot of expectations that in the end were not met, I can only give it two stars.

Maria says

The first half of the book was well-written and intriguing. Then we get to the sex scenes, which I skip. I skipped so many pages in the next third of the book that I felt there was little in them. The last part of the book again became intriguing. I guess my main problem with it was the application of 20th-21st century morals to early 19th century settings. Ms Laurens is not the only author to succumb to this mistake. Many authors do it. However, I would like to point out that it wasn't until the 1960's that birth control (reliable birth control, that is) was commonly available and allowed women the freedom of premarital sex. Although I'm sure there must have been instances in the early 18th century given the nature of hormones, I refuse to believe that women didn't worry incessantly and try to reduce the frequency of contact for their own self-preservation. That aspect is never touched on, and this book was no different in that respect. Also, I had looked forward to Dalziel's story through the other Bastion books, only to find that the character of Dalziel was nothing like what I had expected. He was not as omnipotent and Machiavellian in this book. Instead the honors go to Minerva. Needless to say, I was a little disappointed, but I still felt this book was the best of the series. The character of Minerva was more than delightful. She is a woman of accomplishment and understanding who rarely sets a foot wrong.
