



Shameless

Karen Robards

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In Regency England, a beautiful young woman finds her life thrown into turmoil by the arrival of a handsome scoundrel. Lady Elizabeth, the youngest and most headstrong of the three Banning sisters, has been engaged three times, and has most scandalously broken off all three engagements. Her fear of becoming any man's property has kept her from marriage and earned her a reputation in the *ton* as a heartbreaking flirt.

Neil Severin is a wicked rogue, black of heart and black of reputation. A man of no morals, devoid of compassion, he is a governmentsanctioned assassin. And his newest target is a man Beth holds dear. When the flame-haired beauty thwarts his plan, Neil exacts his own brand of spicy revenge.

Beth despises him. Neil doesn't care. But circumstances most unexpectedly throw them together, and with Beth's life in danger, Neil finds himself in the unexpected role of hero, racing to save her before it's too late.

What he never expects is the twist fate hands him: instead of his saving her, Beth winds up saving him. When the ruthless organization he works for turns its agents loose on him, only Beth stands between him and a death he thought he didn't fear.

In a fight for their lives, Neil and Beth travel the British countryside, fleeing the ruthless killers out for Neil's blood, the men after Beth, and their growing attraction to each other. Can Neil forgive himself for his past and accept Beth's love? Can Beth overcome her fear and trust Neil? Will she have to choose between him and her family? And most important, can they both survive long enough to begin a new life together?

The third in the Banning Sisters trilogy that began with the *New York Times* bestsellers *Scandalous* and *Irresistible*, *Shameless* marks a dazzling return to historical fiction for Karen Robards.

Shameless Details

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Bookaholics says

Shameless by Karen Robards

Historical Romance – April 13th, 2010

5 Stars

Shameless is the third novel in Karen Robards's Banning Sisters trilogy. This trilogy tells the stories of each of the Banning sisters: Gabriella, Claire and Elizabeth. The first book begins with Scandalous, then Irresistible and now concludes with the final story, Shameless.

Shameless is the story of the youngest and most headstrong sister Lady Elizabeth Banning. Despite her many seasons among the ton Lady Elizabeth is considered a heartbreaker and flirt due to the fact that she has become engaged three times and has scandalously broken off all three engagements. She is afraid of becoming a man's property. During a house party, Lady Elizabeth is attempting to end her most recent engagement when she encounters Neil Severin. He is a wicked rogue and a secret government assassin. Despite Neil's black reputation his ability to focus on the job has made him extremely successful. However, his legendary focus is disrupted when he encounters Lady Elizabeth in a difficult situation. He is immediately drawn to her and when he discovers that his most current target is someone Lady Elizabeth holds dear, it only complicates matters for him. What begins as an accidental meeting for these two strangers becomes an adventure for two people who draw out the best in each other.

Karen Robards does a fantastic job creating two main characters that you can enjoy as individuals. She takes the time to explore the different and complex natures to their personalities. The author did a particularly great job with Neil Severin character, I felt he was a bit darker than most historical heroic characters but she made him into a person who you can find redeemable and worthy of finding happiness. I truly loved how the author created characters that were interesting on their own but become even more compelling as the two character spent more time together. Karen Robards also did a fantastic job with the minor characters in the book. I found myself very interested in their lives and what might happen to them in the future.

As someone who loves historical novels as my favorite type of book to read I must say that Karen Robards does an absolutely wonderful job of creating an original and creative story with compelling and complex characters. I wanted to learn more about them and was extremely pleased when the book ended happily for them both.

I highly recommend Karen Robards latest Banning sister trilogy novel. I only suggest you triple your enjoyment and by reading the books in order to enjoy them most!

Reviewed by Mary from the Bookaholics Romance Book Club

Felicia says

When Beth breaks up with her current beau the night he planned to announce their engagement, she has no idea how far he will go to exact revenge. Neil, a government assassin intent on killing her brother-in-law, comes to her rescue at great personal risk.

Kelly says

This book has been on my shelf for so many years and I have never had the impetus to pick it up, but I am glad that I finally did because I rather enjoyed it.

Both Elizabeth and Neil were well-developed and well-written and I liked the progression of their relationship. The supporting characters were equally as engaging and gave added depth to the novel.

The plot sometimes felt a bit random, but it certainly didn't dull my enjoyment. In fact, it kind of worked in keeping everything fresh otherwise it could have lapsed into a rather dull revenge plot that any number of other novels in this genre have tried their hand at.

I would definitely read another regency novel by Karen Robards.

?Ann Matalines? says

All these years, he'd thought heaven was past praying for. Now he knew he'd been wrong. He'd found heaven right here, in this red-haired snip of a girl he meant to cherish for the rest of his life.

My first historical fiction in paperback and I wasn't disappointed. Lady Elizabeth has an unbelievable character considering that it has an assassin theme on it. I always admire her strength in book 1 and book 2 but I thought about the onslaught of events and the normal thing to do is to cry in frustration but I didn't see any hint of her vulnerability. Neil and Lady Elizabeth are perfectly match. They are both headstrong and stubborn that can neutralize one with the other.

Banning Sisters trilogy has a mix of passion and scandal that readers of historical fiction will love the most.

Lynsey A says

Boring. That is one word to describe this book. It had some good parts but for the most part, I was bored with the book. There really seemed to be hardly any interaction between the H/h in the beginning part of the book.

Plus, some of the scenes were just way too long.

The heroine was a "shameless" (pun intended) flirt even after her marriage to the hero. Even if she was doing it to make him jealous it just made me dislike her. Nor did I really care for the hero either. He did get a bit better than he was in the beginning but there wasn't anything redeeming enough about both characters to make me like them by the end.

I am usually a fan of Karen Robards books but this one just fell flat for me. Maybe she's written too many romantic suspense lately and has lost something in historical writing. I don't know. I just didn't enjoy this book. In fact, I skimmed the last few chapters or so. By that time I wanted to shoot the heroine and the hero.

Tammy Walton Grant says

Oh, I am so disappointed in this book! The story, which begins with such promise, seemed to me to just fall down 1/3 of the way through. The rest of the book felt rushed, and the ending tacked on. Robards is so much better than this book would have you think. Ugh. I'm going to re-read the first 2, then read this one again to see if my opinion changes.

Jessica says

I had to wait a long time for this conclusion to the Banning Sisters trilogy. I was not disappointed! I really enjoyed Beth's character, although sometimes I thought she pushed the envelope a bit to far just because she could. But, we all know people like this. I also enjoyed Neil's character, but didn't particularly like the light that was shed on Nick and Hugh (the male leads from the other two books).

Overall this was fun and entertaining. It was worth waiting for.

Cindy says

Picked up this book at the library today. Never have read anything by this author before, but what interested is the time period of 1800s (The high time of the English Ton). First chapter, already Miss Banning in a great deal of trouble; fixing to ruin her reputation. Hmmm.....we shall see.

I finished this book last night; what a delightful read. I certainly will be reading more of Ms. Robards books. Her writing style is so skillful that you can perfectly picture the scenery and characters during the early 1800s. Also, she has crafted the early english prose with such ease that you can imagine the dialect flowing between the characters. Definitely recommend this book.

Thenia says

[she had just knocked unconscious the latest of her jilted fiances who did not take the broken engagement very well, and found him climbing in through the window. She enlists his help in exchange for her silence

and he agrees, both of them thinking they'll never see each other again.

Neil, however, finds himself in a bind and decides to kidnap Beth to lure

Jess the Romanceaholic says

Good Lord this book was a long time coming!

In the tradition of the other Banning Sisters books, this novel was full of secret plots, spies, and intrigues.

I thoroughly enjoyed it. There was really never a dull moment, and every time it seemed that progress had been made, something else jumped forth to cause problems between them (just like I like it lol)

Sensitive readers should be aware that this novel contains attempted rape, kidnapping, and a sexual assault (some would call it "forced seduction", but honestly I think it may have crossed the line a bit).

It also has the dreaded "hero sees the heroine naked without her consent" thing which drives me NUTS in romance novels. Attention Authors: THAT'S NOT SEXY.

heaves breath

Despite that, however, it was a wonderful way to end the Banning Sisters Trilogy which started with Scandalous followed by Irresistible. Gabby/Nick and Claire/Hugh play a big part, as does their wonderfully meddling aunt.

I absolutely adored Neil, however. I know I may be alone in this, but one of the things I loved about him was that he actually, honest to goodness considered killing Beth -- just snapping her neck. Usually in romance novels (outside of Anne Stuart's creations of course lol), even the most hardened assassin hero would never consider killing an innocent woman who'd gotten in his way. I *liked* that he was all like "Man that sucks I'm gonna have to snap her neck. Oh well." (paraphrased of course :P)

The only thing keeping it from being 5 stars is the fact that the ending seemed really abrupt to me. Everything got wrapped up in a nice little HEA mind you; it's just that there was some fade-to-black smexin that seemed a bit out of place, followed by a short bit of action and then cut to what was practically an epilogue where Robards *told* us, rather than *showed* us how the rest of the stumbling blocks to Neil and Beth's HEA were quickly and tidily swept away. Knowing how long it's been since this book was supposed to come out (what is it, an 8 year wait?), it almost feels like Robards took the old dusty, unfinished manuscript off the shelf and spent a few days quickly whipping up an ending and sent it off to her editors so that she could just be done with it.

Still, despite that, it was a highly satisfying and attention-grabbing novel that I would highly recommend to any fan of the Banning Sisters novels (which, I admit, I suggest reading in order before picking up this novel, even though it could easily stand alone).

Solid 4 1/2 Stars.

Miranda Davis says

If a Regency could read like an Indiana Jones adventure, this is it. It's definitely different and in a good way.

This is the first of her novels for me. Apparently it's the last installment of a series but it holds up as a stand alone novel. First 100 pp. were terrific: gripping opening, engaging H/h, though hero is darker in tone danger-wise than most of what I read. The story was suspenseful with unexpected things happening one after another. This review will lack clarity bec. I am not going to spoil the twists and turns if I can help it.

There's crackling tension. He's a state assassin on the run from assassination by his former handlers, she's a notoriously misbehaved young lady who will not be ruled by any man (in a time when married women were the legal chattel of their husbands, D'oh!). There are threats of kidnapping, debauchery by auction and every conceivable threat of murder/death: stabbing, shooting, garroting, drowning, being buried alive, etc., yet it all forms a coherent whole and a very fast-paced story.

There's no explaining ANYTHING without spoiling it so I can only say that this is a truly entertaining adventure-romance. Oh, and I can say, great writing, use of dialogue, the language was a treat.

Last great thing: back in society, the heroine Beth outdoes herself behaving like an incomprehensible bitch and I really started to dislike (read: detest) her but whammy! come to find out that while I was hating on her there's a last, unexpected plot twist and they achieve a HEA.

I will say, all in all, I got tired of the heroine's incessant contrariness. They were in peril time and again and she never does what he says, tho' he's the one who knows how to stay alive when there are goons out to get you. (But kudos to the author if she wanted me to feel as tense and as irritated at her as the hero presumably did.) Many times, I admired her contrariness on principle, she defends him rather than run and insists he save other women not just her, etc.; other times I wish just once she'd sit the fuck down, or duck the fuck out of the way or shut the fuck up. In other words, I don't love bratty heroines. But I did like the chemistry bet. H/h and given all the evil the hero did in his former life, perhaps she is his proper penance.

Ultimately, the brat bugged me too much to be 5 stars.

Koki says

Myslela som si, že príbeh Gabby, najstaršej zo sestier Banningových už ni? nepred?í... naš?astie som sa mýlila. Kniha o najmladšej sestre Beth to dokázala!

Od úplného začiatku až do samého konca to bola pre m?a priam ?itate?ská bašta. Recenziu nájdete tu: <http://kokinakniznica.blogspot.sk/201...>

Shelly says

Wow! That is all I can say for the moment, WOW! I didn't have much hope for the final book in the Banning

Sisters trilogy, seeing as I liked the first, but didn't find it utterly remarkable, and I found so much to nit-pick about the second, but in this series, Karen Robards saved the best for last!

Lady Elizabeth Banning is a fiery redhead who loves to set the beau monde on its ear. Having already jilted two fiancées, and trying to quietly end a third engagement and failing miserably, runs into what she thinks is a house-breaker. Instead of fearing the man, she enlists his help to 'clean up' the situation. Not knowing that Neil Severin is no burglar, but an assassin come to kill her beloved brother-in-law, lest he be killed himself, Beth is grateful for his help. Upon meeting Beth, Neil's first thoughts are about killing her, to make sure there are no witnesses, however he is so entranced by her, he is unable to do so. Decided to kidnap her for his purposes a few days later, Neil is waiting for her in the park she frequents when she is kidnapped before he's had a chance to! Tracking her down to a castle whose purposes at present is to sell women into prostitution, Neil attempts to rescue her. Beth, not knowing if she will be rescued, decides to enlist several other women to try and save themselves. They are successful, but only with Neil's helping them escape, and much to his dismay, helping all the women to reach safety. Meanwhile, half of England is looking for Neil, and he is caught and heavily chained, only being spared his life thanks to Beth speaking up. In league with her new friends, Beth frees Neil to escape, and he insists she come along, she thinks because of a head injury, but really it's because he wants to continue with his plan of drawing Beth's brother-in-law, the duke out so he can kill him. Along the way, the truth of it comes out, and Beth, who is terrified of marriage, decides the safest thing to do would be to marry and attempt a resolution for everyone. Being married to her does help Neil's case, as her brothers-in-law are wary to do, but agree. There is only one assassin left who wants to kill Neil, but as Neil reveals he is also a Marquess, everyone feels safe in the knowledge that Neil and the assassin will not move in the same social circles, especially since they fake Neil-as-the-angel-of-death-assassin's own death.

I don't even know what to say, I'm so happy I stuck with the series, because I loved it! I loved both Neil and Beth, I loved the story line, I loved the secondary characters, this is what I wanted from the first two! First, the characters! Beth is my kind of girl! I'll admit, in the first two in the series, I was not a fan, she was a little too immature. But as a young lady, she's probably very much like I would be if I were to be dropped in that era. Described as a hardcore flirt, who is known for jilting fiancées, she's determined not to settle, and does not want a tyrant of a husband ruling her life. She knows the difference between right and wrong, but is not afraid to blur the lines a bit to get what she wants and do what should be done. Beth is a bright and vivacious woman, and it's almost as if what you tell her is the proper thing to do, she's itching to do the opposite, and is not afraid of society's opinions of her, at least not too much. And if Beth is bright, then Neil is the opposite, he is the dark soul. Believing he is not good enough for Beth, he can't help but want her anyway. She's let him know that everyone is deserving of a second chance, and he begins to believe her, which is hard for him to do after years of living life literally day by day, hour by hour, minute by precious minute. The hard life as an assassin, and the hatred and grief that fueled his career has taken a toll on his soul, leaving him feeling damned. That Beth has cried for him, rescued him and married him to save his life leaves him a little shaky. But when Beth is shot, and Neil begs for Beth's life from a God he felt had left him, I nearly cried! They are perfect for each other! Neil is tolerant and even amused by Beth's antics, and Beth truly sees him as the man he is, not the job he did.

The other thing I really loved about this book is the story line. I haven't come across anything else like it, and I think it's well done. I like that there's a slow buildup between the two main characters, and it's not instant attraction. I love that besides Beth's antics, there are no major rules broken. I don't mind a few rules broken, but the major rule breakers, and lots of them, such as in second book in the series, take me out of the era, I read historicals to be in the era, not taken out.

Let me tell you, the secondary characters in this one are great! The girls Beth befriends in Trelawny Castle

and escape with are a riot! I love that they fought to escape and worked together. Granted they needed Neil's help, and he gave it only because of Beth, but they held fast together, and eventually became women Neil and Beth placed under their wings, but giving them employment and helping them find respectable positions. Mary, the mosquito as Neil calls her, is my favorite, she has such tenacity! A favorite character of mine throughout the series is the great Aunt Augusta, a no nonsense woman who is not afraid to share her opinions, and share them often. She's not an affectionate aunt, but it's obvious from her concern and constant lecturing of her nieces that she cares what becomes of them, and makes things easier for them in society.

This is definitely a keeper, one to read again and again! If you like the traditional regency era romances, with strong characters and a great story line, don't hesitate!

Bobbie O'keefe says

This is the third in a trilogy--and the best one in my view. Neil is a government assassin who has been marked for elimination by the people who employed him simply because he's too good at what he does. He believes himself that he's without redemption, but he's not quite ready to die; he just wants to be left alone so he can retire. Elizabeth is the sister-in-law of the man who put the kill order out on Neil and Neil intends to use her to get to his boss. When someone kidnaps her, the fun and the race is on. In order to rescue her so he can kidnap her himself (uh-huh, you heard me right) he must also rescue six other women. Elizabeth is gutsy and compassionate and calls Neil's bluff at every turn--and she wins. Neil has met his match. The characters are well developed, the dialogue is witty, and the action is non-stop.

Mandi Schreiner says

Lady Elizabeth, or Beth can't quite make it down the aisle. She has had numerous engagements and has broken them all. Her reputation with the ton is hanging on by a thread. Beth is going to have much more worries than just her reputation though. By chance she meets Neil Severin, who sneaks into her family's house to kill her brother-in-law, The Duke of Richmond. Neil is a spy, and needs the Duke dead. When Beth inadvertently thwarts his plan, Neil comes up with an even better plan – kidnap Beth, which will certainly bring the Duke to him, and then the deed can be done.

But things go awry when someone else kidnaps Beth – and Neil rushes off to claim his blackmail. From here it is quite the adventure between finding their way back to London and falling in love along the way.

Shameless is the first I have read by Karen Robards, but it happens to be the third in a trilogy. I think historicals with a spy hero can be tricky to pull off, but this one does a pretty good job of it. Because of his spy situation he becomes engaged in a conflict with the heroine- and then that conflict carries the story. Neil is a cold hearted hero, and Beth is very stubborn and independent. It is a nice pairing. Although Beth flirts and has been engaged numerous times, she is really naïve when it comes to romance. Neil is not used to being attracted to someone so much, so their romance scenes become a very sensual exploration. It takes a good while to get to there, but Karen Robards writes very hot scenes.

This book has a lot of adventure too. Poor Beth goes from being assaulted by an angry ex-fiancé, to

kidnapping, being sold into sex slavery, and then an entire adventure to get back to London with Neil. Sometimes I questioned Beth's bravado while handling these situations and Neil himself – having only lived a sheltered life in London. However, there is a scene in particular where she thinks she will be sold to the highest bidder for sexual favors where her terror really comes through. She accepts Neil pretty easily, but at the same time, he did rescue her so I went back and forth a lot.

Overall I liked this one – maybe a little too many mishaps along the way – but it has a nice colder hero and a heroine who pairs up with him nicely.

Rating: B-
