



## **Dangerous to Know: Jane Austen's Rakes & Gentlemen Rogues**

*Christina Boyd (Editor) , Karen M. Cox , Amy D'Orazio , Sophia Rose , Brooke West , Jenetta James , Lona Manning , Christina Morland , more... Beau North , Katie Oliver , Joana Starnes , J. Marie Croft ...less*

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"One has all the goodness, and the other all the appearance of it." —Jane Austen

Jane Austen's masterpieces are littered with unsuitable gentlemen—Willoughby, Wickham, Churchill, Crawford, Tilney, Elliot, et al.—adding color and depth to her plots but often barely sketched. Have you ever wondered about the pasts of her rakes, rattles, and gentlemen rogues? Surely, there's more than one side to their stories.

It is a universal truth, we are captivated by smoldering looks, daring charms ... a happy-go-lucky, cool confidence. All the while, our loyal confidants are shouting on deaf ears, "He is a cad—a brute—all wrong!" But is that not how tender hearts are broken...by loving the undeserving? How did they become the men Jane Austen created?

In this romance anthology, eleven Austenesque authors expose the histories of Austen's anti-heroes. "Dangerous to Know: Jane Austen's Rakes & Gentlemen Rogues" is a titillating collection of Georgian era short stories—a backstory or parallel tale off-stage of canon—whilst remaining steadfast to the characters we recognize in Austen's great works.

What say you? Are you in? Everyone may be attracted to a bad boy...even temporarily...but heaven help us if we marry one.

MATURE CONTENT as per EDITOR

1. None: possible kissing and affection
2. Mild: kissing
3. Moderate: some sexual references but not explicit
4. Mature: some nudity and some provocative sex
5. Erotic Romance: explicit, abundance of sex

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## **Dangerous to Know: Jane Austen's Rakes & Gentlemen Rogues Details**

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Marie Croft ...less

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Croft ...less**

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# From Reader Review Dangerous to Know: Jane Austen's Rakes & Gentlemen Rogues for online ebook

**Carole (in Canada) says**

Ego, arrogance, vanity, self-centered, anger, weakness and the power to enthrall are just some of the characteristics of the 'bad boys' within the pages of this absorbing collection of short stories. The women who have impacted them and their upbringing have left an indelible mark on their psyche as well. It reminds me of the Pat Benatar song, "Love is a Battlefield". Some were able to rise from the ashes and find redemption but others were unable to look beyond their own wants and needs to truly love anyone but themselves.

There is humour, sadness and in some cases, the urge to knock some of them upside the head for their stupidity, selfish disdain for the feelings of others and their arrogance. Each story is so well written by each of the eleven authors and edited by Christina Boyd. What I loved was the seamlessness of how these stories add that little bit more to each of Jane's characters. Claudine Dimuzio Pepe from Just Jane 1813 says it best in the Foreward:

"While she, herself (Jane Austen), did not condone adultery or the scandalous behaviors that many of the her contemporaries engaged in, she undoubtedly knew there must be at least two sides to every story as she wrote complex characters comprised of a multitude of traits, adding color and depth to her narratives."

Everyone has their favourite 'bad boy(s)' they want to see redeemed but some just can't see the past their own reflection. While reading, I was picturing Mrs. Bennet and her 'gossip girls' tittering and exclaiming over the risque details of each scandalous encounter all behind their fans as the story unfolded. Then there were times when I felt I was on a battlefield as some of our rakes and rogues were routed and outflanked without even realizing it. Those were definitely delicious encounters. I also enjoyed the little details that were sprinkled within each story; how some characters from other books were brought into the storyline as well as a certain name used in Willoughby's story. There were also certain passages that I have written below from each story that stood out to me.

1) Willoughby's Crossroads - Joana Starnes

"A man's future would not satisfy them. They must have his past, his every thought, and perchance a pound of flesh besides!"

2) A Wicked Game - Katie Oliver

"You are a good lad, George. Just endeavor not to let your passions overtake your good sense."

3) Fitzwilliam's Folly - Beau North

"Satisfied, gratified, and quenched."

4) Thomas Bertram - Lona Manning

"I fancy that I would be more watchful of my own sisters' behalf if some designing rogue was being too encroaching with them!"

5) Last Letter to Mansfield - Brooke West

"I more slipped into sin than designed it."

6) An Honest Man - Karen Cox

"Then let me be the nefarious one. It bothers me not at all."

7) Sir Walter Elliot - Christina Morland

"...but then she at least resembled a rose and not a crustacean."

8) The Lost Chapter in the Life of William Elliot - Jenetta James

"There was after all, never a moment at the London theatre where one was not being watched, measured, ascertained."

9) As Much as He Can - Sophia Rose

"He wanted to laugh in the face of his friend Courtenay when he said that women were simple creatures."

10) The Art of Sinking - J. Marie Croft

"Of course, vanity, working on a weak head, produced every sort of mischief."

11) For Mischief's Sake - Amy D'Orazio

"They cannot run so fast nor walk so far as a man, nor can they lift or throw or heave; but, they have fortitude enough to break us, my man. That they surely do."

I realize this is a rather long review, however, each of the authors deserve their accolades as well as Ms. Boyd for bringing them all together under one cover for all of us to enjoy.

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## **Sophia says**

For my re-read, I experienced *Dangerous to Know* in audio format. See to the end for my added thoughts on the audio work.

It can be a gamble to take as one's protagonist a man who has demonstrated by word and action that he has incredible flaws and compel readers to give him a hearing and dare I say, a sympathetic ear? Not to condone his actions, but to understand what lead him to his place in the present.

Well, that was what was accomplished here with some of literature's most infamous antagonists and villains. These authors, who shared this book with me, proved their intuitiveness and insightful-ness and share a bit of the old Pied Piper's magic to make some of the men I have most reviled since I read their stories into men who have shades of gray, though yes, several shade more to black, I will grant you.

As with any anthology written by a group of writers, there is a smorgasbord of writing style, tone, and situation to keep this book fresh with each new story encountered. Authors took a few approaches with their rake or rogue. I found myself sad and a little sympathetic at times, twitchy to smack a few for their idiot choices (the rogue, not the author), and whew, giggle snort my way through one story.

Most of the time, these stories showed that it really came down to choice and the level of strength in their characters to stand firm regardless of past or present circumstances though, yeah, most failed (which I suppose is what separates them from their counterparts, the heroes).

Some of these men chose the wrong path, let their past circumstances govern them, or willfully stepped out to take what they wished. Some were redeemed or were misunderstood offering a few warm fuzzies in this

gallery of rogues and rakes, but I also applauded the choice of many authors who left them just as they seemed in Jane Austen's novels.

Love and respect for Austen's work shines forth in each story.

I think that part is what made me wholly appreciate the writing and the stories all the more.

True confession, though, this was not a book that I could read cover to cover in one or two sittings. I chose to appreciate it at a more gentle pace with a few stories each day. I think they resonated better with me as a result.

I was not disappointed by a single one and in a few cases was startled in the 'hey, it really could have happened that way' or 'no, no, no, Sophia, no swooning over the bad boy'.

As to the other lovely features of this book- the forward, the heat scale, the mini character bios, quotes, editing and formatting, cover, and even the order of the stories based on what were the original order their particular associated Austen novel was released- I felt it was a book to be perused with great appreciation and leisure by fans of Austen's works or those who find character sketches and short stories are quite their thing.

### **Audio Edition thoughts**

They say lightning doesn't strike twice in the same spot. Now, I have no idea if that is scientific fact or not. However, I was really hoping it was true when I experienced the second of the Quill Ink anthologies in audio. New narrator, Andre Refig, steps in to take the reins of this second anthology and it was with curiosity and anticipation having never experienced his narrative work before that I put in my earbuds. How would Austen's rakes and rogues and dubious gentlemen fare? From the first words of Joana Starne's Willoughby's Crossroads to the last of Amy D'Orazio's For Mischief's Sake, I was enchanted by Refig's masterful way of bringing each story to life and giving them nuances that weren't always evident in merely reading the words to myself. I felt more engaged with the emotional side of the stories. I suppose I should say that he did well with the technical aspects of accents, voices, genders, tone, and timing, too. Yes, all and all this second outing with the book in audio format was thoroughly enjoyable.

And, one more thing, as Detective Colombo would say. I'm not rating or doing more than sharing my thoughts here because yes, I'm a little too closely associated with the book for more than that and my bias might have poked out a few times. ;)

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### **J. W. Garrett says**

This was an ARC [advanced reader copy] with no expectations of a review; however, how could I resist?

Forward by Claudine DiMuzio Pepe [Just Jane 1813]. Don't skip the words of this blogger, commentator and Jane Austen enthusiast. Pay especially close attention to the rating scale provided at the first of this book. It will identify those stories that might have a more mature rating. I found this extremely helpful. What a marvelous idea.

Mature Content Guidelines as per Editor

[1] None: possible kissing and affection

[2] Mild: Kissing

[3] Moderate: some sexual references but not explicit

[4] Mature: some nudity and some provocative sex

[5] Erotic Romance: explicit, abundance of sex

This anthology is a must read for anyone who loves Jane Austen's work. The genre, Jane Austen Fan Fiction [better known as JAFF], has exploded with prequels, adaptations, reimagining, variations, sequels, side-stories, science fiction, apocalyptic, other world, time-travel, paranormal [witches, vampires, werewolves, zombies, etc.], featuring every generation [Regency to modern] and mash-ups with everything imaginable, including Fairy Tales. JAFF authors have inspired, thrilled, chilled and horrified readers for at least a hundred years. And, that train does not seem to be slowing down. In fact, I do believe it is picking up speed.

This work is but the tip of a mountainous iceberg that represents the works of this well-chosen team of amazing authors. The writing is superb and the editing left us with minimal [if any] errors. I was so involved with reading that I didn't even notice any errors. There were no jarring places that gave me pause and I was not jolted from the immersion I felt with the stories. Man... that is good writing.

Here are Austen's men... bad boys, rakes, mischievous, and even a scum-bag-rat-bastard or two or... you get the idea.

1) John Willoughby [Rating: Moderate]: Joana Starnes: Willoughby's Crossroads: ends at 10%

John Willoughby... what can I say? He is the rake we love to hate from *Sense and Sensibility*. Austen did not give us his back story prior to his meeting with Marianne on that rainy hillside. Characters hinted at his shadowed extravagance, debts, threatened estate Coombe Magna, and his expectations of inheriting Allenham from his relation Mrs. Smith.

Our author Joana Starnes fills in that blank space as she exposes that chapter in his life we have never seen before. As we journey backwards, we see his affections for women of fortune [of course] and have to wonder are those feelings real? Am I looking at him through jaded eyes and refuse to believe he could truly love someone unless they had a fortune? He is hard pressed for money; however, at this point, he is not yet desperate. I know that will come later. Several women waltz through his life and we see his character unfold. It is not pretty. I want to feel sorry for him. I should feel sorry for him. However, I am unable to rake [no pun intended] sufficient sympathy for him. I know what is to come and therefore, I cannot feel sorry for what he is about to endure. I don't trust his emotions and he more than demonstrates his true character in his dealings with Eliza Williams. Nope, I cannot like him. Joana did a marvelous job of creating that unknown chapter in his life. I am glad I read it.

2) George Wickham [Rating: Mature]: A Wicked Game: Katie Oliver: ends at 21%

George, George, George... man, this was powerful. It picks up after Wickham has joined the Regulars and is in the heat of battle fighting for his life on foreign soil. In his looking back, we journey to his youth and what started him on his trek down [not the Yellow Brick Road] but the road to Perdition. I liked the backstory, I even liked how he acted and reacted to Darcy [both senior and younger]. However, I felt that this story lacked something in the evolution of the rake and scoundrel that we know of as George Wickham. I don't think the back story was strong enough to convey that. Austen's canon hinted at a more nefarious story of his youth, using Darcy's own words, explaining just how corrupt and base Wickham was from a young age. It was well hidden from the senior Darcy, but could not be hidden from someone his own age. I don't think Oliver was able to capture that. Perhaps she didn't want to walk on the dark side of Wickham's personality. Having said that, the ending was appropriate and it worked.

3) Colonel Fitzwilliam [Rating: Mild]: Fitzwilliam's folly: Beau North: ends at 32%

Oh, I love a good story about our dear Colonel. In the JAFF universe, he is almost as beloved as Darcy. He is so adorable and we always want the best for him. This story was simply delightful. Well done Beau North, well done. I especially liked the use of the American heiress. The ton's use of the phrase 'that American' was hilarious. This was so good. I loved how she was smart and was able to take care of her situation to everyone's satisfaction. The embarrassment alone should keep (view spoiler) in line. What fun.

4) Thomas Bertram [Rating: Mild]: The Address of A Frenchwoman: Sophia Rose: ends at 40%

This was a different side to Tom Bertram and I liked how it turned out. He needed a kick in the pants and in this story, he got that and more. In the canon story, we only know that he was with friends when he had his accident and that they eventually abandoned him to the care of servants. This gave us another side to that story. I liked how it solidified the restoration of Tom to his family. It was good.

5) Henry Crawford [Rating: Mature]: Last Letter From Mansfield: Brooke West: ends at 48%

Yeah, this is mature audience material as the Admiral helps initiate a young Henry Crawford into the pleasures of being a man. The Admiral is disgusting and I can see why Mary left the house, [when he brought his mistress under his roof], after the death of her aunt. In the Admiral's mind, women only had one purpose and he taught Henry well. That lesson will forever be branded in Henry's [and my] mind. A good dose of harsh reality is tough for a young man to swallow, but it was a lesson well learned. Man, that was brutal. What a pig. I have even less respect for Mrs. Rushworth than I did in canon. She deserves having Mrs. Norris as her companion.

I will forever be Team Fanny [ongoing GoodReads conversation] and not think Henry a good match for her. One sentence sealed it for me. "No man can refuse our Mary's wishes..." Yeah, Mary needed Henry in town to chaperone her to all the parties. That decision put him right in the path of Mrs. Rushworth. Had he only done what he had promised Fanny... go and take care of the problems with his estate. He kept asking her what he should do. She kept telling him to do what was right. He chose to go with Mary. That right there was the foreshadowing of what her life would have been like if she had chosen Henry. Mary's wishes would always come first... regardless of what Fanny wanted, what was right, heedless of Henry's responsibilities or what should be done. Mary's wishes would always come first. Therefore... Team Fanny!!

6) Frank Churchill [Rating: Moderate]: An Honest Man: Karen M. Cox: ends at 56%

This was a side of Frank that skirts canon, but delves deeper. I don't like him and I'm not so sure I care much for Jane Fairfax either. The ending was especially disturbing and probably accurate. I just never would have thought to go there. Man... I love it when an author makes me think outside the box or step beyond what I think or know.

7) Sir Walter Elliot [Rating: None]: One Fair Claim: Christine Morland: ends at 66%

Pompous, self-serving, haughty, self-absorbed, class conscious, self-important... yeah, that's our guy, Sir Walter Elliot. There are not enough words to describe this... what a jerk. Wow! The ending wraps up this story in such a way that I was horrified at the missed opportunity. I despise him even more and I paint Lady Russell's character with the same brush. This made my heart hurt. OMG!!! What a revelation. It ties so seamlessly into the Persuasion story. OMG! What a creative bent to this story. Whew! I am still speechless.



8) William Elliot [Rating: Moderate]: The Lost Chapter in the Life of William Elliot: Jenette James: ends at 72%

If I am supposed to have any sympathy for William Elliot... I—am—sorry... I do not. Perhaps the author wanted me [as the reader] to understand the state of mind he was in when he restored communications with his relations. Nope... didn't work. Do I feel sorry about his dealings with Sarah Light? Nope, nada, not a chance. If I didn't know what was about to happen... would I still dislike him? Absolutely, one-hundred percent. What a cheap scum-bag... he purposely rejected helping the impoverished widow Mrs. Smith when it was within his power to do so and yet was willing to set up a mistress and shower her with gifts. Yeah... the sleaze. No thank you.

9) General Tilney [Rating: None]: As Much As He Can: Sophia Rose: ends at 81%

It takes a really good author to create something from the few crumbs given to us from the canon text. Sophia Rose did that. She took what little we know about General Tilney and peeled back the layers and gave us a man that we could like. Go figure. Some men do not display affection or show their emotions to the world. It is near impossible to know or understand what they are feeling. They handle things in a different way or they come across with a brusque demeanor that throws off people from knowing their inner most thoughts and feelings. Rose did this for us. I have never seen the General portrayed in this light. I loved the banter between him and his future wife. I really liked her. This was a really cute story and a twist that I would never have thought of. Well done... Sophia... well done.

10) John Thorpe [Rating: None]: The Art of Sinking: J. Marie Croft: ends at 91%

Canon had already painted John Thorpe as ridiculous, so this story did not help to improve that impression. In fact, I thought him even more ridiculous... didn't learn from his mistakes, was ignorant of proper behavior and failed to watch his betters and learn from their behavior. He was a spend thrift, not realizing that in order to have money... you shouldn't waste it on wine, gaming and women. This was a vicious circle that he seemed to not be able to break. What really made me mad... James Morland watched his every move and mistake. I wouldn't have allowed John Thorpe to even mention my sister's name. Nope... did not care for him at all and I'm not sure what goal this story hoped to accomplish. Whatever it was... I don't think it was successful.

11) Captain Frederick Tilney [Rating: None] For Mischief's Sake: Amy D'Orazio: ends at 99%

This was a most creative bent on our Captain Tilney. Yep, the apple didn't fall far from that tree. His father the General taught him a lot about life and women. Our Captain took it on himself to assist his friends and acquaintances with their love lives. (view spoiler) Wow! However, this logic made perfect sense to him. That is... until she walked into the ballroom. Yep... oh, how the mighty have fallen. You know, I really liked this guy. I know... how did that happen? Our author Amy created an adorable story of love, loss and redemption. The mini-epilogue at the end was hilarious.

Acknowledgements follow written by Christina Boyd.

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**Teresita says**

**Superb notion**

Who would have thought that the bad boys of Jane Austen could inspire such entertaining stories? I really enjoyed all of them, as all are imaginative and well written. I have a favorite or two, but that I will keep to myself.

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## **Olga Miret says**

If you love Austen, Regency-period novels, and bad boys, you must read this Thanks to Rosie Amber from Rosie's Book Review Team for alerting me to this opportunity and to the editor Christina Boyd for providing me with an early ARC copy of this book that I freely chose to review.

After reading many great reviews of *The Darcy Monologues*, when I had the opportunity to sign up for this blog tour I could not resist. My fondness for Jane Austen's novels cannot compare to that of the authors of this anthology, but rest assure that you don't need to have read several times all of Austen's novels to enjoy this collection (although I don't doubt you might enjoy it even more if you have).

Each story centers on one of the rakes or gentlemen rogues in one of Jane Austen's novels (sometimes several from the same novel). As the editor explains in her note, after *The Darcy Monologues* she and some of the authors started looking for another project and noticed that there are many characters that are fundamental to Austen's novels, but we don't get to know much about, and on many occasions we are left wondering how they got to be how they are, and what happens to them later. All the stories retain the historical period of the novels, sometimes going back to give us information about the background of the characters, to their childhood, early youth, and on occasion we follow them for many years, getting a good sense of who they become when they exit the novel.

Each one of the stories is prefaced by a little snippet about the character chosen, and by one or several quotations (sometimes spread throughout the story) taken directly from Austen's novel, where the character is mentioned. I must say the authors remain very faithful to Austen's words although they use their imagination to build upon those snippets, always remaining faithful to the language and the spirit of the period, although the modern sensibility is evident in the stories.

We have stories with happy endings, stories that are dark and sad, stories of broken hearts, funny stories (sometimes thanks to the wit of the characters involved, others thanks to the wit of the writers who follow in Austen's footsteps and poke fun at the most preposterous individuals), and some touching ones. There are very clean stories and some steamier ones (as it seems only appropriate to these "gentlemen"), but the editor includes a very detailed classification of the degree of heat of each one of the stories, and apart from one of the stories *A Wicked Game*, the rest are not scandalous (even by Regency standards).

Many of the stories are told in the first person, and that helps us share and understand better the characters (however much we might like them or not), but the few told in the third person also work well, especially as they tend to centre on characters that are perhaps particularly insightful and more preoccupied with appearances than by the truth.

I imagine each reader will have his or her favourite stories. I was a bit surprised because I thought I'd enjoy more the stories featuring characters of the novels I was more familiar with, but that was not always the case. (OK, I truly loved *Fitzwilliam's Folly* about Colonel Fitzwilliam from *Pride and Prejudice*, but not only because of the novel, but because the character is wonderful, witty, yes, Darcy makes an appearance so we get to see him from somebody else's point of view and someone who knows him well at that, and I loved the female character in the story too). Some writers managed to create a sense of a small society, as it must have felt at the time, where characters from several novels kept meeting or just missing each other but are all connected or know of each other. I know this was a book about the gentlemen, but I was very taken by some of the female characters, that on many occasions were the perfect match for the men.

If you are curious to know which of the characters are featured, here is the list: John Willoughby (*Willoughby's Crossroads* by Joanna Starnes), George Wickham (*A Wicked Game* by Katie Oliver. This is

the hottest one and there are some similarities to the previous story but, if you're a fan of the character, I think you'll enjoy this one), Colonel Fitzwilliam (Fitzwilliam's Folly by Beau North. I've already mentioned this one. I love Calliope Campbell too. Well, love everything about this story and the style and the repartee reminded me of Oscar Wilde's plays), Thomas Bertram (The Address of a French Woman by Lona Manning. How blind can one be, or perhaps not!), Henry Crawford (Last Letter to Mansfield by Brooke West), Frank Churchill (An Honest Man by Karen M Cox. One of these characters enamoured of himself who tries to do the right thing but only if it is convenient and at little personal cost. I suffered for poor Miss Fairfax), Sir Walter Elliot (One Fair Claim by Christina Morland. This is one of the stories told in the third person that do follow the character for a long time. The song "You're So Vain" might as well have been written about him. I really enjoyed this one, first because the comments about the character were funny, later, because the tone changes and I liked his wife, who, of course, loves to read), William Elliot (The Lost Chapter in the Life of William Elliot by Jenetta James. This somewhat related to the previous story but is quite different and particularly interesting for the comments about life in the theatre), General Tilney (As Much As He Can by Sophia Rose. This story, that uses both third and first person, I found particularly touching. Appearances can be deceptive, indeed), John Thorpe (The Art of Sinking by J. Marie Croft. This is a farce, the character a buffoon and the story really funny, especially because the character is the butt of all jokes but remains full of his own importance), and Captain Frederick Tilney (For Mischief's Sake by Amy D'Orazio. Another great story. The main character justifies his actions insisting that he is helping other men avoid mistakes, but eventually learns to see things from a female perspective. A great female character too, Miss Gibbs).

I highlighted many passages and lines, but I don't want to make this a never-ending review. I'll just say the language is perfectly in keeping with the period and the stories and I'll be exploring the books of all these writers. (There is information included about each one of them after their respective stories).

I did not cry with any of the stories (although some were quite touching), but I did laugh out loud with quite a few. I recommend this book to readers of historical romance and romance of any kind, those who enjoy short-stories with fully-fledged character, and I'm sure anybody interested in Regency novels and Jane Austen's, in particular, will love this book.

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## **Anna says**

Editor Christina Boyd and her team of Austenesque authors have done it again with her latest anthology, *Dangerous to Know: Jane Austen's Rakes & Gentlemen Rogues*. I absolutely loved *The Darcy Monologues*, so when I heard about this collection, I knew I had to read it, and it lived up to my expectations and more. I love to read about the bad boys in Austen's novels because they make things more exciting, and I have often wondered what led them astray. The 11 stories in this anthology cover all of Austen's infamous bad boys and anti-heroes, and while I enjoyed each story on its own, reading them together was even more delicious.

The collection features: "Willoughby's Crossroads" (John Willoughby, *Sense and Sensibility*) by Joana Starnes; "A Wicked Game" (George Wickham, *Pride and Prejudice*) by Katie Oliver; "Fitzwilliam's Folly" (Colonel Fitzwilliam, *Pride and Prejudice*) by Beau North; "The Address of a Frenchwoman" (Thomas Bertram, *Mansfield Park*) by Lona Manning; "Last Letter to Mansfield" (Henry Crawford, *Mansfield Park*) by Brooke West; "An Honest Man" (Frank Churchill, *Emma*) by Karen M Cox; "One Fair Claim" (Sir Walter Elliot, *Persuasion*) by Christina Morland; "The Lost Chapter in the Life of William Elliot" (William Elliot, *Persuasion*) by Jenetta James; "As Much as He Can" (General Tilney, *Northanger Abbey*) by Sophia Rose; "The Art of Sinking" (John Thorpe, *Northanger Abbey*) by J. Marie Croft; "For Mischief's Sake" (Captain Frederick Tilney, *Northanger Abbey*) by Amy D'Orazio

It should come as no surprise that my favorite of all the stories was "Fitzwilliam's Folly" by Beau North because I am a sucker for a good story about the colonel. The agreement he makes with an American heiress shunned by ton was clever, and I loved the bit of action and even getting a glimpse of Mr. Darcy after his failed proposal at Hunsford. I enjoyed the glimpse of the obnoxiously vain Sir Walter Elliot and how he went about choosing a bride in "One Fair Claim," and he was just as delightfully silly in his youth. But what surprised me is the ability of these authors to make me feel some compassion for the characters I love to hate, like the heartache experienced by George Wickham and Tom Bertram in their stories, which emphasized the complexity of Austen's characters. Still others will never change, but I felt like I understood their motivations a bit more.

Dangerous to Know is a must-read for those looking for something new in the realm of Austen-inspired fiction. Some of the stories were steamy and passionate, some were more humorous, but all of them make you take another, deeper look at Austen's rakes and rogues and make you feel something more than contempt.

Review posted on Diary of an Eccentric

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### **ana darcy says**

In "Dangerous To Know" we have eleven stories about eleven rakes or rogues who were created by Jane Austen. However, their differences cannot be greater, on one hand we have Willoughby and Crawford, who I cannot stand, and on the other hand we can see Colonel Fitzwilliam and Thomas Bertram, who I like. There are other characters as well, as you have read above, but I can tell you already that these stories could make you like them or at least understand the reason why they turned out as they did. Although, I am going to be very mean and I have to say that I still do not like, for instance Willoughby even if Joana's story is really good.

Redemption is a difficult word for characters that you have already "judged" but some of these stories are going to be difficult to ignore... I am mainly thinking about Wickham (you will have to read it!).

I have dearly enjoyed "Dangerous to Know" but I believe that I will always like "The Darcy Monologues" a bit better ?

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### **Sheila Majczan says**

Although the dates seem to reflect that this book is a longer read, it is not. It is simply that my life is busy and thus, this book was perfect. I could pick it up and read one or two stories before another event took me away from the tales. Just reading the list of authors should convince you that this is an excellent read.

I had to laugh in reading the first several stories as they both painted a picture of widows as more the villains in making these men what they became in Jane Austen's books. There are many tales from that era (and not only JA's) which tell of men looking to that class of women to satisfy their carnal lusts. And, yet, I find that with knowing how so many were forced to marry for money, for class connections, etc. to men that they didn't love or even have an amicable relationship with or to men who were of an age with their own fathers, plus knowing that they could control their own finances and manage their own estates if they stayed

unmarried I can totally relate to that class looking to quench the sexual urges that are part and parcel of being human. ..."the services of the young buck and the old codger's purse?"

But I digress.

As I read these alternate views of men with whom we are well familiar I found that my attitude became two-fold. In canon I have hated the actions (and the results of those) by most of these eleven men. Wickham is a prime example. In reading so many JAFF stories, a large percentage do include him and few are kind in writing of his actions. The man in this anthology is of a different character. Oh, don't get me wrong; I enjoyed all the stories but some you have to just accept the portrayal, smile, and move on. But the point I want to stress is that I found the authors wrote such a convincing alternate POV that I found I could easily become united with (for example) Elizabeth Bennet in not only fully believing Wickham but also in finding that I liked him very much. And so it was with the other men: the authors used their "pens" to charm and seduce us, the readers: to show us in an "Aha" moment just how (and why) these men became those roués or how, even in knowing how their acquaintances and, maybe families, viewed them, they were forced, or choose, to remain silent about the misconceptions.

A perfect example of that is the viewpoint we have about General Tilney. Northanger Abbey left me viewing him as cruel to Catherine Moreland, manipulative and greedy in his moves to separate his daughter from the man she loved and dictatorial in even the rules for running his household. But the story of how he met both the lady who would become his wife and their connection as he tries to win the hand of a different lady with both money and connections was well played out.

Colonel Fitzwilliam's inclusion in this line up of rakes surprised me. He does not have a big role in canon and most (but not all) authors paint him as Darcy's friend and "brother"; one who knows him better than anyone else and one who then will go the extra mile to help Darcy obtain what Darcy wants and needs in his life. The colonel is himself drawn into a role...by a lady who needs help getting what she wants, protecting herself from being forced to accept a man lined up for her. ..."I require a rake and only the best will do."

Brooke West did bring me to tears with her story of Henry Crawford. Very interesting and very disturbing POV considering what might have been...but we only read his POV.

There is one story with whose main man I had no sympathy and then there was one in which we read... "I begin to see that to not be a rake might be agreeable too."

This anthology has much to recommend it: some smiles, some laughs, some nodding and some shaking of the head but most of all great writing with creative premises showing us 'the path not taken' by Jane Austen.

I recommend this to all but with the exception that you must heed the sexual content listings for each story as several become hot and heavy in their descriptions.

I did receive an ARC of this book with a request (but not a demand) for a review.

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## **Don Jacobson says**

Reviewer copy received as ARC from the author/publisher.

*Dangerous To Know: Jane Austen's Rakes & Gentlemen Rouges* is like Forrest Gump's remarkable box of chocolates. In this case, though, every one of these eleven expertly prepared confections hides a peppery center inside of a luscious cover. The only question you should ask is if it is jalapeño or habanero! You will love every bite.

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### **Diane Michaels says**

The well-drawn rakes and rogues in Jane Austen's novels leap off the page. Happily, Christina Boyd has gathered a group of authors in this anthology who provide a place for these "gentlemen" to land. The characters we love to hate all have stories of their own. If you ever held any curiosity about John Willoughby's formative romantic encounters, pondered the fate of Lydia Bennet and George Wickham, or wondered about the backstory of Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax, you will feast on the stories these eleven talented authors have concocted. "Dangerous to Know" is the perfect companion piece to the beloved Jane Austen canon.

I voluntarily wrote a review after reading an ARC.

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### **Debbie Brown says**

*I received an ARC of this book with no promise of a favorable review.*

This is an anthology to read slowly and savor. Each rake and/or rogue has a story that is unique and excellent while staying true to Jane Austen's characterization. It's always a welcome treat when a book, novella or short story is well edited, and these all show Christina Boyd's attention to detail; you won't find those distracting punctuation, grammar or spelling errors anywhere. Take your time. Step away after a tale or two and then come back for more later. You won't want to rush through and miss any of the delicious morsels contained in these short stories.

Even the most prudish of readers can enjoy this book because it offers us a sexual content rating of 1 to 5 for each story, ranging from "none" to "erotic." Interestingly, none are in the 5 category ("explicit, abundance of sex"), though there are a few 3's ("some sexual references but not explicit") and 4's ("some nudity and some provocative sex"). Most are rated 1 ("possible kissing and affection") or 2 ("kissing"). Wouldn't it be nice if all books used this kind of rating system!

There are 11 different stories by 11 different authors, each focusing on a different Jane Austen "bad boy." Unfortunately, there are just too many to describe individually in a review, but I found it fascinating to read how the various authors addressed their "assigned" rogues. Sorry, girls, but in several cases, the tipping point that turns a possibly respectable man into a rogue is a heartless female. However, other men have the opposite experience: their rakish ways are tamed by the love of a sweet soulmate. In one story, the gentleman (and the reader) is in for a huge surprise when he learns the true reason for his love's refusal of his marriage proposal. Yet another has a softer side beyond Austen's very hard-edged treatment of him. One gentleman has numerous acquaintances from several Austen books who are mentioned or have cameo appearances at various points in his story. Like Elizabeth Bennet, I dearly love to laugh, and so my favorite short story features the most buffoon-like character of the book, whose misadventures are all the result of his own misguided actions.

How was Jane Austen able to imagine these characters into existence in the first place? Don't skip the Prelude. Claudine Pepe has researched it and gives the reader her insight into that question.

Although I love the previous collection in *The Darcy Monologues*, I believe this group of stories is even better.

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### **Cecily Wolfe says**

I've been listening to this at work and just howling with laughter, prompting my coworkers to ask what in the world I was listening to. Like *The Darcy Monologues*, the narrator is spectacular, capturing the drama and lovely accent that both entertains and charms. The idea itself (the backstories of Austen's bad boys) is long overdue in coming, and fantastically executed. A must for Austen fans, but be ready for a little more romantic detail than Austen gave in the original stories. I highly recommend the audio version - I am sure the print edition is just fine, but this performance is not to be missed.

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### **Madenna U says**

This collection of background stories/missing scenes from Jane Austen's stories is amazingly well done. I love the collection of authors and each one is a work of art to present a different view on Austen's rakes and rogues. These authors always make me "feel" while reading their stories.

I will not attempt to review each one and I can not say anything better than two of my favorite reviewers (Sheila Majczan and JW Garrett) have already said. To their reviews I would say ditto!!

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### **Tessa Robertson says**

Jane Austen lovers rejoice! I cannot tell you how excited I was to learn about the possible outcome to my favorite Austen men who just didn't cut it for the leading ladies. Ms. Boyd did not disappoint. If possible, my love for these rakes and rogues only deepened. Well, done! If you like Jane Austen, you'll LOVE this book!

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### **Meredith (Austen-esque Reviews) says**

#### **Sketching the Characters of Jane Austen's Bad Boys!**

**Rating: 5 out of 5 stars**

#### **OVERVIEW:**

After delivering a splendidly successful and praiseworthy short story anthology devoted to Mr. Darcy, editor Christina Boyd and a team of skilled and imaginative authors have decided to join forces again. This time to divulge the inner workings, untold heartaches, and sometimes scandalous pasts of Jane Austen's anti-heroes, villains, and charming scoundrels. (Can I get a woot woot?!?) Eleven roguish characters, eleven talented

authors, and eleven fascinating tales of human nature and romance. However the question does remain – can these bad boys be redeemed?

#### MY READING EXPERIENCE:

All stories in this anthology take place during the Regency period – either during, before, or slightly after the original stories' timeline. Some of the characters featured in this collection are truly nefarious villains like George Wickham, Henry Crawford, and Captain Tilney, and some are more tame with their bad behavior such as Frank Churchill, John Thorpe, and Colonel Fitzwilliam. In addition, some are gentlemen rogues from the previous generation – Sir Walter Elliot and General Tilney (we know those two are far from innocent!).

I read all the stories in order and I thought it was very clever that they were arranged in accordance with the order of novels published by Jane Austen (starting with *Sense and Sensibility* and ending with *Northanger Abbey*). The stories ranged from 22 to 38 pages in length and I mostly read one to two stories in each sitting. (I enjoyed savoring each story and reflecting on it before diving into the next one.) If I were to give a star rating for each individual story, there would be mostly 5 star ratings for all with just one 4.5 or 4 star rating among the group.

#### MY ASSESSMENT:

How incredibly excited I am that an anthology like this finally exists! Although I adore Mr. Darcy and love reading stories from his point-of-view, I love it even more when authors shine their spotlights on and flesh out some of Jane Austen's other creations. Just like with *The Darcy Monologues*, *Dangerous to Know* met and exceeded my high expectations and hopeful desires. Each story was thoughtfully composed, skillfully executed, and wonderfully plausible. In addition, I loved the elegant formatting of this compilation and I appreciated all the extra touches like the mature content rating system, foreword, acknowledgments, and informative characters introductions.

However, what I admired and loved most about this anthology was the diverse and unique treatment these rakes and rogues received by the pens of these authors. Some authors revealed the past and gave new understanding of why these characters became unscrupulous cads, while others illustrated how even these hardened rakes can find themselves caught unawares by stirrings of a powerful love. I greatly enjoyed the many creative ways these authors told their tales – the backstories they provided, the clever twists they employed, and the new characters they introduced. I also appreciated the fact that not all these characters were redeemed, and not all lived their lives happily-ever-after – they can't be like Jane Bennet and make them all good. ;) I admired the honesty about characters and their natures, but I must admit my romantic heart loved seeing some tender tales of how the love of a good woman can irrevocably change a man. :)

I loved the feelings that these stories evoked in me, and how these thoughtful character developments induced me to feel more sympathy and compassion for these characters than I have ever felt before. Yes, even for the truly nefarious rogues! Their pain and disappoint, their insecurity and jealousy, their remorse and regret, their infatuation and devotion were all sensitively rendered and palpably felt.

#### CONCLUSION:

*Dangerous to Know: Jane Austen's Rakes and Gentlemen Rogues* is another sensational release from Christina Boyd and her team! While this anthology highlights Jane Austen's bad boys, it also pays tribute to her powers of perception and observations of human nature. I commend Christina and all the talented authors of this anthology for constructing another insightful, stimulating, and remarkably high-caliber anthology for



us readers to enjoy!! I emphatically recommend!

NOTE: With some stories marked “mature,” I'd recommend this story for Mature Audiences.

Austen-esque Reviews

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