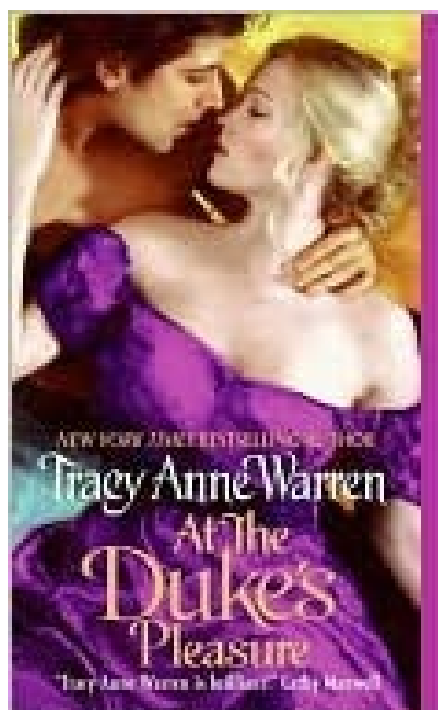




At the Duke's Pleasure

Tracy Anne Warren

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At the Duke's Pleasure Tracy Anne Warren

All the Byrons are just as "mad, bad, and dangerous to know" as their famous non-relation . . . but now the time has come for the eldest son to marry . . .

Edward Byron, Duke of Clybourne, has everything a man in Society needs . . . except a wife. Duty requires he wed, so he decides that a long-standing arranged marriage will do nicely. He knows his bride is beautiful, biddable, and bright enough to run his household and nursery. He expects his betrothed, Lady Claire Marsden, will be thrilled with his decision—unfortunately, she's not!

Claire has longed for Edward since she was sixteen, but how can he expect her to agree to his proposal when he barely knows her and doesn't love her? Nothing will convince her to accept a loveless marriage. And so she begins a battle of outrageous resistance, forcing Edward to learn that he must lose his heart in order to win his bride.

At the Duke's Pleasure Details

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From Reader Review At the Duke's Pleasure for online ebook

Gail says

Nice historical romance. The hero decides to take up the betrothal his father contracted for him when he was 11, and is startled when his supposed fiancée declines to marry him. After all, he's a duke. Who wouldn't want to marry him? The heroine doesn't want to marry anyone who is merely marrying her because he has a duty to marry and doesn't have to exert any effort to claim her, which is exactly why the hero has turned up. But he's determined and her father is determined, and she finds herself bundled off to London to experience a bit of the Season before the wedding. Except she is still determined not to marry him, so she does her best to give him a dislike of her big enough to get him to break things off. It's a good read, thoroughly entertaining. I liked it a lot.

Jenny says

I don't know how to rate this. Heroine did a lot of stupid things and she was really immature but unlike other readers I didn't think she was a bitch. I'm convinced Tracy Anne Warren can not write a hateful heroine. The second half of the book was better. Hero saved her from rape, she confessed her love and they got married but once again heroine's jealousy and insecurity almost had them killed. Well never a boring time with this heroine!

I love the Byron family. Glad she writes more books about them!

♥?elody says

3.5 stars

Edward Duke of Clybourne is the eldest of the Byron siblings and has finally decided to get married to his chosen bride since childhood, Claire Marsden. Claire has secretly been in love with Edward for years since she met her husband-to-be as a child. Unfortunately by the time Edward has decided to call upon her to get married, Claire is no longer interested, refusing to marry out of obligation and duty and wishing for something more, love.

This was a struggle to get through and mostly because of the overall dragged-out plot and the heroine's main reservations for marrying Edward. My biggest problem that I can't wrap my brain around no matter how hard I try is the fact that Claire let one singular encounter she had with Edward when she was sixteen shape her entire decision and form her resolve on not marrying him. I thought it was ridiculous and incredibly lame. Now if it was some life-altering cruel incident then I could understand but this was just stupid. When she was sixteen, she overheard Edward telling a lady friend how he does not want to get married (at the time him being 27 years old) and Claire is just a child in his eyes (which is the truth). Her heart is broken and she quickly decides that she will never marry him cause he doesn't love her.... and apparently never will. Cause g-d forbid the man had the nerve to not want to get married or love a girl he barely knows at the time which equates to him NEVER being able to love Claire. *crickets* The logic is so ass backwards and asinine that I don't understand why Warren chose this as the overall 'conflict' for the couple. Come on! Yes for a young girl it would make sense to be heartbroken but to use that ONE incident and let it shape her entire opinion of him (and it clearly did) and be dead set against marrying him years later because of it I thought was

unreasonable and such a poor wishy washy justification to be honest. I was waiting for someone to clue in the poor girl that men DO change their minds and learn things as they get older. She clearly had a lot of growing up to do cause that was one of many things she had no notion of which I couldn't understand and found a little unrealistic.

I wanted to like Claire and understand her but she made it really hard through most of the book. To be blunt, for someone so naïve and innocent she's a complete idiot. I lost all patience or understanding of her from the beginning when she devised this genius plan of hers to get out of her engagement. She was willing to do anything to get Edward to call off the engagement and I mean ANYTHING. Hence why I call her a naive idiot considering her last and final stunt almost had her raped. Her braziness and complete arrogance and carelessness to what she was doing and the obliviousness to the ramifications of it was just infuriating. Even for someone who's 22 and the eldest daughter she was incredibly clueless and naive about certain things she should know about IMO. I honestly kept looking forward to Edward chewing her out and scolding her like a child cause she was pretty much acting like one.

Plus for someone who's supposedly 'in love' and adores her betrothed I had a hard time seeing it or buying it between all the stupid outlandish stunts she kept pulling to try and get him to cry off through more than half of the book. It dragged on continuously to the point I was tempted to skip parts just to get to the end. I really wish Warren didn't drag all that out till eternity because it left very *little* room for me to believe she did want him or even truly loved him. She was so determined and steadfast on her decision through more than half of the book even while she was getting to know him as a man. That was infuriating to no end. She also seemed to make a lot of grand assumptions and misjudgments when it came to Edward, even when they were married. I understood her insecurity and fear but she needed to have a little more faith in the man she loves and not jump to quick conclusions and think immediately the worse. It's something I hate that authors do with heroines, especially shy insecure ones. They beat the insecurity part over the head repeatedly that it veers off into annoying rather than endearing. I thought here it was heaped on way too much. The constant redundant inner dialogues that would fill up pages of Claire dissecting every. little. thing he would or wouldn't say, do or didn't do drove me up the wall. She loved to blow things way out of proportion and stack every little thing against him. RME. If you have fears TALK TO HIM, if you have reservations talk to him don't assume the worst every single time. Clearly you have a mouth, say something and stop being a giant boob.

The only reason I managed to get through it was because of Edward and his colorful lovely family. I loved Edward, loved seeing him handle his family and work all with great ease and confidence and authority. I really enjoyed seeing him interact with his siblings and mother. The family dynamic is one of the reasons why I love this series so much. Edward is a very straight-forward, honest loyal-to-a-fault kind of man which I loved. When he wants something he sets his mind on it and goes after it, full throttle. :P I admired that and it's safe to say he made me melt more than once. He was so charming and sweet and delicious. It just had me wishing more than once that the heroine was better suited for him. Given Claire's over-the-top silly antics I struggled accepting her as his match. But either way, after they did get married they had some pretty sweet tender moments that I enjoyed. I have to say the love scenes in particular were pretty steamy and intimate and playful which I really liked. It's one of the reasons why I love TAW's writing she gives everything even when it comes to love scenes and intimate moments. Very descriptive and just really enthralling. The honeymoon scenes are the highlight of the book for me.

This would have been a 4 star or even 5 if it wasn't for Claire's antics and dragging out of a shallow redundant plot.

Ally72 says

I am just going to write a few quick thoughts about this book. I do think I enjoyed this book more than my other goodreads friends did! I love the Byrons of Braebourne series and was looking forward to Edward's story. I like the general premise of the story, but I did find Claire's antics (especially the last two) a little ridiculous towards the end. She did act immature at certain points, but I liked how she had a lot of spirit and stood up to Edward. I haven't read any of Tracy Anne Warren's other series so this is the only one I have to compare it to. She is an author that I like and I am definitely looking forward to the next book that will be released this Summer. I am guessing it will be about the sister as this book certainly led into that story line. Hopefully, my other goodreads friends will like that one better too!

Beanbag Love says

Well, this was the first new release I was looking forward to for 2010 and it's not a propitious start.

I'll make it short and not-so-sweet. Duke has an arranged marriage from childhood. Blows it off forever, intending at some point to cancel out on it, then decides 'what the heck, I'll go for it'. By then the young woman doesn't want to marry him because ... sit down, it's gonna be a shockah ... she loves him so much (after seeing him two times in her life) and knows he doesn't love her back. Wow. You might want to get a glass of water after that.

Okay, I'm being facetious. It's fine as a start, but it's not enough to make a girl act like the selfish, childish, moron this heroine (who starts out just fine, BTW) turns into. She's not a harpy. That's the one plus. She doesn't turn into a spiteful shrew, but she does turn into a reckless airhead extraordinaire, trying to make the duke so angry that he'll cry off. Because she loves him so much and he doesn't love her. She is in no doubt of this, of course, because she overheard him saying that during the event of their second meeting when she was sixteen and he was in his late 20's. So ... it's pretty much settled and will never change, as anyone can see.
insert eyeroll here

Yes, TAW has written a couple of my favorite books and I hold her ability in high esteem. And yes, I'm being scathing. Even bitchy. Because she has more talent than this and it ticks me off to see it wasted. Her biggest plus is the incredible chemistry she creates between her characters. But here, the heroine is acting like such a booby and the hero is so stoically busy with other things that they don't really spend any time together where they get to be playful or unrestrained. There's nothing for the reader to hang their expectations on until the last couple of chapters and those are padded with interminable sex scenes so we still aren't getting much banter or camaraderie. In all honesty, I thought the entire thing would have been much more satisfying if the hero had sent her back to her parents and they'd started the whole thing over. But I got the feeling I was supposed to expect *him* to be paying a penance because he was approaching things from a typical POV of the times. And very amiably, too. Sorry, but he wasn't the villain of the piece. Just a dunderhead for not kicking Claire to the curb so she could grow up.

One thing happens that is foreshadowed in the earlier books in the series, but even that comes off as lackluster when it should have had a strong emotional impact.

Wow. I hate to be so harsh on a writer I truly like and who I'm rooting for. I've complained about her well worn templates that don't fit her strengths and this one does change up the formula a little, I'll grant that. But it still doesn't play to her unique talent and that's too bad.

Skip it. :(

Vijetha says

4.5 Edward Stars!!

Edward Byron the Duke of Claybourne has decided to take a bride. And who is more convenient than Lady Claire who was bethroned to him from the cradle. He expects the union to be logical and inevitable. After all who would dare deny a Duke.

Lady Claire Marsden has always knows that she would be the future Duchess of Clybourne. But the cool reserve of her fiancé and his blatant disregard towards her has made her vow to do everything in her power to dissuade the Duke of their marriage.

Edward expected a biddable wife, but what he got in return was a mischievous minx with a pension for scandal. In this battle of wills Edward strives to win especially when Claire declared that she will take his name only if he offers his heart.

They say the third time is the charm. And it was most definitely true in this case. I loved the book. After reading the first two books in the series I was about to give up on the entire Byrons. But Edward had intrigued me from Cade's book and I wanted to know his story. I'm so glad I tried!

Claire delighted me. Despite being in love with Edward she holds her own with a belief that she deserves someone better. Someone who loves her. The various methods she chose to vex Edward was humorous. I enjoyed her exploits. She was charming, confident and determined.

Edward did not disappoint me either. He was every bit a Duke, but with a passionate side. Brought up as the future Duke he holds responsibility and honour above all. But with Claire he relaxes and let's the chip fall from his shoulder. I loved the chemistry between them.

The earlier complaints I had in the previous two books that the author needs to develop her characters more and give them a better reason to fall in love than only lust was assuaged in this book. I could connect to both Edward and Claire. I also liked that they got to understand and spend time with one another before tumbling in love.

All in all it was 350 pages of delight. I had actually expected a better ending with Islington. Oh well one can't have everything I guess. I did love Edward and Claire's story and will remember it for a while. They were perfect together!

Read the full review and lots of others at my blog!

Keep Reading!
Vijetha Kumar

Holly says

This is my first book by Tracy Anne Warren. I've been on a historical kick and grabbed this at random from my TBR shelf. Having read it, I'm anxious to go back and read the first two in the series.

Edward was an excellent character. He's strong, responsible and just a tad domineering, but he's also kind, sensitive and extremely sexy. He takes his responsibilities serious, but he unwinds and relaxes around his family. I think the amount of responsibility a Duke carries is often downplayed in romance novels, but not here. Warren really did an excellent job of showing the weight of responsibility, without weighing the novel down or making Edward boring.

Claire was harder to pin down. I enjoyed certain things about her. Her zest for life was unparalleled, and her sense of humor and charm made her a likable character. The longer her antics went on, and the more outrageous they became, however, the more frustrated with her I became.

Though Claire's actions bothered me, I enjoyed this novel for the most part. I'm anxious to read Mallory's book (Edward's sister, the next entry in the series) and also to read about Cade and Jack (the first two books in the series).

Kit says

Claire and Edward had been engaged since she was an infant, she had been ignored by him until he felt the time was right. At 22 Claire was devastated and understandably wanted more from marriage. This had the makings of another fine romance yet the heroine's thoughts and actions through the story just didn't align. It wasn't until page 277 that the romance became interesting. Finally, Claire was able to communicate her warranted devastation and fear about marrying Edward without his declaration of feelings-- Before that, the majority of the book was her reaction to the disappointment by trying to get him to dissolve the betrothal by a series of possibly self destructive actions (especially the last one). Antics are one thing, but Clair came off slightly immature and impulsive.

Carolyn says

This third book in The Byrons of Braebourne series was a HUGE disappointment. I was looking forward to the Duke of Clybourne's story since he appeared in the first two books of the series "Tempted by His Kiss" and "Seduced by His Touch." What a let down!

More than three-quarters of the book is devoted to the female character trying her utmost to make the Duke break their engagement. This could have been handled in a myriad of ways, but here it bordered on the ridiculous. I was so disgusted by the time the heroine finally decided she didn't want to break the engagement, that I almost did not finish the book. There were so few pages left, however, I finished it.

I have to admit that I did enjoy Edward Byron, the Duke of Clybourne. His character and my enjoyment of the previous books in the series are the only reasons I stuck it out. And, I will admit that I will read the next book in the series, which I'm hoping will be about Mallory, the Duke's younger sister. But, this book will not make it to my "keeper" shelf.

Huong says

Could Claire be any more of a brat? Oh god, her juvenile behavior really put me off this whole book. OH and when Edward spanked her like a child. What the hell...

I already knew the book was slowly going downhill when Ms. Warren reintroduced the villain Everett (it's pretty bad when the writing is so predictable). I just knew there would eventually become a repeat of "Hero forbids Heroine to do brash stupid act. Heroine does it anyway." Except I hadn't expected that even before committing said stupid act, Claire would turn into the most obnoxious person ever. (She's best characterized with the acronym of TSTL = Too Stupid To Live)

Note to the author: It does a disservice to a romance when you create a heroine that is so unlikable! Heck I wanted to cry off the engagement and was upset for Edward to be so loyal and kind to such an insipid woman.

I rolled my eyes when Claire rode off in a carriage alone with a man who then tried to rape her. (Though she was repeatedly warned by not only the Hero, but JUST ABOUT EVERYONE ELSE to stay away from). Then of course, in the last few chapters...she had to sneak off and spy on her husband, convinced he was (again) being unfaithful to her. Sarcastic hurrah for the predicted stupid act. I actually laughed when she got shot! :x

Should I even bother with #4 and #5 of this set? This series has been a huge disappointment so far...

♥The Kat's Meow♥ says

An entertaining, sweet, well written, story.

To what lengths will Clare go to get out of an marriage arranged from her birth? In the grand scheme of things, immortalized by Tina Turner, What's Love got to do with it? Ah, now we get to the crux of the matter: love. After, what's a romance novel without love?

Edward "Ned" Byron, aka Duke of Clybourne's got it all; except Clair.

Claire Marsden, aka "Claire the Dare, doesn't want to be stuck with the Duke without... what's that thing we love to read about? Oh, yeah: Love aka "romance".

Did I skim? No

Will I re-read? Yes

Thoughts on the supporting characters : I enjoy the antics of the close-knit Byron family. Each new novel gives us a change to renew our acquaintance with the Byrons and their friends.

News flash: Lord Drake's store is due out in 2011. Woot!

sraxe says

All he had to do was touch her and she was lost.

And that about sums up this novel.

This book is so incredibly stagnant. For a majority, it's just push push push against the implacable wall that is Edward. However, there are absolutely NO stakes because, through him, the author has already made it expressly clear to both Claire and the reader that he isn't going to jilt her, not now, not ever. So, it's just one ridiculous stunt after the other with no real progress. I feel as though this, and the previous novel, would've been better suited to novellas rather than full-length novels. It's just so unnecessarily drawn out.

The author keeps telling me that Claire is interesting and unpredictable...but I found she really wasn't. I wasn't impressed by her antics because it didn't seem as though she was really trying. If she really wanted Edward to jilt her, she could've easily been found with another gentleman and have Edward and Society believe the worst. The author failed to show me what was so great about her and all I got was that she's boring and rather spineless. The above quote is a summary of Claire throughout this novel. She says she's determined...until he gives her a smile. More determination? Only until he touches or kisses her. Even MORE determination? Well, only until he takes it a bit further. She's such a waffler and her actions don't jive with the nonsense she spouts. The author did a terrible job of showing me determination. She didn't come off as determined to me -- she only came off as wishy-washy, particularly with her susceptibility to the magic stick.

Edward? I didn't like him either. He's been avoiding his betrothal for ages and has no plans on actually following through with it...until he one day decides to. So...he's been doing what he wants for the two decades they've been betrothed (and the four years since she's been legal) and now he's finally decided to follow through?

In the beginning, I had no strong emotions about him...until that flashback scene to when Claire was sixteen and overheard him speaking to Lady Bettis. I understand that Claire was too young for him (her sixteen to his twenty-seven), but it absolutely pissed me off that she overheard the conversation between them at sixteen. I wouldn't have minded so much if it had happened elsewhere, but I feel that it's in such bad taste for him to be flirting with Lady Bettis while simultaneously talking down about Claire...AT HER PARENTS' HOUSE PARTY. I understand he held no great affection towards Claire, but there's just something so absolutely vile and unsavoury about doing what Edward did, particularly because it was on Claire's HOME TURF. It pissed me off even more because that encounter eventually led to a short affair between Bettis and Edward. You just...you just don't shit-talk someone on their home turf. You just don't.

Christine says

Even though I didn't quite finish this, it wasn't so horrible that I wanted to give it one-star. Tracy Anne

Warren is a perfectly good writer with an engaging style and plenty of chemistry. I've enjoyed other books by her, though admittedly not in this series.

I guess my biggest issue was that Claire was kind of a princess...appropriate, as she was raised to be a duchess, but still. Her issue seemed to be that she didn't want to marry the man she was betrothed to as an infant because, despite the fact that she **does** love him, she doesn't think he loves her in return and she can't bear the thought of such a lopsided marriage. So she makes some attempts to get him to cry off, all of which seemed pretty weak and childish to me. Either your heart's in getting out of a bad betrothal or it isn't. Hers wasn't, which made the whole thing a little boring to me.

If her dilemma interests you, then enjoy, but if you're like me and thinks she should just get over herself, carry out her duty, and realize how much she actually has, then you may want to skip this one. She's rich, lives a life of liesure, and gets to marry a man she loves. I'm supposed to take pity on her because he's only just fond of her?

Edward was ok. I didn't really get a sense of character from him at all and I'll tell you the moment I put the book down, if you're interested:

minor spoiler ahead, read at your own risk

They make love for the first time after she tells him that she loves him. He has not said the same and doesn't plan to, but he asks her to say it again. Seriously, what is that about? Some kind of pwoer trip?

So yeah, Claire never had my sympathy, Edward lost it at that moment, and it was clear the whole story was about to devolve into a quest for the three magic words.

Lover of Romance says

Claire, has been in love with Edward, the Duke of Clybourne, since she was sixteen years old, but then he broke her heart, and even though they have long been betrothed, she has no desire to marry him now. Claire refuses to enter into a loveless marriage, because she has seen what a one sided loveless marriage is like, and has no desire to go through that. Edward, knows that it is his duty to wed, and knows that with her pedigree and manner, she would be an acceptable wife, but little did he know that he would have to fight to win her hand and affections, and that he could awaken her deep passions and desires with his kiss. Despite her resistance of him, he is ever the more determined to claim her as his wife...no matter what it takes to win his bride....At The Dukes Pleasure is the third in this series by Tracy Anne Warren. I just recently started reading books from this author, and just adore them. At The Duke's Pleasure was such a witty and fun love story, yet the story line still had a serious tone to it as well, but I just loved how the author woven the characters and the story all together, such brilliance in her writing, I was so entranced from the very beginning and I could hardly put this book down. The characters were so vivid throughout the story, both have vulnerabilities that I felt I could relate to. A WONDERFUL STORY!!!

My Favorite Quote

"No, I told you before, you're the only woman that I want." His lips brushed across her forehead, then over her cheek with a gentle touch that was almost reverent. " The only woman I'll ever want"

Rachel (BAVR) says

Warning: GIFs and some spoilers

Somehow, this is my first Tracy Anne Warren book. I know - unbelievable. You'd think I would have come across her in one of my Avon HR binges before now, but it appears that her series catchphrase -- *Everyone knows the Byron brothers are "mad, bad and dangerous."* -- discouraged me. Shocking, I know.

The Byron brother in *At the Duke's Pleasure*, Edward, the Duke of Clybourne, is hardly dangerous, but I consider him abso-fucking-lutely mad for putting up with the heroine, Lady Claire. Just take a list of the most annoying HR tropes, and Claire has a hand in almost all of them. Is this a secret time travel novel? That's the only thing that could explain why she acts like a spoiled, impetuous 16-year-old.

Basically, Edward and Claire have been engaged since she was an infant. It's an arranged marriage, you see, which is what just about everyone back in the day did to create powerful family alliances. As a teenager, Claire is thrilled to be engaged to Edward, because fuck yeah, he's hot AND a duke. She may as well have seen a unicorn using the Loch Ness Monster as a raft for all the more common hot and available dukes actually were. Edward, for his part, is less than thrilled because he feels like he's engaged to a child. A besotted 15-year-old Claire overhears Edward saying as much and is naturally heartbroken.

Whatever. She's a kid. By the time she grows up, I'm sure she'll understand what marriage is like in her time.

What reality did to my expectations.

Right. So, Edward comes back several years later to retrieve his bride. Claire's blossomed into a refined beauty, and she's been raised to be a duchess, so he figures it's a win-win. Note to Avon heroes: NEVER assume it's a win-win.

While Claire is older, she is not wiser. Still consumed with love for Edward, she decides she simply CAN'T marry him if he doesn't love her back. God, I hate this story line. But Edward won't release her from the engagement because it would make them both look bad and inconvenience his carefully arranged plans. So Claire goes to her dad, an earl who is quite pleased with the match, and asks him to release her from the betrothal. And her dad is like:

Thus, Claire agrees to go to London to "get to know" Edward as his fiancée while quietly scheming ways to convince him to jilt her.

To recap: Claire wants the man she loves to jilt her.

Now that you know what a hare-brained idiot we're working with, I'm sure it's easy for you to see how implausible this story will be.

Claire has younger sisters. All they really have to do in life is get married and create heirs. And I get it, the past sucked donkey balls. But this is the world Claire lives in, and she pisses all over it. How marriageable do you think Claire's sister will be after...

She dances THREE TIMES at a ball with a man who's well-known for ruining another young lady, smokes cigars with noblemen, openly defies her fiancé in public, races carriages in broad daylight, gambles with

gentlemen, cuts all of her hair off, DRESSES AS A BOY TO SNEAK INTO A GENTLEMEN'S CLUB AND GAMBLE SOME MORE (this one irritated me the most), and leaves a ball with the bad man who ruins lady.

Sure, all of these things would usually cause a man to cry off, but they would also RUIN you and your family and bring into question the character of the people who associate with you. Claire lives in this fantasy world where all she has to do is drive away the man she loves (I know, the logic hurts) and go back to living her respectable little life in middle-of-nowhere England. I'm pretty confident that every Jane Austen novel ever has established that life wasn't that damn simple back then.

Edward, bless his stupid little heart, refuses to jilt his spirited bride. He just soaks up all of the scandal with his name and title and goes to great lengths to appease her. But can he appease her with the love she really wants?

I refuse to answer that question.

For all of its character flaws, the book is incredibly readable. BAVR was entertained the whole time, and that's a feat in itself. Warren writes a steamy love scene, and despite the fact that I think Claire will send Edward to an early grave, their chemistry is believable.

To be honest, I'd rather wade in the sea of HR WTFery than read any contemporary or new adult romances at present, so At the Duke's Pleasure was sort of a treat. If Claire had been any less stupid, I may have rated it higher than 2.5 stars.

But here's some good news for Warren: I'll be reading the next book in the series. Avon Soup is my favorite comfort food, after all. >:D

"At the Duke's Pleasure" is a part of my Care-Package-Ageddon series of book reviews in gratitude to my GR friend Karla for sending me a GIANT BOX O'BOOKS. She said I "might" like some of them. o_O
