



Bitter Rednesses of Love

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Anthony, degenerate genius and impoverished nobleman, finds himself wedded to the painfully proper young aristocrat, Stephen. Anthony needs Stephen's money, and Stephen has been pledged to Anthony since birth.

Yet, they are absolute opposites. Will their marriage prove intolerable to them both, or will they find a happy equilibrium, instead? As Anthony teaches Stephen the pleasures of the body, will Stephen be able to teach Anthony the pleasures of the heart?

Bitter Rednesses of Love Details

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From Reader Review Bitter Rednesses of Love for online ebook

Kaitlyn says

I bought this solely out of curiosity because when reading the synopsis, I immediately thought - hey this "Anthony" sounds like Tony Stark/Iron Man. Then I realized it's the same name, with a similar description, and this Stephen sounds like Steve Rogers/Captain America. And then I had a suspicion it's probably fan fiction? :\ I bought to give it a read to see.

The leads' names are Anthony Clark and Stephen Ayers. Their appearances are also similar to Marvel's idea of the characters. Perhaps more to the comic book side of things, where Tony Stark is past 6ft? It's not an entirely bad story, but I can't get past the fact that I had to pay to read fanfic disguised as an original story.

Tricia says

I REALLY liked this book; it reads like a fairy tale in away, somehow distorted from the tone of a normal historical romance. It has erotic scenes, that are completely inoffensive and compassionate. My only disappointment is the length. There is a complete story here, the two main characters are interesting and/or charming. There is a romantic plot and another more practical story line. I wish the story was longer, the ending seemed a little rushed, and there was so much MORE that could have happened towards the end. So, my opinion is positive, seeing how I wish there was more. I sincerely hope we find more books, novel length, from this author.

Ije the Devourer of Books says

This is brilliant. I thoroughly enjoyed this regency era steampunk story. The writing is just so picturesque and although the storyline is quite simple (rogue falls for innocent) it is deeply enjoyable.

This is the first time I am reading a book by this author and I will definitely be reading the others. A fab read!!

Edina Rose says

This is my kind of historical romance. The style is very, very pleasant and the plot is tight and well executed. No nonsense, no WTF, no OTT, no long-term idiots, no weaklings, no martyrs, good grovelling, mature handling of emotional situations, etc. Nothing silly. And it takes place in a regency society where same sex marriage is socially accepted. The two heroes have been promised in marriage since birth and when the book starts they are about to get married. One is a rake, one is a virgin BUT they are not cliché characters, far from it.

When I learned that one hero (Stephen) was a 21 years old virgin, I was afraid that we would be the silly, naive and weak kind of hero we had in old school heterosexual historical romance. No worries. Stephen may have been a baby when it came to romance, but he was smart and confident, so he handled this romantic relationship very well. As a decorated soldier and a young Earl managing his considerable fortune himself, he was not a cinderella.

The other hero, Anthony, was 15 years older and quite the original. He was known for his genius in science. He spent his days in his laboratory making science discoveries related to steam power and helped improve people's lives. He was also famous for being a rake. Although he had excellent social skills, he despised society's class hierarchy and the rigidity of useless social rules. He made his own rules and well, I liked his boldness, his "madness". He was a bit like a Sherlock Holmes, but a Regency Sherlock with great social skills and a very active sexual life.

I liked that the age difference was not used as a source of conflict; it only served to emphasise the fact that Anthony was more sexually experienced. On all things, in and out of bed, when it came to work, responsibilities and all, both men were equal, just two adults dealing with their feelings for each other.

I also liked that the sex was not repetitive and was part of the plot and not just an erotica add-on.

Warning:

Physical cheating (not emotional though, which is actually worst than physical, though both are bad enough), but it's very brief and the grovelling after is well done, in a way that preserves the dignity of both heroes.

I hope this is not the last historical gay romance written by this author.

Monika says

Review also posted on World of Diversity Fictions

This novella is a historical with the added touch of Steampunk. I loved this world and the two men who live in it. I thoroughly enjoyed everything about this novella, the story was well written, the MC's Anthony and Stephen were well suited and the romance was touching.

Anthony and Stephen have an arranged marriage and in this world gender plays no part in who your spouse will be, I loved that! Anthony is a bit of a rogue he beds whomever he pleases and has no intention on changing that once he is married to Stephen. Stephen on the other hand is a shy, quiet, virgin and wants only Anthony, he has for a very long time. I was nervous on how the author would handle the wedding night, I already had a soft spot for Stephen and didn't want their night to be a disaster but I worried needlessly the author did a wonderful job, she made me totally fall in love with both MC's.

This story does have some angst but it's very light mostly its just a sweet, lovely read one I didn't want to put down. This story ended far too soon for me but that's just my personal opinion, I wasn't ready to let these

guys go. The story is complete you're not left with any unanswered questions and the two MC's get their beautiful HEA. The End.

I recommend this story to everyone even those that don't read Historicals or Steampunk.

Katharina says

Dominique Frost is a new author for me, but after reading this story and her other one *The Art of Touch*, I'll definitely have her on my mental to-look-out-for list. Because I just really like the way she writes.

There is nothing inherently new or surprising about *The Bitter Rednesses of Love*. It features a common-enough arranged-marriage trope with a bit of steampunk thrown in. There's an experienced older guy who has trouble keeping it in his pants, and the virginal younger one who is all for fidelity and love. But the thing is that, despite the rather unsurprising happenings, the story never felt trite or boring. The romance part is clearly the most important one here, and it's a character-driven romance, with believable actions (once you accept the premise of a gay arranged marriage in a historic setting) and thoughts from flawed, anxious, stubborn men trying to protect themselves.

It was nice and easy to read, very enjoyable, and had the perfect length. Recommended!

Adrianamae says

Substitute title: When a*holes fall in love

3.5

My historical romantic heart gave this one a 3.5 cuz the idiot wallowed in guilt and misery while the other hero was "no, no, no I'll never give you another chance." *Place hand on forehead - there's even a slight triangle with a supposedly noble friend who really is just trying to get in the pants of the naive hero who believes his friend is just friendly and a*shole hero is just jealous. Ah, crap, just read it.

It's good.

Sagajo says

3.5 stars.

This is candy for the romance reader. Ever feel like you want to escape reality and read something bittersweet? This is your story!

Amy, it even has an arranged marriage!

Mandy*reads obsessively* says

“Anthony Rowan Clark was in the midst of a moral dilemma—albeit without the morality.”

I have read a few of Dominique Frost's books and enjoyed them all. I don't normally read historicals, but this is more of a steampunk/regency story and I trust the author to write a good book, so I gave it a go.

Stephan and Anthony have been promised to each other since Stephan's birth. Anthony is 15 years his senior and has definitely enjoyed his sexuality and debauchery. Stephan is the opposite, he has not engaged in any kind of sexual activities, although at least financially he has the upper hand.

Anthony is a bit of an asshat, arrogant and conceited, already dismissing Stephan and his place in his life. The book is told completely from his POV and I do have to say I would have loved a bit of Stephan's thoughts.

But as they say, the bigger they are the harder they fall, and although his friend Clive tried to talk sense to him, Anthony had to learn the hard way.

I did want to shake both of them a time or two and just tell Anthony to open his mouth and **say something, tell him how you feel, apologize**. Alas, he's dense and Stephan is understandably reticent to trust again.

I loved it though and the only thing that would have made it better for me would have been alternating POVs and you know **more** cause I'm greedy like that.

~◊~Doxni(ela) ♥ ?? love & semi-colons~◊~ says

3.5 stars

I like this alternate steam punk universe where men are promised to one another. Add one horny scientist and one beautiful boy virgin, throw in an arranged marriage, and you have this slightly fantastical, delightfully sensual little story. I wanted just one more chapter post reconciliation, but this was good fun nonetheless.

Macky says

This is the first of Dominique's books that I read and the one that made me search out her other two. First of all I love historical m/m but this is slightly different in so much as in this slightly regency steam punk setting, sexual preference is not an issue and men can become betrothed to either men or women.

Anthony is a rake, a rogue and has many dalliances whilst Stephen is quiet and virginal. Anthony has no time for him and thinks he's pretty to look at but boring as hell. However they have been betrothed since children and as he has become an impoverished nobleman over the years, he needs this marriage so the wedding must go on! Thinking that this will be just a wedding of convenience that will allow him to carry on his bed hopping lifestyle he enters into it happy to fulfill his marital duties sexually yet with no depth of feeling but over time he starts to realise that this shy thoughtful young man is getting under his skin in a way that he never wanted or expected.

There's not really any major surprises in the romance but it's written in such a way that it makes the whole

premise feel refreshing and new. Putting the slight fantasy feel to it made me look at the dynamics between them in a slightly different way and again seeing a not so nice character to start with grow into someone I couldn't help loving despite his arrogant ways was great, and Stephen is just so lovely that again it was like love at first sight.

I was enchanted with both their story and Dominique's writing style. Loved, loved, loved it! And that's why I've read all the three books in one go. Awesome and its staying on my Kindle forever.

SheReadsALot says

Not going to lie, the title...eh

This is sexier rednesses, IMO

But the story, the story is good. Real good.

4.5 HEARTS--I am fan of Dominique Frost. She hasn't written many books but from what I've read (all but one), there's something about her writing that just works for me. Her characters are never dull or read one-dimensional. And when the snark is on, oh baby, is it **on**. In "*The Bitter Rednesses of Love*", the author uses a few of my favorite historical romance themes and did a swell job with them. What themes you may ask? The degenerate rakehell falling in love with a virgin (who is no wilting flower) and arranged marriage, having to marry for money. The story is steampunk but not heavy with any steampunk references, it read more like a historical...closer to Victorian England. It's like a marriage of both where it is normal for same sex marriages to take place. For full enjoyment, just take a spot of:

Thirty-six year old, poor scientist and rake, Anthony was betrothed to marry twenty-one year old, virginal solider, Stephen. Anthony was arranged to marry Stephen before Stephen was born. The silver tongued hero has sex with married people (he likes to sleep with wives and husbands for fun), he doesn't get married. But he needs money for his creations, so he can just marry the virgin, pluck his cherry and carry on with his philandering ways right? Maybe bring the virgin along for some fun.

He he he...luckily his plans never come to fruition, no matter how hard Anthony tries to remain a rake.

"It was mad. It was inconceivable. Anthony began to detect in himself the symptoms of a disease he had sworn never to acquire--lovesickness--and thus berated himself for a clodpoll to so fall into the gilded trap."

Oh boy, his downfall into love was fun. I just wished there was more. I could have easily read hundreds of more pages about Anthony and Stephen. Anthony was charismatic as was Stephen. Stephen was not a

fainting virgin, he gave as good as he got. (Though sometimes he could be a bit too stubborn) I zipped through this story and ate it up.

Why?

The dialogue was sexy.

"Today, I shall have you as you are meant to be had. Tomorrow, you can expect more patience from me."

But the characters when they were together...even sexier:

Anthony took one of Stephen's hands and placed it on his own chest, above his racing heart. "Feel the beat of it," Anthony said, "the beat and the roar. I am no less disarmed than you." He glanced downward at Stephen's hardness, mirroring his own, and smiled. "Though we may seem well-armed indeed, with lances of our own..."

The plot was a fun one. I loved the struggle between the two and the ending especially. There were minor issues with transitioning - not a lot hence my rating of 4.5 hearts. But definitely an engaging read, with delicious main characters, great banter, and memorable secondary characters. I really enjoyed the valets.

I think this was the best the author has published to date.

Heather C says

Ever get tired of reading the same ol' gay historical romances? Where loving another man is punishable by death or incarceration? Imagine a world, lets say maybe set around the Victorian era, where marriage equality exists. Throw in a little steampunk, a delicate virgin and a tinkering rake...

The Plot: Since birth, Stephen has been promised to marry Anthony. Stephen is the calendar boy for purity and Anthony is a bit of a man whore with every intention of having an open marriage with Stephen. Of course, it all doesn't work out as planned.

The Romance: It doesn't start off very romantic at first; had more of an erotica feel. Anthony quickly shows Stephen the pleasures he can have with a man (oh man it was HOT), but never really gives all of himself and control to Stephen. Eventually, Stephen finds Anthony in a compromising position with another person and Anthony suddenly realizes he only wants Stephen...a little too late!!

The Steampunk: Instead of having "respectable employment", Anthony spends his time creating steam powered items for commissions, therefore putting this story a bit in the steampunk sub-genre. Its very minor

and only a side plot to the main story, although important to the outcome. But if you don't like steampunk much, I don't think those bits would hinder your enjoyment of the story.

The End: There's a sweet HEA at the end. Anthony really had to fight for it there for a while and it put a huge smile on my face when Stephen finally gave in. These two were sexy together!

I really liked this little story, even though it could have been longer and I really wanted some insight into Stephen's head. But in the end, this story works just as it is.

Sweet, sexy, a bit of angst with a HEA.

I wish there were more m/m historical romances like this out there. Who cares for historical accuracy everyday, all the time, right? Sometimes I just want two aristocrats to be able to get-it-on and everyone to think "so what"!

4.5 Stars

Reviewed for The Blogger Girls

Lucy says

Reviewed for Hearts On Fire Reviews

4.5

Anthony is an inventor, degenerate yes but he does pursue his work with devotion and he puts his inventions to noble uses, helping the poor, refusing to make weapons. He is an equal opportunity seducer, playing faro and drinking. Now, however, his life is taking a detour. He was only 15 when he was betrothed to the newly born Stephen Ayers, son of a very wealthy family. Anthony needs the money and does not intend for his marriage to take away from his pursuit of other pleasures, especially due to a prim, virginal thing such as Stephen.

It is the typical fashion of Anthony that when he meets Stephen he is rude, condescending and talks to a friend instead of his betrothed. The wedding is not what he wants and he acts like it. He is sneering about Stephen's chastity up to this point and generally acts like a rakehell. Surprisingly, Anthony makes Stephen's wedding night something to be remembered and thoroughly enjoyed. They are good together and Anthony is gentle with his new husband. It was endearing, sweet and sexy.

As they progress in their lives together, they learn to please each other and there is happiness, even as Anthony still pictures his future with sex outside the marriage bed. This vision gets pushed farther back, though, and Stephen proves time and again what a lovely man he is. The lab, especially, and Anthony is amazed that Stephen "was...his. For life." That is, until Anthony is an ass and in a moment from his past, drinking overmuch at a faro hall with his tongue down the throat of "woman of the town", breaks Stephen's trust even as he tries to act as if it were all what he wanted in the first place. Ass.

I loved watching Anthony's realization that he had finally grown past that degenerate lifestyle to a deeper one with his marriage to Stephen, only to realize it was his own folly that has taken away the affection and

care that Stephen had for him. I love that Stephen isn't "simpering cuckold", in his words. He is a strong man; more so, an honorable one.

This story, while having steampunk elements, is more on the interaction between Anthony and Stephen. Watching Anthony try to rise above what he was to what he can be was wonderful. The added complication of Rathington just makes him work harder. Highly recommended.

Christelle says

I think the best part of this book was...the blurb.

The rest ? No substance, childish characters and behaviors...sorry to be so harsh, but I felt really left down. Good writing but nothing worth reading.
