



## The Silent Duke

*Jess Michaels*

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# The Silent Duke

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**The Silent Duke** Jess Michaels

**A hot historical from 5 time USA Today bestselling author Jess Michaels**

Born mute, Ewan Hoffstead, Duke of Donburrow was abused by his wicked father and wretched younger brothers until an uncle swept in to save the day. Still, he carries the scars of his past with him, including a terrible belief that perhaps a “person like him” truly doesn’t deserve the title his uncle fought so hard for him to earn.

Recently widowed Charlotte may be the proper Countess of Portsmith to Society, but when she is around Ewan, she still feels like the enraptured little girl who met him decades before when her brother was best friends with him and his cousin.

A planned trip to spend Christmas with their families at Ewan’s estate reunites the old friends. But when a storm keeps the others from arriving on time, Charlotte decides to stop living in fear and pursue the man she has desired and loved her entire life. Ewan cannot resist her seduction, but he fears giving in to his heart. Especially when the family that disposed of him returns and threatens not only his life, but that of the woman he loves.

**Length:** Full Length Novel (70,000 words)

**Heat Level:** Might burn your swiping finger

**This can be read as a standalone book, but is the fourth book in the 1797 Club series.**

## The Silent Duke Details

Date : Published November 14th 2017 by The Passionate Pen LLC

ISBN :

Author : Jess Michaels

Format : Kindle Edition 200 pages

Genre : Romance, Historical Romance, Historical, Regency Romance

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## From Reader Review The Silent Duke for online ebook

### **BigComfyChairBookReviews says**

#### **Best in the Series**

I loved this one. I thought it was really a beautiful romance. I have read books where the hero was pretending to be mute for much of the book, but none where they were really mute through the whole book. I thought it made for a wonderful if tortured hero. I loved Charlotte she was sweet and determined to get what she wanted. The conflict was entirely self-inflicted on the hero's part and I got frustrated with him a couple of times, but I thought it worked. I could understand him and was nearly in tears at some of the emotional tension between the 2. I thought the ending could have been more dramatic with his brothers. But, as a whole this is my favorite in the series so far and I will keep reading. Looking forward to Matthew's story.

**WARNING:** there is sex in this book, it is not erotica, but enough to be a steamy & hot adult romance. Please do not read if you are looking for something PG. Romance-4/5 Steaminess-3/5 Explicitness-3/5

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### **Kindling Micky says**

4.5 stars

I enjoyed THE SILENT DUKE cover to cover. It's been a while since I've read a Jess Michaels historical romance and now I'm remembering how good they are. After reading the blurb and seeing it centred around a Duke with a disability, I was hooked in and I was not disappointed.

This is a beautiful friends to lovers story that is as much full of emotion as it is heat. Jess Michaels knows how to write HR heat without losing story cohesion. This was a full story, with family and past that was full of depth. Ewan was very likeable but incredibly self-deprecating with regards to his disability. This was frustrating occasionally to me and frequently to the heroine, Charlotte. Charlotte was his childhood friend and she was a brave woman, widowed and with steely determination. Her character was full of loyalty, courage and passion. This was just an excellent coupling and an engaging story.

THE SILENT DUKE is book four of a series I haven't read up until now. This book stands alone nicely but I'm sure there are side characters I would have recognised had I read the others. I can't find it in myself to regret where I've started considering my enjoyment of Ewan and Charlotte.

A copy of this book was provided by the publisher through netgalley in return for a honest review.

Reviewed for Jo&IsaLoveBooks Blog.

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### **Jen Davis says**

I one clicked on this bad boy the minute I finished reading the blurb, and it gave me everything I wanted. Namely a mute and abused hero fighting himself over a chance at happiness with the woman he has loved his entire life. Yes, yes, 100 times yes.

Ewan (I even love his name) spent 10 years in the home of the father who hated him. It wasn't until the man threatened to put him in an asylum over his inability to speak that his aunt and uncle took him away and decided to raise him as their own. Charlotte was only seven, but she felt a special connection to her brother's friend, so much so that she developed a special sign language that allowed the two of them to talk.

Fast forward nearly 20 years. Charlotte is now a widow, just coming out of mourning. She is about to re-enter the marriage mart, but she wants to try one more time to make a go of things with Ewan. You see, she confessed her love to him before she ever got married, but he pushed her away. Now that she's no longer an innocent, she has another tool in her belt to aid in her efforts and she is not above using seduction to finally win the man she loves.

As luck would have it, Charlotte is the only guest at a house party at Ewan's estate before a storm makes the area inaccessible. She'll have no better chance to work her magic, so she gets right down to business.

I was a little worried at the beginning of this book because I felt that it was progressing too fast. I expected much more build before they kissed or progressed further. I was also a little skeptical of their special secret (highly complex) sign language. However, those were probably my only reservations. I enjoyed this book very much.

Ewan was so wonderfully damaged and totally in love with Charlotte. It was so angsty and sad and sweet. Despite my initial reservations, I ended up loving the way he was completely powerless to stop himself from responding to her. And did I mention... he was a virgin??? Of course, Charlotte helps relieve him of that problem pretty quickly. Unfortunately, it's much harder to convince him to consider any kind of future between them.

This love story is one stolen moment after another and it's so bittersweet watching Charlotte and Ewan get tiny tastes of what they've both always wanted together. Ewan's dad did a real number on him and even though he's now got the dead man's title, he hasn't found peace.

I feel like I've spoiled too much already. Suffice it to say, Ewan and Charlotte are very easy to root for and their HEA is super-satisfying.

This is book four in the 1797 Club series, but holds up entirely as a standalone.

Rating: B/B+

*\*ARC provided by publisher*

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### **Hollis says**

It could be that coming into this series at book four was my undoing, it could be because this is a new-to-me-author and sometimes there's an adjustment to writing styles or plot direction, whatever the case : but THE SILENT DUKE wasn't exactly what I was expecting it to be.

Michaels has created a great premise with a mute Duke and the childhood friend who has loved him almost from the moment they met -- and vice versa. There's quite a bit of angst surrounding self-worth and deserving a title, a future, love, all of which can be interesting if the topic isn't recycled a hundred times

(which it kinda was). So it seems the author tried to balance out that angst with sex.. a lot of it. Pretty much from the get-go. Which I just wasn't a fan of, to be honest.

This story is on the shorter side, though longer than a novella, so it's strange to have wanted so much more of this story expanded and yet way less time cycling through sex scenes that felt somewhat copied and pasted over and over again. There was also a bit of time spent on other couples who have already found their happy endings, who I obviously don't know but was provided with enough information to get the basics, and I imagine that lack of previous foundation may have attributed to some of my dislike. It's said this can standalone and I would agree with that statement.. and also disagree because.. like I said, we're meant to feel connections to other characters or care about seeing glimpses of them after their stories have wrapped and ultimately I didn't.

*Ewan was mute, and it seemed mute he would stay. His father said it made him stupid and damaged. Ewan felt damaged, certainly, but he wasn't as certain about stupid.*

That being said, I love seeing characters with disabilities or mental illness, any kind of representation, in my reads. Especially historicals. I may not have loved Ewan but I loved that Michaels gave words to a man who couldn't speak. I wish there had been less of a convenient workaround for his ability to express himself but alas that was kind of a big element at play with his connection to Charlotte. (view spoiler) As for the lady in question.. yes, she was kind, yes she was generous, yes it was great to see female agency in regards to pleasure, especially during this time, but she also.. too perfect?

*"Ewan, if I had a life with you, I would gladly live it slaying your dragons."*

Despite a conflict near the end that I was really not a fan of at all, there were some very moving and wonderful passages in THE SILENT DUKE. Enough to make me want to read the author again, maybe even backtrack to the beginning of the series to play catch-up. But unfortunately this book, this installment, wasn't the winner I had hoped it to be.

2.5 stars

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\*\* I received an ARC from NetGalley and the publisher (thank you!) in exchange for an honest review. \*\*

## **Tracy DeNeal says**

An auto-buy author for me!

Charlotte, the daughter and sister of dukes and widow of an earl, has loved Ewen since she was a girl of seven and he a boy of 10. She has decided that enough is enough and she intends to have her heart's desire - a life with the man who holds her heart come hell or high water. Adverse weather conditions give her just the opening she needs.

My favorite romance trope is childhood best friends. This story fulfilled my trope loving dreams in spades. Pure childhood love, check. Secret language/code words, check. Coldhearted, unfeeling parents, check. Love triumphing over all obstacles, check.

Above and beyond, Jess Michaels never fails to make her characters sizzle on the page. She has done more than accomplish that with this offering. You can't help but fall in love with Ewen, he is a hard working honorable man, who just happens to have been born mute. He doesn't let his disability hamper his responsibilities with respect to his estate and his dependents. He just needs to get over the hangups that prevent him from fulfilling his own heart's desires with respect to Charlotte.

This is a romance, so, of course, he does. It's the journey to HEA that makes it so rewarding.

Although, I already preordered this book, I was fortunate enough to receive an ARC prerelease. I was happy to provide this review ahead of time.

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### **Melisa says**

Excellent read with a mute and virgin hero! Loved it!

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### **Shell Cunliffe says**

#### My Review

Well what a book, I just loved it from start to finish a absolute must read...this series is just getting better and better.

As you know I won't be giving spoilers, What I loved most about this book was the chemistry between Ewan and Charlotte. I just loved the way Charlotte wouldn't give up and one by one she brought down the barriers that Ewan had placed around his heart.

Ewan had thought the barriers that he had put in place were there to protect him, but in the end they became a hindrance and in the end with the help of Charlotte and his friends and family they managed to break them down.

As I said earlier this is a must read and I will give 5/5 stars. This book is up for pre-order and is released on the 14th November.

You can this book and all the other books in the series from [Amazon.co.uk](http://Amazon.co.uk)

I received this book from Netgalley in return for a honest review.

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### **Katy says**

1.5 rounded up.

I had such high hopes for this book. A storyline this unique really had the potential to be something special but instead, it just fell flat. Nothing worked for me.

Ewan, the Duke of Donburrow, was born mute. This obviously didn't go over well when he was a child. His father wanted to throw him in an asylum because he was "damaged" and Ewan's aunt and uncle wouldn't hear of it. Charlotte and Ewan were friends when they were young (I believe they were neighbors?) and Charlotte never treated Ewan any different. They became the best of friends, even inventing their own sign language so that they could converse. When Ewan's father gets more serious about throwing Ewan in an asylum, Ewan's aunt and uncle step up and take him to live with them. Ewan is raised in a loving home, free from the cruelty of his father. For reasons I'll leave out to avoid a spoiler, Charlotte marries an earl and becomes the Countess of Portsmith but she is widowed a few years later. The book begins as her time of mourning for her husband ends and she along with other family members visits Ewan for Christmas. She makes her way to his estate (alone) and the weather traps her with Ewan until the bridge is safe for everyone else to cross and join them. Charlotte decides to use this time to convince Ewan that they belong together. And by convince I mean seduce.

Listen, I don't really read historical romance for its accuracy. For that, I'd read historical fiction. I love to think that a duke would marry an illegitimate bluestocking, an overworked barmaid, or the feisty governess the marquess next door hired. Or that a duke's daughter would run off with a blacksmith and he would eventually be welcomed into the family. That's pretty much the point for me. Love conquers all, even social convention and ramifications be damned. But there's a limit. There has to be. This book crossed it for me. Which is really saying something. There were so many *Wait, what? How is that going to work? So they are going to do what, now?* moments that I just didn't buy any of it.

Ewan obviously can't speak, so he carries a notebook and a pencil around everywhere. This, I get. But my unfortunately ever-busy mind kept thinking of instances this just wouldn't work or work well. Not that it *couldn't* work, just that it was never explained. What if he was trying to "talk" to someone who couldn't read? What if he didn't have his paper/pencil with him? Perhaps if these problems occurred somewhere in the book and were handled (whether the outcome was good or bad) it would have been easier to accept. He and Charlotte have a way around the hurdles of communication that I wish had been explored better as well. **When it comes down to it, that is my main problem with this book. So many interesting things were left unexplored.** We're only given a few pages of Ewan and Charlotte's childhood. I'm not usually one for flashbacks but this book should have been filled with them. Their pre-existing bond is a major part of the romance. Ewan and Charlotte knew each other for years but we only get a few pages of their past. I wish I could have read about their friendship and seen it bloom into something more as they grew up.

Ugh. The sex. Ewan is a virgin, which is believable. What isn't believable is the fact that he is somehow amazing in bed right off the bat. He was as inexperienced as possible but was immediately ahhhmazing at everything, including the technical stuff. My eyes rolled so many times I lost count. And there was a lot of this eye-roll inducing sex. Half of this book is sex, and not in a good way. When it came down to it, Charlotte was trying to use sex to convince Ewan they belong together and at a certain point, it became outright almost aggressive manipulation. Screw that. There wasn't anything almost about it. At one point she crossed a line and for a few pages, I hated her for it.

And it was hard to come back from. If Ewan hadn't instantly forgiven her, it would most likely have ruined the book for me.

On top of all of this, the writing wasn't great. It wasn't the worst I've ever read but it could have been so

much better. This was altogether just a disappointing read which was a real shame. It was kind of romantic and Ewan was sweet, but it wasn't enough to save the book. There was a lot of potential here and it was wasted. Thankfully it was short, which made it easier to finish.

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### **Isha Coleman says**

Ms. Michaels had to have known she was creating something special. I knew from the moment I read the blurb this story was meant for me. The Silent Duke is so much bigger than a seductive romance. It is a story of one man's struggle to be heard, despite unspeakable heartache. Told so masterfully through the eyes of courageous and the soul of love, this tale speaks to the heart on so many levels and is as inspiring as it is gut wrenching. Ewan is the ultimate survivor because he made it through ever obstacle with his soul intact and finally made it home. His was a voice meant to be heard and together Ewan and Charlotte found a love that was unstoppable.

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### **Juliana Philippa says**

#### **3.5 stars**

Overall, it was worth the read and I didn't dislike it as much as some of my friends did. Some of the hoopla at the end could have been cut out and it could have been turned from novella-ish into a novella, but oh well. I had read the first book in this series and really did not enjoy it, and had been nervous about the others, since this is my first foray into Jess Michaels's work; while there were some echoes of what annoyed me in *The Daring Duke (Book 1)*, on the whole, I enjoyed the two main characters and found the romance between them very sweet (and sizzling).

**Charlotte (24), Countess of Portsmith** has recently come out of mourning and is spending the holiday season with family members and, most importantly, the love of her life: **Ewan (27), Duke of Donburrow**. Sadly (but not really), the rest of the party gets waylaid due to poor weather conditions, and Charlotte and Ewan find themselves alone (with an army of servants, of course) for several days, before the holiday party can get started in truth. Now, *what* are they to do during this time?! Lol

In all seriousness, it is a bit of a quandary, because they both are in love with the other, though Ewan has been determined since forever to not let anything come of it. He doesn't want to saddle Charlotte with a "damaged" man whom she'll only come to resent and be embarrassed by, and he never wants to have a family, lest one of his children should have to bear the same burden he does (have I mentioned Ewan is mute? I'm assuming you've read the summary/back cover).

**They give into their desires quite quickly**, which was fine with me because they have a long-standing relationship and although we only have one flashback at the beginning, their relationship is written very well, in the sense that you totally feel the friendship and easiness they have with one another. Ewan, of course, refuses to make it anything longterm, and Charlotte says that if nothing comes to pass between them, then she'll be going to London to go back on "the marriage mart" (which made no sense to me: even if it's true her husband's property left her nothing, her brother is a rich Duke and she could easily stay with him, at least a little while).

Eventually, the rest of the family joins them, and then we just have to hold our breath to see what happens and if Ewan will finally give in and admit his love and devotion to Charlotte (I'll leave you in suspense, since I wouldn't want to ruin the ending by letting you know whether they get together or not ;-).

**Although the hero-resisting-love ploy is so often employed, it actually made sense in this one;** the damage and abuse that Ewan suffered in his early years, from those who should have loved him but did anything but, have taken their toll. Thankfully, his aunt and uncle saved him and he went to live with them when he was 10, but he still has all the other bad reactions that he has to deal with due to his muteness and it makes complete sense that he is wary to "drag" (as he sees it) Charlotte into his world.

**I loved that Charlotte was having none of it and was so determined to fight for them**—because it really is for *them*. There is no doubt as to the attraction between them and their connection is unbelievably close, so thankfully he never pulls the "I just don't love you" card to purposefully hurt her and push her away. This means though, that Charlotte knows they have a chance to be incredibly happy, if only Ewan will allow it. Charlotte could have otherwise come off as just a sweet and somewhat uninteresting heroine, but the battle she puts up made me really like her.

Not a reread for me, but still an enjoyable couple of hours that I would recommend to others (which is basically the definite of a 3.5-star rating from me). Enjoy!

### **Ewan Loves Charlotte ...**

*The moment the butler had gone, Ewan pressed both hands against the top of his desk, leaning over the surface as his breath came suddenly short and hard.*

*Charlotte. Charlotte. Charlotte. She was his obsession. His dream. And he recalled every single moment they'd ever spent together in one blink of an eye, just as he always did. Each was seared into his mind.*

### **And Charlotte Loves Ewan ...**

*She pushed aside the dessert and scooted her chair a bit closer. He stiffened in response and a curtain drew down over his face, a distance he normally reserved for strangers.*

*Having it put there between them made her heart hurt. This was what she was risking by pushing him. That he would set her aside forever, that their relationship would be irreparably destroyed.*

*It terrified her. But then, so did walking away from what she wanted and what she felt. She'd done that once and had been miserable. If she didn't risk this now, when all the world had seemed to align to make it happen, she feared the remainder of her life would be a series of regrets over what she hadn't done or said.*

*"Ewan," she whispered.*

*His hands shook as he signed, "Please don't."*

### **Miscellaneous Notes:**

- Why is the book called *The Silent Duke*, when it turns out that's a derogatory name used to reference Ewan and he hates it?

- I definitely consider this book "novella-ish," as I term it (has 215 pages)

*This review is of an ARC provided by NetGalley and the publisher in exchange for an honest review. Some changes and/or edits may be made to the final published version.*

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### **Lisa Jo says**

I have loved this series from book one, but this book is easily my favorite. Give me a tortured hero any day of the week and I'm smitten. Ewan was wonderful in every way and Charlotte was a great match for him. Their connection was powerful and absolute. It was a heart-wrenching, emotional story from page one and I became completely immersed in the journey. I love how strong their feelings were from the beginning and how the emotional drama played out through the rest of the story. Extremely passionate, extremely rewarding story that I will treasure always! Love, love love!

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### **Olga therebelreader says**

In short:

**Hero 5/5 | Heroine 4/5 | Plot (Point, Originality) 4/5 | Writing Style 4/5 | Steam 4/5 | Romance 4/5 | Angst-Suspense 3/5 | Darkness 1/5 | Humor 1/5 | Secondary Characters 4/5 | Drama-Conflict 4/5 | Mystery 0/5 | Twists 3/5 | Pacing Steady | Action 3/5**

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### **Cathy Geha says**

The Silent Duke by Jess Michaels  
1797 Club #4

Ten teens at boarding school form a club to assist one another as they grow into their positions of being dukes one day - The 1797 Club - this series is already plotted out to have ten volumes starring the ten original members of the club. Over the years a bond stronger and closer, in some ways, than that of blood brothers is formed. In each book of the series we find out what has become of the members of the club and who they will find their HEA with.

Charlotte has known Ewan since she was seven and he was ten. She was there when his father gave him away to his uncle and aunt and at that point comforted him. Mute and unable to speak many, including his father, considered him "damaged" but Charlotte, Ewan's uncle and aunt and the 1797 Club saw him as more and made him part of their lives. His pain from the first ten years of his life lingered for a long time, though, and impacted his beliefs about the possibilities for his future.

Charlotte is just coming out of the mourning period after being widowed and is going to try one more time to have the man she truly loves, Ewan. She heads to his home for the holidays and due to bad weather the two of them are isolated for a few days and that gives them time to explore more than they have before. When the weather clears, family appears, and evil arrives...well...there is a lot going on and a lot for the two to contend with if they are to achieve a HEA together.

I thoroughly enjoyed this story. It made me think about what it must have been like to be “different” long ago and wonder how people managed. I am eager to read whoever’s book is next. I should probably throw in here that I stayed up till 2am reading because...I could not put this story down ;)

Thank you to NetGalley and The Passionate Pen for the ARC – This is my honest review.

4.5 Stars

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### **Michelle says**

As I expected, this book had so much emotion and pain but also so much love that makes you want to say awww! Jess Michaels just gets better and better. Lately, her books have been involving even more emotional depth but not so much where is just a depressing sob fest. Lots of endearing and of course sexy moments to enjoy. I really understood the struggles that Ewan was dealing with and why he pushed Charlotte away. Almost everyone around him was so cruel and completely awful to him that I just wanted to smack them all. It is believable and understandable that he wouldn't want that kind of life for anyone else so his actions came from his good heart. I can see the desperate need they have for each other and the love is shining through as well. I really loved Charlotte. She is just perfect for Ewan and loves him unconditionally. She is warm, caring and one tough cookie. They work so well together that all I can see is a happy and wonderful life together.

*I received an ARC via Netgalley.*

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### **Barbara Rogers says**

Series: The 1797 Club #4

Publication Date: 11/14/17

What a book! I absolutely loved it from beginning to end – and couldn’t put it down until I could see how it all worked out. Do you want a broken heart? If so, just read the Prologue to this excellent book. The unimaginable pain a heartless and mean-spirited parent can cause is just palpable. Then, if you want a smile in your heart – read the rest of the book. It is an excellently written, well-paced, story of life-long friends finding their own happily ever after. It isn’t one of those books where they were in denial of their feelings – no – both knew they deeply loved the other. However, one of them (you guess which one) is stubborn beyond belief and doesn’t feel worthy of the other. Now, for the purists among us (yes, I’m one), the author did use a couple of anachronistic words – for instance, she used the word ‘sex’ to refer to the act rather than the gender. See this Facebook post for information on the etymology for ‘sex’.

Ewan Hoffstead was born mute. He was a lovely child, but his father could not accept that his heir was less than perfect and tried to beat, berate and shame him into speaking. Picture a grown man standing above a cowering two-year-old child screaming at him that he was broken and worthless. Imagine the damage that treatment would cause to a young child’s psyche. When Ewan was ten-years-old, his father was going to finally put him in an asylum in order to keep him from inheriting the title. Luckily for Ewan, his aunt and uncle took him from his parents and raised him with love and acceptance. Ewan was actually a very

intelligent man, but everyone else seemed to judge him on his lack of speech. Or did they? Maybe it was just his perception that everyone was judging him negatively – but, that poor abused little boy always came to the fore and thought that they did. You'll just fall hopelessly in love with Ewan when you read this book. He's sweet, thoughtful, considerate and honorable.

Charlotte Undercross was a blonde-haired, blue-eyed girl of seven when she helped Ewan through the worst day of his young life. Then, together, they developed a hand-signing language to make it easier for Ewan to communicate with others. It turned out to be much too complicated for others to learn, but Ewan and Charlotte used it all the time. Charlotte loves Ewan with all of her heart and she has told him so and asked him to love her in return. When he refused, she married another.

Charlotte is now a young widow and she's determined to have one more shot at a life with Ewan. If he still refuses, she'll have to go back on the marriage mart. Ewan is hosting a Christmas celebration at his estate and several friends and family will attend – Charlotte is among those. Fate intervenes and a winter storm causes rivers to flood and Charlotte's coach is the last one to make it over the bridge leading to Ewan's home. That gives Charlotte several days alone with Ewan. Can she convince him to let go of his past and embrace a future with her? We sure hope so. Then, there is the remainder of his hate-filled family to contend with. Will they manage to oust Ewan from his title and cause irreparable harm?

This is a quick and lovely read and I hope you'll enjoy it as much as I did!

Please check out my reviews at:

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