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Sharon Kendrick

THE FORBIDDEN WIFE



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After her mother died, Ashley Jones spent her childhood in care and foster homes. Alone in the world, she desperately needs her new live-in job as an author's assistant. But she is filled with trepidation when she arrives at isolated Blackwood Manor and meets the formidable Jack Marchant. Ashley thinks she is just a drab nobody...but her heart goes out to handsome but arrogant, tortured Jack, though she has no idea what troubles him. What is the secret that he keeps hidden? It is only after Jack proposes marriage and Ashley joyfully accepts that she finds out...and, for this innocent bride-to-be, the truth is shocking....

The Forbidden Wife Details

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From Reader Review The Forbidden Wife for online ebook

Sapheron says

I don't know what to think about it really. I can accept the similarities to the Bronte book easily, it is a remake after all. I don't think it was to be a retelling, just a modernization. That said, of course it doesn't live up to the old standard, but, for what it was it wasn't bad at all. I wasn't weirded out by the age difference, I didn't mind them having sex (a copious amount actually), it was more the internal musings of Ashley/Jane which sometimes didn't ring true to me. In a modern plot I can see her feeling extremely betrayed by Jack/Rochester so much that she couldn't forgive him for it easily. But, I think in the original Jane forgave him once she'd heard his story, it was really the fact that they couldn't rightfully be together that drove her away. Not because she felt she couldn't trust him anymore. Oh whelp, guess I'm not so speechless after all.

willful says

I couldn't get into this -- it seemed to so thoroughly miss the point.

Dianna says

When Ashley was very young her no good mother died and Ashley went into the foster system. The fictional foster system sounds even more awful than fictional orphanages, and at least in a fictional orphanage you might get the opportunity to do a musical number with your fellow orphans. In the foster system, the best you can hope for is to be locked in a cupboard with rats. Ashley got the cupboard and had a seizure. She's wrapped herself in layers of silence and isolation ever since, and because she is a tiny drab of a person, she goes unnoticed. Ashley started working full-time when she was sixteen, and two years later, she's taken a job with a wealthy ex-soldier turned writer, and as the book opens she arrives at his big house in the Remote North. Ashley's job will be to type up his manuscript.

She needs the money not only to support herself, but because she has debts. I don't think I ever found out exactly what these debts were, and they puzzled me. She had no assets, no blackmailers, and no money-draining recently deceased family members. Romance heroines are never in trouble for simple reasons, like credit card debt, and the most extravagant thing a romance heroine ever buys is a double-shot rather than a regular skinny cap. And she's wracked with guilt for weeks afterwards, over that extra fifty cents.

Ashley's grim life and independent spirit lend her a maturity beyond her eighteen years. Or, you know, she's a normal eighteen year old with that air of maturity because that's how you behave at eighteen, until you once again realise that you are young, and that it's ok to be young, and that the boundaries between child and adult aren't set by whatever birthday is chosen to define you as adult for a variety of purposes. Being an adult for Ashley still means that she believes anyone who tells her that she is being immature, when honestly, being an adult actually means telling anyone who uses that line to bugger off, you're not falling for that again. Ashley's now stuck in a house with only an older man for company. He's good looking and smart (he writes books!) he's her social superior (he lives in a vast mansion he inherited!) and he's a hero (he was at war!). It's not at all unreasonable for her to harbour a big enormous crush on him.

Jack is a whole other story, because Jack is a creeper. With a generous squint, he's twice as old as Ashley, but is perhaps even older. His immediate perception of Ashley is that she's a plain little thing in ugly clothes with a too-serious face. However, she does have this youthful glow about her, and this is Jack's obsession. She's got young skin and young limbs and she moves like the young move and youth just wafts off her like a pheromone. Eighteen? She looks younger. Jack is much turned on. So turned on in, fact, that he begins to wonder if she's doing it on purpose, the little tease. Surely she knows how turned on he is by the way she types up his manuscript, so quiet, so thoughtful. She's trying to seduce him! He knows exactly how these plain orphan girls operate! So Jack spends his time daydreaming of stripping her naked and possessing her young skinny body, and it made me shudder. I could not get into him on any level.

'The Forbidden Wife' is 'Jane Eyre, the Outline.' I debated with myself for quite some time about how pointless comparisons are ... but I couldn't let it go. Therefore: Rochester.

Rochester was the first man I ever fell in love with, and I refuse to be objective about him. I read him before I read his clones and he's perfect. Perhaps Rochester was really into Jane because he started to think that she was both hot and accessible, but what we get in the book is a far more romantic 'into her' story, because Rochester is clearly turned on by Jane's brain. They talk and talk and talk, and he's gruff and she's candid and clear eyed and she won't back down and he's hooked. Whether or not as a reader of 'Jane Eyre' you can find this entirely credible is up to you. I choose to find any number of things that are less credible acceptable in forming a relationship between two characters, so I'm more than fine with it. When the crisis occurs between Rochester and Jane, it's clear that he knows and understands his degree of culpability. He knows his faults, but his soul cry is: haven't I suffered enough? You, my fairy spirit bird creature, are my only hope for true redemption! For me, he's equally wrenchingly sympathetic and monstrously selfish. It's much attempted, but very rarely does that mix come off perfectly right.

Jack's culpability is foreshadowed where Rochester's was not. He thinks it's interesting that Ashley is talking about obstacles to them doing it, and forming a permanent doing it arrangement, because phew, she doesn't know the real reason, which would probably be a pretty winning argument, come to think of it. Which he doesn't. Jack is at a disadvantage because he has been a hero, and Rochester never has. Rochester knew all along that he had been a villain, and only found reason to become a better man at around the time he met Jane. She wasn't quite the trigger, but she played a big part in his change. Jack believed all along that he was the hero. His troubles were that he was weak and lead astray because he was traumatised (thanks for only pretending to see your own culpability, jerk). While he may also truly believe that he has suffered enough and deserves a shot at happiness, I don't. Ashley has no part in making him change – he dismisses her objections to their relationship, based on the inequality of their backgrounds, as nonsense. As something only a foolish young girl would notice.

Look, there are thousands of books out there about the governess who fell in love with the lord of the manor, and how their love was threatened by something in his past. There are also books where I'm pretty sure that Jane Eyre has basically ended up with a sexier but still awful John Reed (or maybe that's wishful thinking on my part) or a slightly less intensely scary St John Rivers. It's a great outline, and I've no objection to it in principle. I don't think some sort of sin against beloved classics has been committed. I just think that on its own merits, 'The Forbidden Wife' has a creepy selfish hero and a heroine who never really overcomes her inherent drabness.

Tia says

I read this book before, possibly under a different title. However I still didn't quite like it. It just seemed like it was emotionless, only facts present. It's sad that the hero had been blinded in a fire and it's great that the heroine came back but where is the passion? I just felt like I was reading some boring autobiography.

Carol Storm says

Sumptuous and very traditional, this Harlequin Presents is basically a retelling of JANE EYRE in modern England. On the whole it was a very enjoyable reading experience, though at times the angst and drama and the heroine's over-wrought imaginings were a little over the top. And a lot of the hero's back story was unintentionally funny. To give you some idea what I mean, I will now retell the entire story in my own words. (WARNING: SPOILERS AHEAD)

Born in a cardboard box, Ashley knew she had to keep this job. She'd grown up wearing cardboard shoes, newspaper hats, had no schooling, and was unable to find any job that didn't involve living in a mysterious mansion with a rich, moody employer who eyed her ragged clothes with knowing desire.

"Shall I tell you about my horrible ghastly war experiences?" Jack asked, his black eyes flashing moodily in the firelight. "Or would you rather go upstairs and shag?"

"I hardly know you, sir," Ashley said demurely. "Let's go for a walk around your secluded estate, and then we can shag afterwards."

Jack found her mysterious, this ragged little woman with the hungry look who kept gnawing on the stale hunks of cheese he left in the kitchen for the mice. Instead of just shagging her at once he found himself telling her about the war. Next thing he knew, he was dictating a memoir that was sure to be a classic. But something was missing. So they shagged.

"I love you, Ashley," he said afterwards. "You really listen and you type everything I say with no mistakes. I want to marry you and give you a life of luxury."

"But Jack," she murmured. "I hardly know you." Then, with a new boldness born of shared passion, she added, "I think we should shag some more."

Throughout the days that followed, they shagged. And they walked in the pure clean air. And he told her how much he loved her. And they shagged.

And then he gave her the ring.

"Oh, Jack," she said. "It's beautiful!" Yet part of Ashely was unsure. Was this a marriage proposal? Or did he just want to shag her some more while she wore nothing but a fabulous diamond ring?

Just then an evil man came laughing into the room. "Remember my sister, you English jerk? Huh? What

about my sister, the one you married?"

Ashley's whole world fell apart. She saw herself back in that cardboard box, wearing newspaper hats and gnawing on gravel. "Jack how could you?" she asked.

His eyes were black and moody as he told her the truth. "After I killed all those terrorists single handed just by brooding them to death, I went to America. It's a terrible place, Ashley. Too much sunlight, people laughing and having fun. And then I met . . . Kelly. I shouldn't have married her, but I needed to forget. She was blonde, and she liked to party. Party, party, party, all day and all night. It's like a sickness with these American women. All she wanted to do was have fun. And spend my money. I couldn't stand it. One day I told her it couldn't last. She laughed and said I'd never be free. Or if I did divorce her, I'd have to pay alimony. Bloody Yanks, always talking money. So we had a little tug of war with the steering wheel of my speeding sportscar, and I won. Kelly's in a coma now. Damned shame, isn't it?"

"Tragic," Ashley agreed. "Jack, you suck. I can never trust you again."

Ashley went away. She inherited tons of money from nowhere. She got a new job, and began a new life. Then one day she heard from Jack's housekeeper.

"There's been a terrible fire. Jack's blind. He needs you. Come back."

"Okay," said Ashley.

"Ashley? Is that you?" Jack was brooding away, all broken and helpless. He needed her.

"I'm here," she said. "Should we shag now or later?"

"My horrible American wife is dead." Jack looked extra super moody. "I know being blinded in a freak fire was my punishment for lying to you before. But it was worth it. Let's shag."

So they did. And then, mysteriously, Jack's eyesight came back to almost normal.

And they all lived happily ever after. Except for Kelly, the American bitch who had to die because really, all American women want to do is spend money and have fun.

Robazizo says

2.5 stars

A not that good modern retelling of Jane Eyre. The relationship between Ashley and Jack is based on lust IMO, not on mutual understanding and intellectual connection. The central dilemma of the book is also not convincing.

Read An American Heir: A Modern Retelling of Jane Eyre or Jane instead. Or better yet, read the fabulous original: Jane Eyre.

RLA says

The story begins with the heroine Ashley arriving at her new live-in post as assistant to the writer Jack, the hero. Ashley is a quiet 18 year old who has struggled through her life, first through the foster care system where she had some awful experiences, and then in adulthood with living expenses and debts. Over the course of her life she has learned to keep her feelings inside and not let anyone close. Jack is also harbouring issues from his life experiences such as the destruction he witnessed while at war in the army, he is also holding a disturbing secret.

Jack and Ashley slowly develop feelings for one another, which eventually leads to an affair and to them falling in love. However Jack asks that their relationship is kept secret and Ashley worries that he is ashamed of her and doesn't really love her.

This was a beautifully written book, and a true love-story. This was another case of the pace of the book being absolutely perfect to the development of the story. It takes place over a good few months and it really allows for depth. The secret that Jack was hiding was a stunner when it was revealed, I was not expecting anything like it at all! It really gave the story an edge, I honestly did not know how this was going to work out. The characters were well written, and I really loved that Sharon Kendrick created both characters to be flawed, they really had trouble trusting one another as a result of their pasts yet they could not fight against the chemistry between them.

This is a modern interpretation of 'Jane Eyre' by Sharon Kendrick and one that is done very well, the whole forbidden love aspect was wonderfully executed and it had just the right amount of passion and heartbreak, plus a great HEA!

Originally posted at <http://everyday-is-the-same.blogspot....>

Caro says

[que queda ciego sobre el final del libro (hide spoiler)]

Vintage says

I'm still reeling that this wasn't written sometime in the 1970s.

Straight from Pinewood Studios, comes this production of .

The brooding, dressed in black Bronte-ish hero has just passionately kissed the plain governess secretary. She turns and runs. He follows, enraged that she is willing to deny her passion. When she rejects him a second time because he's her employer and of a higher station, he internalizes the ridiculousness of lowly HER rejecting HIM for wanting to scratch an itch.

My first thought as he left in a huff is he's going to go find another woman.

Yep, he leaves for London as she stays and works. He brings his fancy piece back, and here are my predictions for the rest of the book.

1. The fancy piece will be rude and snotty, and either has dark hair or red hair. Yeah, not really a guess is it, but more of a given.

Yes, she had dark hair. She wasn't a bee-yotch.

2. A male side piece will have come along that sets his eyes on the heroine which scares her and pisses the hero off.

Nope, that didn't happen either.

3. The hero will force her to dine with everyone, and she will fumble around wondering what to wear and yank out a vanilla in EVERY-WAY-if-you-know-what-I-mean navy or beige dress with a built-in Peter Pan collar that drives all the men wild despite there being a temptress sitting in sining go-to-hell red satin.

Darn! How could I have forgotten governess grey? But the OW was dressed in tiny scarlet silk.

4. The heroine will see the h and SP in a clinch at some point where she will go into the garden and eat worms as no one as ~~awful~~ wonderful as the arrogant POS H could ever love the h, AND/OR the H will see the h in a clinch with the male SP and accuse her of being a really bad girl.

Nope, not that either.

5. At some point the H might have a nightmare from all his angsty pre-h moments that she soothes him over and where once again he tries to put the moves on her. Oh, that treacherous body alert.

Lost my touch.

5. The h will either run from an attempted rape by the male SP or a forced seduction from the H. She will get lost on the moors, because of course this is set in Yorkshire, wherein the H fears for her life and realizes that pale, self-pitying bathmats are his cup of tea.

Well, part of that is right.

Review

Apart from getting the potential OW's hair and dress right, I was a loser on this. I knew other reviewers said this was based on "Jane Eyre", but I didn't realize quite how much. I am surprised that Charlotte Bronte's estate hasn't sued, but I guess it's JE is public domain now. Every detail down. Too bad it was a little boring.

I think my favorite line is when he compares her skin to silk and wants to make a shirt out of it so he can wear it.

Shelby says

If I wanted to read Jane Eyre, I'd read Jane Eyre.

Grace says

Jane Eyre is one of my absolute favorite books. I love the heroine--strong, self-contained, independent. I love the wild, cynical Mr. Rochester who loved too deeply and too much. This is why inspite of the awful reviews on Forbidden Wife, I got suckered into wasting my evening reading it. Forbidden Wife is a modern, shorter re-telling of Jane Eyre, Harlequin style.

Before writing this review, I thought whether my disappointment with the book is because I love Jane Eyre so much, therefore anything coming after it, will always fall short. Unfortunately, that is not the case. Jane Eyre inspired or not, the book was just not very good. It was not awful. It just did not live up to its promise especially when that promise is to follow Charlotte Bronte's steps.

This is probably the biggest failing of the book: the author was so conscious of Bronte's voice, of Jane Eyre's story line that she dared not stray from that plot line. Thus, the result is that the voice in the book was choppy, disconnected. It failed to take flight from the moment "go". Harlequin books are shorter than the average book, and much shorter than Jane Eyre so that when you try to take all the elements of Jane Eyre in a 180+ book, one is bound to fail.

The book starts the same way as Jane and Mr. Rochester meet thus Ashley meets Jack Marchant while she was walking, and she is almost run over by Jack's horse. The book was so condensed I did not get a good sense of what attracted them to each other. When they get together, there was no real sense of emotional connection. And when Ashley discovers that Jack is married, I was almost relieved that these two can now go their separate ways and move on. I had no sympathy for Jack, no real insight to what tortured him--he was in the Middle East as a soldier but the book provided little window to this part of his life. Ashley was not a sympathetic character. I had no admiration for her, even when she left Jack. Instead of being strong by leaving, she looked weak and immature.

There have been countless of books and even movies loosely based on classic literature. One book that comes to mind is the Bridget Jones' Diary. It was supposedly based on Pride and Prejudice. And looking back, you can recognize the theme, even the hero is named Mr. Darcy. But Helen Fielding used her own voice, and followed her characters' motivations, rather than be controlled by the plot of Pride and Prejudice.

I did not "see" Sharon's voice at all in this book unlike her other books that I've read before (and found enjoyable). There was just too much was going on in such a short book. If Sharon had stuck to the basic themes of Jane Eyre rather than following the straight plot line, the book would have made more sense.

www.chick-reads.com

Jacqueline J says

Oh the melodrama! Actually this was a pretty well done retelling of Jane Eyre. It had that gothic feel and tone. The middle of the story was the strongest part. The end, since it pretty much had to follow the original storyline, was the weakest. While it worked in the original, it just was a bit too much to have him blinded. That was the one place where following the original storyline didn't work so well. All in all a fun read.

Amanda Sheila says

I have read Sharon Kendrick's books before and they're pretty good. I don't think this one is my favorite though. I was expecting more. But overall I enjoyed it, the Hero's pretty much a jerk. So.. yeah. Good one.

iamGamz says

She's an eighteen year old, young, vulnerable orphan raised in foster care that took a live in job as his secretary.

He's a thirty-something tormented war hero/author in need of help to write his current book.

Together they work together, walk the moors together and eventually end up in bed together.

He spoke words of love and made promises for the future...but in secret. No one can know.

She believed his words and promises until her hopes and dreams were smashed by his visiting brother-in-law!

His secrets are finally told and they ain't pretty.

She ran away.

His beautiful house burned down.

He was injured.

She ran back.

And they lived Happily Ever After.

Diane says

i did pick out some lightweight books to read today, and this unfortunately was one of them. it was also a rehash of jane eyre and mr rochester and not a good one. i'm going to have to start being a little more picky about the books i pick up to read
