



A Notorious Ruin

Carolyn Jewel

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All the widowed Lucy Sinclair Wilcott wants is to save enough money to move to a cottage of her own and keep her younger sister safe from the consequences of their father's poor judgment. No one is more aware than she how thoroughly her first marriage ruined her. She could not remarry if she wanted to. Then the Marquess of Thrale comes to visit and long-absent feelings of desire surge back.

Everything Lord Thrale believes about the beautiful Mrs. Wilcott is wrong. The very last woman he thought he was interested in proves to be a brilliant, amusing, arousing woman of deep honor who is everything he wants in a lover, for the rest of his life. If only he can convince her of that.

A Notorious Ruin Details

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From Reader Review A Notorious Ruin for online ebook

Melissa says

[All along the heroine had been telling the hero there was no way they could have a long-term relationship, given her background and reputation, and I thought we would see more of her working her way through it to come to the conclusion that she deserves love and happ

Dabney says

I really liked the vast majority of this book but two things irked me. One, the sex scenes kept hinting at something I couldn't quite figure out. I never quite got a grip on the hero's true desires. Secondly, it ended so abruptly I wondered if I had a flawed copy. But, I did enjoy the rest of it and I think Ms. Jewell's heroine is a truly fascinating woman.

Lady Wesley says

ARC received from this generous author who offered them to all of her Facebook followers.

This is the first full-length Carolyn Jewell title that I have read, and I am very impressed by her writing style. She has a lovely way with the English language.

I have not read the first title in this series, *Lord Ruin*, which involves the “forced” marriage of the eldest Sullivan sister, Anne, to the Duke of Cynssyr. Our heroine, Lucy, was in London at the time and apparently met our hero, Lord Thrale, and I think that neither one was impressed by the other.

Years earlier, Lucy had married Jack “Devil” Walcott, a man far beneath her, who had earned fame and fortune as a professional boxer. He wanted her for her beauty, and Lucy’s spendthrift father wanted the £50,000 Devil offered him. Two unexpected things happened: Lucy became an expert on boxing, and she grew to love her husband.

After Devil died and Lucy returned to her father’s home, she was shunned by village ladies of Bartley Green. Anne had been the sister who managed her father, his estate, and her younger sisters. Now, the widowed Lucy is trying to fulfill that role, but she is struggling. Her sister Mary is happily married to a baron, and Lucy is determined to protect her youngest sister, Emily, from their father’s machinations. She plans to send Emily to live with their sister and remove herself to a cottage in the country, dreaming of contentment in her poetry, her flowers, and her elderly wolfhound mongrel, Roger.

As the book opens, Lord Thrale and Captain Niall arrive to spend a few weeks hunting, fishing, and perhaps attending a few “mills” (Regency slang for boxing matches). Boxing plays a central role throughout the plot, as Bartley Green is home to the renowned Johnson’s Academy of Pugilistic Arts, where both high-born gentlemen and the “flash” come to practice and watch. In fact, using the expertise she learned from Devil, Lucy is funding her escape plan by saving up money that she wins from secretly betting on local boxing matches.

Thrale and Lucy are polite but distant with one another. (Major hint: Roger the hound is immediately in love with Thrale.) Thrale sees Lucy as cool and empty-headed, which is exactly the façade she has adopted to conceal her deeper emotions and hurts. Jewel is very good at showing, not telling, us the two different sides of Lucy's personality. For her part, Lucy sees Thrale as just another spoiled, selfish gentleman with no purpose in life beyond his own amusement. She finds herself attracted to him, but she doesn't really like him, and indeed, he is not terribly likable at the outset.

Please read the rest of my review at [Romantic Historical Reviews](#).

Tracy DeNeal says

Lucy and Thrale

A notorious widow in a small village meets her match with a notorious marquess. Sparks fly and passions are ignited.

The poor Sinclair sisters have the worst, most selfish and self centered father imaginable. To say he is loathsome would be charitable.

I have now completed the three book series. Color me impressed. I loved all three installments.

Leigh says

more of 3.5 stars

Honestly, i was a bit disappointed with the ending. it was hurried as if the author lacked another imagination to end it (the way i expected it) or she was a lil bit scared to put "more lines or pages" which will create a devastating effect instead he he.

The build up between Lucy and Thrale is slow compared to other characters in the romance genre (compared to what i have read anyway :-)) but i liked it in a way that the characteristics of both protagonists are peeled layer by layer. The passions are hidden, both are reserved and it took a hundred pages later for a kiss :-D Then BOOM! gone are the walled feelings, the facade emotions, the sexual repressions. Their sexual needs are the same - deeper, harder, dirty and loud. Actually, i did not expect that.

I appreciate Lucy's first marriage. I mean, widowed characters in this genre tend to have sordid or unhappy marital lives. Even Lucy's sisters, family or friends viewed her marriage to a commoner prizefighter an unhappy one. But they were wrong, she actually felt loved by Jack and really really enjoyed their bedspout.

I am maybe deranged or what but the slow revelation of her marriage really intrigued me to the point that I crave to read a story of it. Jack "Devil" Wilcott - 6'6ft, a very large commoner who married a gentlewoman for her beauty and she for his ahmmm.. money (?) to save her family. Unhappy at first but she found joy in their relationship later. It was a unique kind of affair. Jack taught her well - from the science and art of the fights, to boxing lessons, to coarse lovemaking (haha). I want to know "how" he taught her that she craved

for it - that is basing her attitude towards sex with Thrale years later :-D.

I am a bit sad actually that Lucy lost Jack. It's like watching the first few minutes of UP! Her relationship with her husband was wow. Short words, few sentences but deep and beautiful in a rugged kind of way hehe.

AHEMMMM, BACK TO THE ORIGINAL PLOT:

Her relationship with Thrale was of course not a rebound. They were not even friends at the beginning. They did not like each other. Just like in real life, small instances happen to get to know another person better. Their relationship just bloomed out of nowhere. Like a wild flower. I appreciate Lucy for she was aware that Thrale is different from Jack. And it is being honest also that Thrale reminded her of the Devil from time to time (though her husband was taller, broader and bigger *wink wink*).

I understand her loss of an equal, i understand her lust towards Thrale, the longing for companionship... i even understand Thrale's love for her. But FRANKLY, i am not entirely convinced that what she felt for Thrale is Love - the deeper level. I mean, Thrale fulfilled her needs in every aspect - I dig that. I did not really feel the "love" (that kind of love that i usually expect from romance) from her. They declared their love almost at the bottom of the end page haha. So maybe that's why, I do not have faith that what Lucy feels for Thrale in this is WHOOOOAAA!! I am not despairing because with those simple words, another hope is blooming. Maybe in time, Lucy will love him as an earthly woman feels for an earthly man. I am not wishing that she forgets her husband (damn! i wish their story was written no matter how it ended tragically har har).

She was well loved and well f***ed by her first husband. She is experiencing that with Thrale. To lose one love and to find it again. The first was somehow forbidden yet pleasurable and the second seemed right yet edgy :-D Similar yet different.

With all the sacrifices she did, with the loss she had, with the ruined reputation that will cling to her for the rest of her life? She deserved to be happy. And Thrale will be good for her... Awwwww!!!

Feminista says

I love the story of a fallen woman and I love how the heroine loved her ex. So refreshingly different. But this book prattled about things that were nonsensical and the ending was so anticlimactic, so lukewarm. I can't fathom what the author must have been thinking.

Jaci says

This book was everything you expect from Carolyn, outstanding characters, a great story and sumptuous awe inspiring sex. She writes with stunning complexity that keeps your mind engaged at all times. This is the second book in the Sinclair Series and I enjoyed it as much as Lord Ruin. This book tells the story of Lucy who was forced to marry a commoner to help her family get out of debt. After her husband dies she returns home to her father's house. She is treated harshly by women who think she whored herself for the money, and the men assume that she is available for the taking. All she wants to do is buy herself a small cottage and

live alone.

Enter the Marquess of Tharle, invited to her father's house for visit. She doesn't want to have anything to do with him or any other man. She is a puzzle to him that he is determined to solve. The more time they spend together she realizes she wants him but knows that Society will shun him if anyone finds out. They start a secret affair that includes very explicit sex scenes. You will have to read the book to find out what happens.

This book is beautifully written and worth reading. I have always enjoyed her writing and cannot wait for the next book in the Sinclair Sisters Series.

I received a complimentary copy for an honest review.

∅???? [Punya Reviews...] says

My review contains spoilers and they're mostly my thoughts as I went with the book... for more, visit [Punya Reviews...](#)

After reading Lord Ruin, and despising it, I must've been crazy to request a review copy from CJ. You ask, why? That's mainly because, even though I hated some of the other characters, Lucy and Thrale were two exceptions. I've been waiting for their book ever since CJ announced that she's writing. I'm just happy to finally to have read A Notorious Ruin, book 2 of the Sinclair Sisters Series.

For those who haven't read book 1 of the Sinclair Sisters it was published way back in 2002/2003. I read it about 3 yrs. ago... well, just read my review [HERE](#) and be the judge, because I'd rather not repeat myself. Not again. I don't even think it's necessary to read this, as book 2 is a very nicely done standalone. You won't miss much IMO.

The Sinclair Sisters are Anne, Mary, Lucy and Emily, 4 daughters of Viscount Sinclair. Their father is a complete a\$\$ who has already gambled away the family fortune. Anne, the eldest is the h of book 1, was your proverbial spinster; a 'Plain Jane' with a non-existent dowry. But Anne had no big aspirations. She's smart and knew how to manage a household tittering on financial ruin. She also knew how to handle their self-centered father. Anne was the epitome of the Saintly Sister. But then, Duke of Cynssyr, the notorious rake of the ton who had also been dubbed as the 'Insincere Cynssyr' due to his inability to keep his pr*ck in his pants, happens to Anne (don't even ask me exactly 'how', as I might break into another rant). Et voilà, she finds herself married to a Duke!

Their middle sister, Mary, had already been married to Lord Aldreth and has found happiness in a love marriage. Anne despaired of her marriage being a just a shell, when she finds herself falling in love with a man like Cynssyr. Thankfully, for her, he did have a change of heart during the course of the story, with that, quite determined to be monogamous for once in his life.

Right!

Moving on...

Thrale was one of Anne's friends who helped her throughout book 1 in various situations. He, as we find here, is also friends with Cynssyr, Aldreth and the Earl of Bracebridge, Devon. Now Devon, another friend

of Anne, I was fond of... until a chapter at the end of Lord Ruin. After reading that scene, I lost whatever liking and respect I might have had for him. It was disgusting to say the least. I hate rakes generally, even then it was gross. I knew from that book that Devon was going to be paired with Emily. Both have feelings for each-other, trying their best to hide it. Emily thinking Devon doesn't care because she's so young, and Devon thinking Emily is too beautiful and innocent to be his. Either way, I was more interested in Thrale and Lucy and how things play out between them, mainly because both were rather... mysterious. Not a lot were given but hints.

It's been 2 or so years since Anne had married and moved away. Lucy, who was already a widow in book 1, has been forced to shoulder the burden of housekeeping and managing their financial woes. Their father is still the same, doesn't care one whit about the source and how difficult it is for Lucy to scrape by. All he wants is to show off the non-existent money in everything he does, rest can go to hell. Anne (and now Lucy) will manage somehow. End of story.

Lucy's previous marriage was mired in scandal and until this book, we didn't know what *exactly* happened. The most beautiful of her sisters, Lucy was the first sisters to marry off in haste. She's also the first and only sister to have been widowed. The details of her marriage are not up for discussion and Lucy is determined to keep it that way. She has been dubbed as a beauty without the brains, which is a façade she likes maintaining so that the gossipy biddies and the rest of the world leave her alone. Yet the truth is, as it's gradually revealed in the story, that Lucy is as smart a woman as they come. And no matter the vicious gossip and ruined reputation, Lucy had loved her deceased husband and misses him dearly. Lucy also has a secret of her own, through which, she's stashing a bit of coin here and there, in hopes that one day she can escape this house, and her father, to a small cottage of her own. So far, this has what kept Lucy sane and going.

Note that this story heavily revolves around pugilism and its various ideas. I'll be lying if I said that I know much, so many-a-times, I was confused about the terms and such. But that didn't hinder my enjoyment.

Thrale is the only son and heir to the Marquisate. Though his main interest has always been pugilism, he's willing to see through this responsibility. That doesn't mean he doesn't train regularly. Thrale is tall and strong, heavily muscled unlike most of his peers. Obviously he'd pursue his interest with more gusto had he also not have to take care of his rundown estate since his wastrel father's death. Moreover, he's trying his best to clean up the already besmirched family name, again, thanks to his sire. A notorious rake, the old Marquess made a harem out of their estate, Blackfern, both in looks and reputation. Thrale despised every single moment of it. Since he passed, Thrale had done his utmost to erase everything that his father installed in the house. He sold some of those gaudy pieces to pay the debt, threw away some and gave away the rest. Blackfern now looks all dark, dull and lifeless but that suits Thrale just fine. He's also, almost a saint in comparison to his buddies when it comes to women. He's very discreet in his liaisons, never chases women left and right.

Thrale visits the Sinclair house on Lord Sinclair's invitation with an acquaintance, Captain Niall. The moment I saw Lucy and him together, I knew that they didn't have *that* definitive spark. Thrale, though considers Lucy the most beautiful woman he'd ever laid his eyes on, with her dark hair and blue eyes, he also admires intelligence. Hence Lucy has just been Anne's sister. Yes he felt attracted to her loveliness as any virile male, but that's about it. The same can be said about Lucy. Thrale has just been a family friend, a rather reserved one who generally prefers staying in the background. But after this visit, it was certain that things were about to change.

Johnson's famous pugilist institute is here on Bartley Green, near Sinclair estate. Each year, throngs, mostly men, come down to enjoy matches between famous pugilists. Bets fly wild. This year is no different. Lucy,

personally, is looking forward to it. As mentioned earlier, she has a secret, something that has to do with her late husband, the famous Irish pugilist, the Devil. Though the starting was rather inauspicious, she being the touted beauty and he coming from the streets, literally, Lucy and Devil were able to make a partnership out of their marriage. Lucy gradually began studying Devil's profession, learning much about pugilism in general. She also got to know some people, who are now helping her placing bets on her behalf. Lucy had studied the game well, and her hunches are rather good. Actually pretty good. It can be said that Lucy has made a small income out of those winnings. If things go well enough, she'd be able to buy that cottage she's been dreaming about very, *very* soon.

An incident regarding the Sinclair Library and a copy of Milton finally blows Lucy's *cover*; at least, to Thrale. He notices the spark of intelligence he has never before seen in her. Though Lucy, at first, feels uncomfortable knowing Thrale must know her secret, soon enough things begin to transform. Now knowing Lucy to be beautiful *and* intelligent, Thrale's mind begins to wonder in dangerous directions. And Lucy suddenly becomes too aware of Thrale's presence, not to mention his magnificent pugilist's body. It's not as if Lucy is any stranger to that type. It was terrific to know that she wasn't another fragile young widow who needed rescuing. She was strong and smart, with a healthy appetite for sex, something she never denied to herself or to Thrale in the later parts of the story. Lucy enjoyed every moment of it with her husband. She misses him, and what they had, but she has no intentions of starting an affair or becoming any man's mistress. She just wants to live her own life and finally have some control over it. Yet Thrale; he intrigues her in a way that Lucy begins feeling overwhelmingly tempted. It only fuels when she finds the same interest in Thrale's eyes.

If not only the ever growing attraction, their mutual interest in pugilism brings Lucy and Thrale together. Meetings at odd places at odd hours helped too. At one point, Lucy gives up any pretention of a vacuous woman around Thrale. Gradually, she even opens up about her mysterious marriage. This shocks and intrigues Thrale to no end. She was married to THE Devil?! I found it really entertaining when his thoughts would directly dive into the gutter, imagining Devil taking Lucy after a night of intense match. Being a pugilist himself, Thrale can understand. And he envies the dead bastard! I was positively vibrating with glee when they, at last, end up in bed... or on a couch, all in a hurry. I'd say, I loved seeing Lucy's demanding side, something that even surprised Thrale, but made him no less ecstatic. Rather, it makes him desperate to have her whenever, and, however he wanted to, with Lucy giving herself in abandon. Thrale knew that for the time being he should be happy with it, not wanting to find out where this will ultimately lead them to.

The sex scenes were HOT. I mean, who knew the seemingly aloof Marquess had a penchant for rough sex and light bondage, things that only exhilarates Lucy further. She has heard faint rumors, now Lucy knows what *exactly* he wants and likes. Thrale was a bit hesitant at first. He thought his crude words and preferences might turn her off. Imagine his surprise and delight finding Lucy reciprocating! I found it so sexy that they couldn't keep their hands off each-other whenever they were alone or could get a little privacy. And I mean *anywhere*. *wink*

As for Lucy, she's determined to avoid any new scandal. She loves being with Thrale. The connection between them, which started out tentative, is now full on madness. She loves every inch of his body, and doesn't shy away from saying so. Knowing that he feels the same only made everything more incredible. For the first time in years, Lucy begins feeling alive. But she also had no interest of going beyond an affair for the duration of Thrale's stay. At least, for now, that's all she can have. And she *must* be happy with it.

We get to meet some new characters too, childhood friends of the Sinclair Sisters. There's also trouble in the form of a man Lucy's husband thought a friend. The same a\$\$hole who ruined Devil's financial status. This guy came down for the event, saw Lucy and instantly starts making insinuations. Lucy is also on high alert.

Then he starts spreading vile gossip about her. Captain Niall, who was an amiable fellow, begins to give Lucy the eyes that Thrale instantly knew would bring no good. Lucy is beautiful, every man around her wants her; it's the fact. But that doesn't mean Thrale would have to like the dirty looks they share. When he hears of the rumor, he's mad but it's the sad truth that he can't do anything to protect her. Not without giving up their own little secret to the world. Thrale suddenly wishes he could protect Lucy always.

When the big event nears, Lucy's BILs begin to arrive one by one to enjoy it on Thrale's invitation. Alongside Cynssyr and Aldreth, Devon also makes an appearance. I don't remember much about him from book 1 but that Devon had a scandalous reputation with an equally scandalous past. He's the newly minted Earl but Devon is still a pugilist at heart. He loves it, practicing regularly. He's still crazy about Emily, who, as we find, still feels the same. Only she's not sure if Devon will ever look at her with the eyes of a man lusting after a woman. Then there was Chapter 40 which gave me hope about Devon and Emily and the sizzling chemistry between them. I might not be averse to their story after all. *heehee*

When his high and mighty son-in-laws are here, Sinclair of course has to show off his new acquisition; a pricey carriage with fine horses. As he begins boasting about it, Lucy begins wondering about the source of the money... which leads her to her secret stash, only to find it empty. It was so heartbreaking to and made me so horribly mad! Earlier in the story, he demanded that Lucy pursue one of the gentlemen, his preference being Thrale. One more rich son-in-law, to him, equals to another source to beg for money. Lucy vehemently denied any help, embarrassed to find Thrale has witnessed that ugliness. The POS returned that 'rebellion' this way; stealing her money and spending it on that carriage. Not only that, he also inquires if Cynssyr or any of his other guests would like to buy it! Good God! Somehow, from Lucy's expression and knowing Sinclair's disgusting track record, Cynssyr, Aldreth and the rest knew that something must be horribly wrong. But the one who was most enraged, and worried, was Thrale. He already knew of Lucy's little dream, so he also knew how this will break her spirit.

Thrale would love to tell Sinclair exactly what he thought of him, but keeps quiet just for Lucy's sake. Even now that their intimacy has grown from mere lust induced haze to something deeper, more meaningful, Lucy still craves secrecy. That connection has only entwined them in a way that Thrale doesn't see a way out of it. At least not for himself. He never thought himself a romantic, but these days, he keeps thinking of Blackfern, his huge, sterile mansion. It needs to be brought back to life with much love and laughter. Once upon a time, he thought he'd marry out of duty. But now, Thrale can't imagine being in that house again, all alone, with no Lucy with him in it. Only he can't really force her to do anything if she doesn't feel the same. Depressing thought, that.

Lucy, on the other hand, is tempted. When Thrale offers help with her cottage, she declines, again, scared of any scandal. But this time, she's thinking of Thrale. She doesn't want to ruin his chances of a good marriage to a fresh debutante. Thrale even offers to help her with the betting, as in he'd place the bets on her behalf but Lucy doesn't really know what to do anymore. She rather resigns herself to living with her father.

I was scared that I'd have to witness a defeated Lucy and to me, that would've been so very unfair. Her life has been mired in vicious gossip. She had nothing to do with any of it, neither was she a fallen woman. Yet, these busybodies made her life hell, making her unwelcomed wherever she went. Her own father is a weak nincompoop. Though Lucy loves her sisters and wishes them all the best, she's envious of their happy state. Lucy would've loved that for herself, would've loved children of her own. Yet, fate will not let her be in peace. It was just unfair. I was hoping, praying that Thrale, who I already knew has fallen madly in love with Lucy, could convince her that she doesn't need to sacrifice her happiness this way. She needed to see that there's life beyond, that there's a man who's willing to stand by her side, rain or shine.

Then it happens, when the whole Sinclair clan and friends are invited to Blackfern; an attempt for Thrale to bring the old days back, just without the debauchery and the gaudiness. Lucy instantly takes an interest in his garden, as it's one of her favorite pastimes. Thrale loves seeing Lucy taking charge of the manor, just the way he has been dreaming lately. And though he'd surrender to Lucy's wishes, Thrale had to try, at least once, to see if she'd be willing to be his wife. I can gladly tell you that he was successful in his pursuit.

A Notorious Ruin was such a heartfelt story of two lonely souls who needed to find one-another. I know now I'd be seriously unhappy if Thrale and Lucy didn't end up together. 4 stars and recommended. Looking forward to the next installment, which I'm thinking, would be of Emily and Devon's. Just hope I don't have to suffer through more of his shenanigans in his book.

PS: Don't remember if Thrale was ever called by his given name, Robert. Then again, knowing CJ's books, heroes don't always even have a given name. :p

I received an ARC from the author in exchange of an honest review and I'd like to thank her for it.

Caz says

I've given this a B at AAR.

A Notorious Ruin is the second book in Ms Jewel's series about the four Sinclair sisters, which began with **Lord Ruin** back in 2002, so there's been a bit of a long gap between books one and two!

The eldest sister is Anne, who is now married to the Duke of Cynssyr, the youngest is Emily, and in the middle are Mary (Lady Aldreth) and Mrs Lucy Wilcott, who is widowed and back living at the Cooperage with her father and Emily.

It's widely known that Lucy married beneath her; her late husband was a prizefighter, and the gossip is that they eloped. Thus, Lucy's reputation is in tatters and the local tabbies have no compunction in regularly delivering barely veiled insults and generally treating her as if she's no better than a whore – which is how most of the men view her. Following her husband's unexpected death, Lucy moved back to her father's house where a condition was imposed on her that she would never speak of her husband or the circumstances of her marriage, so that even her sisters don't know the truth – that she married Mr. Wilcott at her father's urging because he needed money to pay off his massive debts.

I had forgotten how much I'd disliked Mr Sinclair in **Lord Ruin**. He's almost permanently drunk, incredibly selfish and, having sold Lucy for money once, isn't above doing it again. All Lucy wants at this point is to be left alone; she is quietly saving money and will soon have enough to be able to move out of the Cooperage and rent a cottage of her own. But before she goes, she needs to make arrangements for Emily; Lucy knows it's only a matter of time before their father turns his attention to his youngest daughter as a way of generating income, and is determined to protect her.

The village of Bartley Green is a popular destination among the men of the ton it is the location of Johnson's Academy of Pugilistic Arts, where both professionals and amateurs come to practice and to watch the "mills" (Regency slang for prize-fights). The book opens with the Marquess of Thrale and his friend, Captain Niall, arriving to stay at the Cooperage in order to attend the prize fights which will be taking place over the next few weeks. Lucy isn't pleased at the prospect of having guests; not only is it an expense they can't really

afford, it means she will have to remain hidden behind the carefully constructed façade she presents to the world, an outer shell of amiability and vacuity she uses as a way of dealing with rudeness with which she is so often confronted.

Thrale has met Lucy before, of course, through his association with the Duke and Duchess of Cynssyr, but while he certainly appreciates her beauty, dismisses her as being insipid and not possessed of any of the spirit he normally finds attractive. But living under the same roof for a short time means he sees her unintentionally drop her guard on occasion, and then she begins to intrigue him. Bit by bit, he starts to draw her out – but it's not until they converse on the subject of pugilism that he realises just how much of herself Lucy keeps hidden. Amazingly, she turns out to be somewhat of a connoisseur of the art – and even helped her husband to write a famous book on the subject. And now, she is discreetly betting on local boxing matches in order to fund her plans to leave her father's house.

Her interest in the sport would be yet another nail in the coffin of Lucy's respectability were it known abroad, but she is tired of playing a part and senses that Thrale is to be trusted with her secret. She also can't ignore the strong physical attraction she feels for him; she enjoyed the physical side of marriage and the presence of this big, well-built man who exudes a kind of dangerous sexuality awakens desires in her that she had thought behind her.

Lucy is a strongly-drawn heroine with many different facets to her character. She sees her beauty as a disadvantage, but also uses it to create the insipid façade she presents to the world. Thrale watches her disappear time and again behind her shield:

She smiled at everyone and at nothing, and as Thrale watched, he saw a woman who'd turned her beauty into a fortress...She was among the enemy here, and she had come in the only armor she possessed.

Even though Lucy and Thrale are very aware of each other on a physical level from early on in the story, Ms Jewel takes her time in building a genuine friendship between them before allowing the sexual tension that's been bubbling between them to boil over – and when it does, phew! The sex scenes are hot; Thrale likes it “dirty and loud”, and doesn't mince his words – but fortunately, Lucy is no simpering miss and not easily shocked.

I really enjoyed the story, but there are one or two things which prevented me from rating it more highly. For one thing, there is a little too much time spent on the discussion and description of boxing for my personal taste. Ms. Jewel has clearly researched her subject very well, but I found myself glazing over a little at the extended descriptions of the fights and techniques.

And more importantly, it falls a little short in the characterisation of Thrale. He's quiet and reserved in company, and while he certainly lives a life of privilege, there's the pervading sense that he's not a particularly happy man. We learn more about the reasons for this late in the book when we travel to his family estate at Blackfern, but I never felt that I got to know him in very well in his own right, other than as he related to Lucy.

But he's an attractive hero nonetheless, and he and Lucy are certainly very well-matched.

A Notorious Ruin is beautifully written, and the central relationship is infused with tenderness and insight, as well a deep sensuality. I hope that Ms. Jewel isn't going to keep us waiting another twelve years for book three!

Jan130 says

3 to 3.5 stars. I've just discovered Carolyn Jewel, and I'm having a bit of a binge on her books. As I started with Lord Ruin, I thought I'd continue with the trilogy while those characters are fresh in my mind. This is book 2.

I did like Thrale, the H. Very serious. Also very sexy. And I liked Lucy, the widowed h as well. She was treated so horribly by her dreadful father, but she didn't have many other options, and was doing her best to save enough money so she could escape into her own, independent life.

But I didn't enjoy this book as much as the first one, Lord Ruin. In this book there was sexual tension and longing between H and h, but it took way too long for anything much to actually happen between them. Instead, IMO there was way too much about BOXING!! Who knew? I certainly didn't when I picked up this book. But it turns out this is a central theme of the book. Well, I'm not interested in boxing, either now or then. So for me there was waaayyy too much tedious info and detail. Care factor, nil..... :(

I did quite like the idea of Lucy's first marriage and the relationship with her husband. That was done quite well. But overall I needed less about boxing and more about Thrale and Lucy's lerve developing.

But I persisted, and in the end it paid off. The final 1/3 to 1/4 or so of the book really picked up. The c*ap about boxing eased off and we started to see Thrale and Lucy finally accepting they could be together. In their end their acceptance of the reality of their relationship was nicely done, and I liked the ending. The sex scenes between them were pretty wild, because that's how they both liked it. Usually it would be a little OTT for me, but the author showed how this was part of their personas, and it was all between two completely consenting and well-matched adults. Be warned though, it is pretty full on. Whew.

So I finished by quite liking this book, but the first approx two thirds did drag a little, so it's a toss-up between three and three point five stars.

I do now intend to read the third book, Surrender to Ruin, about Emily, Lucy and Anne's sister, and Devon, who was in love with Anne in the first book but lost her to Cynsyrr. Interesting set up. I think this one was written a while after the others, too. We'll see!

Sheila says

I LOVED, LOVED, LOVED this book! Thrale is my new book boyfriend. Lucy and Thrale are wonderful characters. I like that Thrale does not accept Lucy's empty look at face value when he meets her again. He looks beyond the front she presents to the world. Lucy tries to hide her intelligence and interest in the world behind a façade of the simple-headed society miss to avoid being hurt or hurting those close to her. Her reputation is in ruins because she, a gentleman's daughter, married far below her station. She married a pugilist. She also came to love him and their sex life. When she was widowed she returned home where no one speaks of her marriage.

The Marquess of Thrale likes the sport of pugilism and practices it. Lucy teaches him things he did not know about pugilism. She was an avid student of it because of her husband. She has insights that Thrale never expects a woman to have. I like that Thrale treats her as an equal during their discussions of it. I also enjoyed

their fight scene. I loved that Lucy was treated as an intelligent woman who was interested in more than fashion and gossip. Her forthrightness was wonderful to hear. I also liked that Lucy could admit, if only to herself, that she liked sex and she liked it rough. When she and Thrale finally get together, their sex scenes were some of the most arousing I have read. I loved the honesty between them at those times.

I hope more books are planned in this series. I enjoyed this book.

Claudia says

After reading the first book of the Sinclair-Sisters, I knew I have to read the next books as well unfortunately there is only one out till now, but I really hope Mrs. Jewel will give us also the last story.

Lucy is quite different than her sisters. instead of dazzling everyone with her wit, she tries to seem empty-headed. as we learn her history, some of it is explained and I felt for her.

Lord Thrale (and I have to confess, we never learn his given name, which is ... strange) is proud of his ability to see through every facade but he is never sure about Lucy.

this story is mainly about how these two learn about each other and how their feelings change. I loved the way this story unfolded and could not get enough of it.

I would have loved to see more of Anne and Ruan in this book, but that was not meant to be (unfortunately).

the one thing, which took half a star away from the first book, happened here as well - we don't get a lot in the end.

and I have to confess, that is my major complain with Carolyn Jewels books. I really like her writing but the endings always seem rushed and abrupt.

all in all, if you liked the first book (which is not really needed to read this one), you will definitely enjoy this one as well.

Michelle(Chelle) aka Nightshade - Cake Whisperer says

Another great story by Carolyn Jewel. While I didn't enjoy this one as much as Lord Ruin, it was still a really good read.

The Marquess of Thrale (funny how I don't think his first name is ever mentioned...if it was I completely missed it) and the widow Lucy Sinclair Wilcott are a very interesting couple. This was most definitely not your typical Regency romance. I honestly don't think I have ever read a book that centered so much on a sport that I really can't abide and yet I found it so very interesting.

Lucy is a very strong character for all that she hides her true self behind a facade meant to fool the entire world into seeing her in a certain light. Even Lord Thrale is fooled at first and as a result dismisses her from any serious consideration, until by chance he glimpses something that everyone else seems to be missing....including most of her own family.

I loved the progression of romance and character build in this installment. The build up to their romantic entanglement is great and once they actually get together....combustible.

The only real complaint I had with this book was how quickly everything gets resolved. I honestly kept thumbing through my reader assuming there had to be a couple of missing chapters.

On a side note...Lucy's father deserves to be drawn and quartered and it disturbs me that sister's that seemed close wouldn't be more forthright with each other.

Patty McKenna Van Hulle says

A historical romance with flawed characters & NEKKID NAUGHTINESS!

Lucy Sinclair Wolcott was sold lock, stock & virtue to a prizefighter named Jack "The Devil" Walcott for £50,000. She was the sacrificial lamb to marry him because of her beauty. She widowed, only shows the world her "empty" smile, tries to protect her younger sister from her greedy father, stretches the household budget without breaking it, called a whore by the village ladies & just wants a little "totally away from her dad" cottage, to live in peace.

Marquess of Thrale is a quiet man, who loves the outdoors, so he is visiting with Mr. Thomas Sinclair's home, with Captain Niall in tow, for a Sportsmen house party. Also the famous Johnson's Academy of Pugilistic Arts is located in their village & he loves all things boxing. Thrale likes beautiful woman, but they need to have a brains, instead of air between their 2 ears. So he actually likes 3 out 4 sister like Miss Emily, Ann the Duchess & Mary the baroness, but their widowed sister, Lucy, just smiles her vacate smile.

Lucy just smiles her vacate smile at Thrale & he isn't impressed, but the Captain seems smitten with her empty beauty. As the week goes on, he sees Lucy without her knowledge & see the deep emotions behind those sensual eyes & he actually wants to get to know her. Lucy's dad has gotten himself in debt again, blames her because she advised him on who was the better fighter & he lost the bet, so he lays the debt at her feet, expects her to smile pretty & get the money from her brothers-in-law. She has been betting on the local boxing matches to save for her cottage & soon Thrale & her bond over her hubby's boxing career & all things boxing & it opens the door to friendship.

With friendship comes understanding, with understanding comes emotions & their emotions sets LUST roaming freely between these 2, with electrified caresses, pantie dropping kissing & their clothes begin melting off. Soon everything seems to hit the fan, as old enemies pop back into her life, Mrs. Glynn gets uppity, passions unleashed on a comfy couch, a selfish, drunk & useless father who never learns, Thrale has a quickly defrosting heart, many insulting mistress proposals made, knee melting kisses exploded, a blood & guts boxing match watched, clothes banished for skin & meddling sisters who use some LOVE induced PIXIE DUST! Will Lucy sacrifice herself again by pushing Thrale away? Can Thrale uses their passions against her, to snag her forever? Is their a happily ever after for these 2 stubborn kids? Will Lucy ever put herself 1st? But most important, can I beotch slap Mrs. Glynn into another universe?

I didn't read the 1st book in this series, Lord Ruin, but this book did stand alone well & made me CRAVE Lord Ruin. My mom taught me that you have to love yourself, before anyone can love you & I know it is super hard to even like yourself sometimes. Poor Lucy was her Father's doormat which she allowed, but she needed to accept herself as loveable & Thrale showed her to see herself that way. Thrale was an unusual

man of his time, by craving brains over a lady's beauty & he also a fierce protector at heart. Ms. Jewel slowly exposed their good, bad & ugly & I loved peeling the many layers back & seeing their inner essence. Let chat about sex, because HELLO it's a romance. Ms. Jewel uses all forms of NAUGHTINESS with swallowing-lightening shivers & quivers to all my girlie parts & assorted NEKKIDness! A lot boxing was in this read & I did get lost in some of it but I still enjoyed this read. I enjoyed the flow of this character driven romance that will make you smile, giggle, want to kick some folks down the longest stairs & even cry yourself ugly, so Ms. Jewel gets my score of 3 fingers up & 7 toes.

ARC given for my honest review.

Wollstonecraft homegirl says

This is a re-read [I first read it, waaaay back when, before I had Goodreads]. I picked it up again because I saw a flurry of posts about the fact that Jewel has sent the third book in this series (*Surrender to Ruin*) to her editor.

On which note: *give me Emily's book, give it to me now!* *grabby hands*

I was invested in the outcome of Emily and Bracebridge by the end of *Lord Ruin* (*Lord Ruin*) which I finally read earlier this year and I had forgotten that this book also dedicated some space to them so now I'm even more wound up.

Anyway, onto *A Notorious Ruin*. This made a much bigger impact on me second time around. I am a big Jewel historicals fan. She writes very period appropriate books which are subtle and multi-layered. This one is a great example of all of that at work. In some ways very conventional historical romance - going from front room, to ballroom, to gardens and so on. But there's an unusual element running through this book, namely the focus on pugilism. Nothing too much happens in the book, there's no massive drama, or mystery, or scary villain who isn't really scary. This is just about two characters and their romance. And when that's done right, it's great. And Jewel has done it right.

Lucy, the heroine, was essentially sold into marriage with a leading boxer by her father. The boxer (a man risen from dirt poor to wealthy on the basis of his skill with his fists) is far, far beneath her class and the rumours swirled that she ran off with him, or was seduced, or perhaps did the seducing. She came to love him though and through him the craft of boxing and the various men engaged in the sport. When her husband suddenly dies she is forced back to her father's house. Some people shun her because of their perceptions about her marriage and thus her character. It's argued by them that she surely cannot come back from such a match, I suppose on the basis that once a woman has lowered herself to such levels, she cannot simply return to the class from which she came. However, thanks to her well-connected relatives she is still accepted into society, by and large, although the slights, when they come, are not small or insignificant.

For this reason, amongst others, Lucy wants to be alone. She loved her husband, she misses him and the responsibility and independence she obtained in being married to him and she can talk to no one about it because he is not spoken of in polite circles. She also needs to be away from her drunk, irresponsible father. She is tired of the face she must put on for the world around her, as expert as she has become at maintaining it. She's concealing who she is and her frustration at the façade is palpable. In spite of all she's going through she is trying to stay strong. I liked her character very much.

Thrale, our hero, is less complex. He's an earl who loves to box and watch boxing and talk about it. He's acquainted with Lucy but finds her the least interesting of the Sinclair sisters. He thinks she is boring and probably stupid, albeit very beautiful. Then, he starts to see what no one else sees. That she is hiding her true self. And, he likes her true self very much. They talk about pugilism. They spar together (a very hot non-sex, sex scene). She can talk about her husband with him. And, they share the same tastes in bed. Thrale likes it rough and dirty, and so does she.

On which note: The sex. My goodness, the sex.

Slowly, Thrale falls in love with Lucy and she falls for him too. He brings her out of herself. They learn about one another. They grow together. She lets the mask drop and it's wonderful to read about.

So I've pretty much raved so far. Why isn't this five stars? It's on the cusp. However, I thought Lucy's realisation (or perhaps her acceptance) of the fact that she's in love with Thrale and wants to be with him in spite of the obstacles and her original plan for a little cottage on her own, was hugely underplayed. It almost felt like she was marrying him because an incident late on (view spoiler) took her other choices away. I know (because this is romance) that I am not supposed to feel that way and that's not what Jewel intended, so, for me, something has gone awry with the writing. Maybe it is all too subtle for me. Perhaps I need stuff spelling out. Generally, I think the big coming together of Lucy and Thrale at the end of the book was a disappointment. I wanted some lovey dovey declarations. They don't have to be pages long or full of sentiment or sappy adverbs, but I wanted something more than what I got.

That said, this is a great book and I would encourage everyone to read it.
