



Dance for a Diamond

Melinda Hammond

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Antonia Venn describes herself as a very average sort of female, "...average height, average colouring – a poor little dab of a girl, nothing to win the heart of a man of fortune or fashion!" In a bid for independence she decides to open a dancing school in Bath, despite the misgivings of her family. Antonia is persuaded to take the beautiful Isabella Burstock as a pupil, a decision that puts her on a collision course with the young heiress's autocratic brother.....

By the end of 1814 two forces are sweeping through Europe, a new dance, the waltz, and Napoleon Bonaparte. Melinda Hammond's characters are influenced by both – one brings love and romance, the other threatens to destroy their happiness and keep them apart forever.

A sweet Regency Romance.

Dance for a Diamond Details

Date : Published 2014 by Kindle (first published October 1st 2005)

ISBN :

Author : Melinda Hammond

Format : Kindle Edition

Genre : Historical, Romance, Historical Romance, Clean Romance, Regency

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From Reader Review Dance for a Diamond for online ebook

Rachel Knowles says

This is another charming traditional Regency romance by Melinda Hammond. Set against the background of the Napoleonic wars, culminating in the Battle of Waterloo, there is some nice historical detail that brings extra colour to the story. Quite by accident I read it as we approached the 200th anniversary of Waterloo which was an added bonus. I thought the opening scene was, perhaps, a tad unrealistic, but it was an enjoyable read and I shall continue to look for other books by this author.

Jennifer says

Despite the ridiculous circumstances that brought the MCs together for the first time, this was a decent read.

The author did a good job incorporating just enough historical details to make the story realistic and interesting without being too fussy. She also wrote a very compelling h. I wanted her to succeed. I admired her gumption but wish that she had a little more common sense in certain situations. The way she wasn't able to stand up and defend herself when wrongly accused grated too.

The H was a jerk. I understand that he had trust issues and feelings of inadequacy regarding his downturn in fortune, but he treated the h pretty shabbily at times. Then all he had to do was offer a heartfelt apology and all was forgiven. It's not that I wanted the h to be a bitter person. I just wanted the H to have to work for it more.

Overall, an engaging read. I appreciate how it was totally clean, but I wanted a more deserving H for our poor h. I will read more by this author. I hope that the MCs of her other books meet under better and more believable circumstances.

Wendy says

"Dance for a Diamond" which I won from Goodreads Giveaways is a delightful historical romance set in England during the Napoleonic crisis of 1814. The story begins at the betrothal ball of Lady Pamela Bressingham and Viscount Moran. Injured in battle and his estate mortgaged, Sir Laurence Oakford returns to find his fiancé announcing her engagement. After confronting the flighty fortune hunter he seeks solace in a brothel and is confronted by a young virgin who's being forced to sell herself to survive. Instead of taking advantage of her he buys her a ticket to Bath and gives her a diamond ring.

A year later Sir Laurence is surprised to find Antonia Venn operating a dancing school in Bath, her need for independence outweighing her family's apprehension. When Antonia enrolls his sister Isabella Burstock in dancing lessons, sparks fly as Sir Laurence and Antonia clash, only to find love blooming amid their trials and tribulations.

This entertaining plot is set in an era of propriety, decorum and manners. Antonia Venn is a woman from a well-respected family whose father, a notorious rake and gambler left her destitute after his death and

dependent on her aunt and uncle's generosity. Left a small inheritance by her mother she has decided to defy tradition and set up a dance school which brings censure from the aristocratic families in Bath, and lecherous men to her doorstep. This is a story of friendship and love in a restrictive society as war looms and fortunes are won or lost. The story progresses quickly and smoothly to a predictable, but charming ending.

The core characters are realistic for that period but not complex. Antonia Venn is a headstrong, quietly determined young woman from an impeccable lineage who struggles for independence to pursue a trade. Sir Laurence Oakland a wealthy aristocrat and former soldier is domineering, blunt, proud and haughty. When confronted by Antonia's frankness and courage he's smitten, and fears losing his heart forever to the obstinate young woman whose station in life is far below his own. Among the minor characters are Beatrice Chittering, Antonia's chatty, kind-hearted and loyal partner; Master Charles her charming and witty cousin; Bella Burstock, Sir Laurence's a spirited and overindulged minx of a sister as well as Sir Rigby Claremont an incorrigible flirt and devious lecher. The personalities of the characters add to the appeal of this romance.

"Dance for a Diamond" is fascinating light reading which holds the reader's attention from beginning to the end.

Donna says

A young woman learns that independence is not always freeing. I thought this was a good story but in the beginning it is a bit unrealistic/vague how she meets him where she does.

Jan Jones says

Lovely Regency novel from Melinda Hammond. A delight from start to finish

Michelle says

I received my copy of Dance for a Diamond, by Melinda Hammond, from the author through the Goodreads First Reads program.

Set in Regency England against the background of the Napoleonic Wars, Dance for a Diamond follows the independent minded Antonia Venn as she opens a dance school, despite the misgivings of those around her. Determined not to rely on the charity of her relations, Venn opens her dance school in Bath, constantly aware that her independent streak makes her a target for condemnation and possible scandal. It seems a struggle to maintain a respectable reputation as a dance school worthy of the attendance of the young ladies of Society, and Venn must navigate the unwanted advances of the likes of Sir Rigby, who see her as an available mistress. Antonia, and her comically annoying assistant, Miss Chittering, are modestly successful in their venture and attract several pupils, eager to learn the latest dances before their "London come out", including the new turning dance, the Waltz.

Antonia develops a relationship with her pupil Isabella and her mother, Lady Burstock. It is through this relationship that Antonia finds herself face to face with the ever dark and demanding Sir Laurence Oakford,

who saved her from inevitable ruin in a brothel in the opening pages of the book, and sent her on her way to Bath. Oakford's tortured past colours his ability to politely deal with Antonia, his sister Isabella and others. Prone to moodiness and a desire to dominate every situation, Oakford's brash personality means that he and Antonia are constantly brushing each other the wrong way. Navigating societal pressure, the financial challenges of being independent, her roguish cousin Charles, the chatty Miss Chittering, impulsive and brattish Isabella, Sir Rigby and moody Oakford, Antonia has her hands full.

Not familiar with Regency period terminology, I found myself looking up terms for clothing, dances and transport. I rather enjoyed the learning experience. I admired Antonia's independence, which I am sure would have been as reckless and impulsive in that time period. My only fault with the book was that at times the romance elements were so vague that I wasn't even aware certain characters had had the opportunity to develop feelings for one another until they suddenly declared their love, such as with Charles and Isabella. I enjoyed the sparring between Oakford and Antonia and the back handed way that she learns about his past and his personality. *Dance for a Diamond* was an enjoyable read and I will certainly read other books by this author.

While there is romance blooming between the lines, it is not always evident to the reader
