



Never Dare a Wicked Earl

Renee Ann Miller

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They are the infamous lords, unrepentant rogues whose bad behavior makes for good gossip among the ton. But every scoundrel has his secrets, and it takes a special touch to reveal the true hearts behind their devilish disguises.

Known as a brazen philanderer, Hayden Milton, Earl of Westfield, is almost done in by a vengeful mistress who aims a gun at a rather essential part of his anatomy—but ends up wounding his thigh instead. Recuperating in his London town house, Hayden is confronted by his new medical attendant. Sophia Camden intrigues him, for behind her starched uniform is an enticing beauty better suited for bedding than dispensing salves and changing bandages.

Unshaken by his arrogance, not to mention impropriety, Sophia offers Hayden a dare: allow her ten days to prove her competency. If she resigns in exasperation like her two predecessors, she will be beholden to this wicked seducer. As a battle of wills begins, Sophia finds herself distracted by the Earl's muscular physique . . . and discovers that the man within longs only for a second chance to love.

Never Dare a Wicked Earl Details

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From Reader Review Never Dare a Wicked Earl for online ebook

Krystal says

This is the second story in the span of a week that I have read that deals with the Hero having been shot, and the Heroine having to take care of him. When I first began reading, I was a little distraught. I mean how many novels with the same initial story-line can one read so close together and still be entertained?

Thankfully, this one was so much different from the other that I found myself completely drawn in. The author weaved such a compelling story-line that it was hard to put down. I adored both of these characters - Hayden's inner demons coupled with his reputation made him a complex character that I enjoyed watching Sophia peel back the layers of. I also liked that she was a very strong willed character. I do feel this would have been a slightly better story if the Hero didn't fall into the "let me do stupid things that upset the object of my affections in the name of protecting her" story-lines, and the Heroine wasn't equally guilty of the "let me overhear something I shouldn't that makes me doubt everything".

While those are two story-lines that while it no doubt work consistently, they do become tiring, and honestly, they make the story become somewhat predictable after that. We know how the Heroine is going to react, we know something bad is going to happen, just like we know the Hero is going to try to save the day. Perhaps that is a sign that I read too many stories like this, but every now and then I would like to see the Hero treat the Heroine like an equal and have them face the threat together.

Even considering that, I still believe this story will appeal to those who enjoy slightly unconventional historical romance novels. I would definitely read more from this author!

DISCLAIMER: I received a complimentary copy of this novel in exchange for my honest review. This has not affected my review in any way. All thoughts and opinions expressed in this review are 100% my own.

Shannon Gallagher says

I have to say that the hero in this book made me laugh from the very beginning. There's just something underneath all that snark that really played through and made him likable even when he was being obnoxious to our heroine. He'd dare anything and often did. Little Celia added such a sweet softness to his character, and brought out the childlike spirit in him and Sophia.

One think I must say: I read a lot of historical romance, often 2 or 3 at a time, and it can get confusing to follow names. I read the common character names over and over while authors do their best to keep names within the time period. I'm not a stickler for the time period names for this reason alone. I'm not sure Hayden is of the Victorian age, but I love his name and will remember him because it's different.

Bravo on a delightfully wicked debut!

Jultri says

3.5/5. Okay, so this book started off really well. There was humorous bantering. The language was appropriate for the time and the people were quite likeable and well-drawn. The heroine had cheek and sass, just what was required to stand up to the cantankerous arrogant earl. She was the nurse employed by his sister to care for his unappreciative self after he was stabbed by a spurned ex-lover. Bed bound from the leg injury but his wit and bite intact, he intended to send her on her way, like he did her two predecessors. She did not allow herself to be intimidated by this growling man, and to his shock, treated him firmly like one of her recalcitrant child patients. His interest was piqued, but he had a shocking secret to hide from her and the world and additionally suffered a severe case of self-loathing that even her caring nurturing would struggle to cure.

This was great up to the half-way mark. Then the author just tried to do too much with the plot. Murderous psychopath on the loose down to maniacal laughter. Constant bilateral self-doubts and self-condemnations resulted in recurrent communication failures which became wearisome. This might just be a rookie mistake, this being her debut novel. She has potential aplenty. The writing is good but she just needs to tidy up the plot. Less is truly more. I have rounded this up for that reason. I will try her out again.

Pamela says

Wasn't sure I would like the H this story as it began, but he won me over. The h is a nurse, assigned to caring for the H, a nobleman wounded by a former lover. He has a horrible reputation, and is cantankerous and rude upon meeting her. She is attracted to him, but fights the feeling, as he warms to her wit and strength. An interesting and passionate story with a wonderful couple and great HEA. He was redeemed! Received a free arc in exchange for an honest review. Will read more of this author!

Caz says

I've given this a D+ at AAR, so that's 2.5 stars

As I've said in the past, I make it a point to try new authors when I can – after all, I had some pretty good luck a couple of years back when I found not one, but three *début* authors whose books have since become 'must reads', and I live in hope of finding others. Unfortunately, however, on the strength of her first novel, **Never Dare a Wicked Earl**, Renee Ann Miller isn't going to make that list by a long chalk; the cover trumpets a "*fresh new romance*" – but it's about as fresh as week-old kippers, and I ended up reading a story I've read several times before. It's a solidly average book; not badly written, but the story is hackneyed, the characters are stereotypical and the author seems to have thought it a good idea to throw the kitchen sink into the (very weak) plot. Plus – what on earth is the heroine wearing on the cover? The book is set in 1875, and by no stretch of the imagination is that dress from the late Victorian period. I know that's not the author's fault, but it nonetheless telegraphs "*Danger, Will Robinson!*" to the potential reader. With good reason, as it turns out.

When Hayden – a very unlikely name for a man (let alone an earl) in Victorian England – Earl of Westfield is shot in the leg by a demented ex-mistress, he is confined to bed and not at all happy about it. He runs off two male attendants by virtue of his appalling manners and threatening behaviour, so his sister, thinking he might not be quite so rude and abrasive towards a woman, engages a nurse by the name of Sophia Camden. Of course, the fact that Sophia is female makes no difference to Hayden's dreadful behaviour, and he begins

to try to get rid of her, too, adding not-so-subtle sexual innuendo to his established repertoire of bad manners and ill temper.

Naturally, Sophia is wise to his tricks, and decided to stay, especially as – and here's where we get lip-service to the title – Hayden *dares* Sophia to stick it out for ten days. If she wins, he will throw his political weight behind a new bill to allow women to qualify as doctors (as this is what Sophia wants to do) and if he wins he'll get... well, he'll think about that tomorrow.

Okay – this is a romance, we know where things are headed and that whole wounded-rude-hero-with-a-damaged-psyche falls for well-bred-female-fallen-on-hard-times thing is one we've all read lots (and lots) of times before. Hayden and Sophia banter. They ogle each other. He squirms in his seat a lot, she gets warm and tingly – from pretty much the first chapter. We get it. He's hot and she's beautiful. How about giving them some personality outside of his constant feelings of guilt and inadequacy over the way he treated his first wife, and her insecurities because her uncle continually taunted her over her dusky, Mediterranean skin (she has Italian ancestry), calling it inferior and vulgar compared to the creamy complexion of the traditionally English rose?

To add insult to injury (!), Sophia – supposedly a strong, intelligent, professional woman who is determined to enter a profession previously dominated by men – is a mess of breathless, quivering lust and tears around Hayden and doesn't really do anything for him that his valet or servants can't do. She brings him his meals on a tray, his valet bathes him and she doesn't go near a bedpan or chamber pot. Other than putting on a bandage or two, she does nothing 'medical' for him whatsoever. Yet she wants to become a doctor because of the oldest cliché in the book:

... everyone she'd loved had died and perhaps if she became a doctor, she could stop others from losing those most important to them...

Gimme a break.

The kitchen sink I mentioned is thrown into the second half of the book with gusto, when we are treated to ALL THE DRAMA – kidnapping, attempted rape, attempted murder – you name it, it's in there, all courtesy of a villain whose identity is blindingly obvious from the start. There's a heartbreakingly interesting backstory to Hayden's first marriage, but it's little more than an obvious attempt to introduce more drama into the story and its treatment lacks subtlety.

So my search for GOOD new authors continues. I'll let you know when I find one.

Jennifer Klepper says

Outstanding historical romance debut by Renee Ann Miller! NEVER DARE A WICKED EARL presents compelling and strong-headed male and female leads, sparring and romancing against the backdrop of historical London. This well-edited novel shines with Miller's strong prose and thoughtful layering of backstory and motivation. With both romance, a mystery, and thrills to go with both, NEVER DARE A WICKED EARL promises an outstanding new series from Miller.

Minerva Spencer says

This book is a great way to kick off a holiday in a good mood!

I loved Hayden and Sophia (and also Lady Olivia) and their romance was fraught with enough delicious tension to keep me flicking the pages on my Kindle like a junkie.

The part of Miller's writing that impressed me the most (okay, there are 2 parts) was her ability to evoke the era (or certainly what felt like a "bygone" era, to me) and also her delightful turn of phrase (GREAT similes which made me alternately smile or move to the edge of my seat). Miller does an excellent job of injecting historical fact into the story without beating the reader over the head with it.

Great sensuality and tension throughout, with lots of secondary characters to bring depth to the story and make you care what happened to the H&h.

The author also did a fantastic job engaging my sense of smell, something I don't often experience reading books. From the seamier smells of London's impoverished back alleys to a gourmet breakfast that made me get out of bed and ransack the kitchen at 10 o'clock at night.

This book is a Victorian adventure that will engage and satisfy all your senses.

Eva says

„Never Dare a Wicked Earl“ by Renee Ann Miller is the first Book in the „Infamous Lords“ series and my first by this writer. I got this ARC by Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

Well I had not heard from Renee Ann Miller and the cover of the preview was not, honestly said, very intriguing, it is cheap and far away from a book I usually would buy. Nevertheless the synopsis sounded interesting so I decided to give it a try and started it last night. I immediately fell in love with the main protagonists and Lady Olivia, the huge dog. I could not put the book aside and read it through all the skiing races, ski jumping, tour the ski etc. – I have not really a clue about the sport results at all.

It's not one of those completely unrealistic stories because I already wondered over the last year how so many innocent young 19th Century ladies can have sex before their wedding and never ever fall pregnant. How realistic.

In this story it is finally different. But the whole story is a little different from the novels I have read lately. Both have a backpack from their past they carry around, both have a past, are older and wiser but they fall for each other immediately but do not want to give in – in the beginning. The story turns quickly into a passionate story, lots of passion between two adults and a progressing love story. It is not easy to give in, to allow to love because of their past. Both have secrets they do not want to share and the ways they come behind things are not always honest.

Many would say that Sofia, the female lead, should have resisted him longer because she wanted to become a physician, wanted to be a strong female in a world of men. But honestly said, when the heart is engaged in

something most of the time the head is too. Nevertheless she stays passionate about her independence and fights for it.

Hayden, the Earl of Westfield, could also have resisted her for a longer period but on the one hand he had the wrong image of her after some news from a private investigator and on the other hand he is a passionate man who fell for her.

The sex scenes are tastefully written, the characters well portrait and developed and the story is different. You know from the beginning that those two belong together but you understand that they have to find a way to grow, grow to overcome their past and grow to be the person they want to be for each other.

Very well done, Renee Ann!

Rating: 5 stars

Norah Gibbons says

I received a copy of this book from NetGalley to read in exchange for a fair review. Never Dare A Wicked Earl is the first book in what I think is going to be a fabulous series by Renee Ann Miller. Consumed with guilt after the death of his wife Hayden Milton, Earl of Westfield leads a life of decadence, debauchery and drunkenness in order to forget his past failings. When he is shot by a vengeful former lover his sister hires Sophia Camden who also has a difficult past to nurse him back to health. The Earl a terrible patient has already gone through several caregivers and he issues a dare to Sophia that she will not last 10 days as his nurse. Sophia accepts the dare on the condition that the Earl use his influence to allow women to study medicine as it is her dream to become a doctor. Sparks fly between them until Hayden still burdened with self hatred says something unforgivably hurtful to Sophia. The story of how these two find their way back to each other had me up reading way past my bedtime. I very much enjoyed this book and look forward to the next one in the series. Very Steamy, publishing date January 30th 2018. #NeverDareAWickedEarl #NetGalley

Toni says

A good read that I didn't want to put down. I almost wish this wasn't an arc because I need more! Lol. The characters were great and the conflicts well done.

Angela says

I believe this is the debut book of Ms. Miller's and it was great! You have a hero who isn't what he seems and a heroine who wants to be a doctor. The witty banter, double entendre, bit of intrigue, and misunderstandings all make for a fantastic and quick (for me) read. The first part of the book is quite light and fun to read but as the story goes on you realize that there is a lot of depth to these characters. They have been hurt but march on. The progression of their love story is beautifully written. Cannot wait to read more from this author...Simon...

I received a complimentary copy from the publisher through NetGalley.

Ginger says

Great writing, good characters and a decent plot! This is the first book that I've read of *Renee Ann Miller* and it won't be the last.

I thought the characters of Hayden Milton and Sophia Camden were well written. The dialogue between the two was fun and witty.

Hayden Milton might have been shot in the leg by his mistress but he's more complicated than the reader realizes in the book. This guy has got some layers and turns out to be much more complex than a bold womanizer.

Sophia wants to be a doctor and decides to attend to Hayden out of the request of Hayden's sister. She'll put up with anything or anyone in order to become a doctor. But this might be one of her biggest challenges!

I enjoyed **Never Dare a Wicked Earl** and look forward to the other books in the series!

Debra Martin says

When Hayden Milton, Earl of Westfield, is shot by a jealous lover, Sophia Camden agrees to be his nurse while he recuperates. Hayden is an unrepentant rake, but Sophia is not intimidated. Instead she challenges Hayden at every turn and the witty banter between these two carries the book.

Ms. Miller has written a compelling and thoroughly delightful story. I loved how she teased out the back story for these two. Is Hayden really as bad and unrepentant as the gossips say? Does Sophia really want to be a dr.? This story kept my interest until the last page. I especially enjoyed the epilogue. It was a nice closure to the story.

Fans of historical romance will definitely enjoy this book.

I received a copy of this book in exchange for a fair and honest review.

Melanie says

Never Dare a Wicked Earl was a fantastic debut from Renee Ann Miller set in Victorian era London with a rakish hero and the heroine who has him rethinking his ways.

Hayden Milton, Earl of Westfield, is known throughout the ton for his rakish behavior, so it should come as no surprise when he is shot in the leg by a vengeful ex-mistress. Hayden has little patience while waiting to recover and goes through several attendants before Sophia Camden is hired for the position. Hayden is immediately intrigued by the woman who refuses to bend to his will and is further surprised when she dares him to allow her ten days to prove herself or she will be beholden to him for any request. Sparks quickly fly as Sophia aims to meet her end of the bargain while Hayden imagines all the wicked things he could request.

Sophia is considered unusual for her time in that she hopes to become a physician despite the law forbidding women to sit for the exam. After losing her entire family to illness, Sophia entered the medical field with hopes of saving other families from experiencing the same loss. Prior to their deaths, Sophia was incredibly close to her family and the loss devastated her. She hopes that by proving her competency to Hayden she will be able to convince him to put his support behind a fellow member of the House of Lords who is trying to change the law and allow female physicians. Sophia is very good at her job and is very dedicated to her work and helping others.

Hayden is an incredibly kind man who uses his wealth to help those less fortunate than he, but because he believes he needs to be punished for ignoring his wife who died several years prior to the start of the book Hayden refuses to allow anyone to know about his charitable deeds. Instead he gives off every appearance that he is a rake who cares for no one but himself. I won't get into the reasons Hayden ignored his wife as I don't want to spoil anything, but the story is a good one and I can understand why Hayden acts the way he does as a result. When he isn't laid up after being shot, Hayden spends a great deal of time with his daughter Celia or managing the interests he has in several businesses.

Sophia and Hayden had great chemistry and their scenes were filled with tons of banter and teasing. The scenes where their relationship turns physical were quite steamy and very well done. One of my favorite parts of their relationship was that Hayden would actually stop when Sophia didn't want to do certain sexual acts (A+ on consent). Hayden does have a bit of that alpha male protection side to him and there are several occasions where he keeps information from her in a bid to protect her. There was only one part of their relationship I disliked, but it is very much a personal preference thing and not something I imagine will bother most. (view spoiler)

There were a few suspenseful scenes in *Never Dare a Wicked Earl* with Hayden getting shot and multiple kidnappings. You pretty much know who the bad guy is throughout the book, but that in no way detracted from the story or the suspense. I did question Hayden's judgement a few times in his unwillingness to turn the person over to the authorities, but I guess I can see why he would be reluctant to do so.

Overall, *Never Dare a Wicked Earl* ended up being an excellent read and I look forward to reading more books from this author in the future.

I received an advance copy of this book from Netgalley and the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

OLT says

Oh, great, I said to myself as I picked this ARC from my Amazon Vine list. A debut HR author who was a 2015 and 2016 finalist in the Golden Heart Contest from Romance Writers of America. This might be good. I'd like something good to read in the HR new releases department. Well, if wishes were horses...

Now, if I'm going to read a "fresh" voice, I want a fresh story. Not the first in a series about some "infamous lords, unrepentant rogues whose bad behavior makes for good gossip." Not that again. Well, maybe, if well written and with well-drawn characters? But that's a negative on the characters. They're all straight from Central Casting. A hunky hero with a troubled past who doesn't feel worthy of love and acts like a jerk most of the time and a heroine who gets weak in the knees, all melting and blushing and flushing around the jerk.

Naturally, the sexual attraction is the main thrust (yeah, pun intended) of their relationship, what with her noticing his spicy masculine scent and ogling his manly chest and shapely buttocks and him noticing her noticing and saying things like should he turn over "so you can ogle my bits as well." And, of course, there's a good deal of tenting and shifting uncomfortably on his part. After all, she's a tasty-looking female. He can't even watch her eat strawberries and cream without getting squirmy.

So why are these two together, you may ask. Because the hero, Hayden Milton, Earl of Westfield, gets shot in the thigh by an unhinged former lover who was aiming for those bits he offered to the h for ogling, but the ex-lover missed, thank heavens, right? While recovering, he isn't the most cooperative of patients and has already driven away three sickroom attendants in as many days, so his sister hires our heroine, Sophie Camden, medical assistant to a Dr. Trimble and an aspiring doctor, hoping Sophie will work out.

OK, here's my problem with the way things transpire. Sophie is supposed to be a professional. She is dedicated to her work and plans to become a doctor as soon as women will be allowed to study that profession. Why, oh why, can't she keep herself together around Westfield? Not only is she annoyingly attracted to him but in all the time she's there attending to him I did not find that she did anything for him that his valet could not have done. (As a matter of fact, she needs the valet to help because she won't do baths or chamber pots.)

Sophie is so unprofessional that she can't even look at his bare chest or thighs without going all aquiver. She gives women who want to be treated as equals in a man's world a bad name. Oh, and she also has some things in her past that set up roadblocks to the HEA. "She didn't want to lose another person she loved. No, it was better not to love Hayden. Better to guard her heart." And I can't count the number of times tears were spilled from her glorious eyes. Couldn't she keep it together at least half the time?

So we have two idiots lustng after each other without any real communication. Hayden should have known better because a large part of his former troubles revolved around not communicating well with the woman he had loved. But that would offend the Failure to Communicate trope authors all know and love. So these two don't confide in each other, seeming to prefer to make the wrong assumptions most of the time. Arrgh! Fresh new romance? Heck, no. This story is same old, same old, and then some.
