



## That Scandalous Evening

*Christina Dodd*

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*A Disastrous Season*

A simple statue began the scandal.

*A Lady Concealed*

An innocent English miss conceived of it, her hands gliding across the clay, delineating each smoothly defined muscle and sinew, creating a sculpture of the man she worshipped. When the likeness was exposed, along with Miss Jane Higgenbothem's secret tendre for Lord Blackburn, the ton's gleeful contempt sent the lady back to the country in disgrace.

*A Gentleman Revealed*

Now, a decade later, she's back in London, as a chaperone to her beautiful niece. But to Blackburn, Jane's unwitting model, the cool, reticent spinster is still a challenge. She once made the arrogant rake a laughingstock: so why is he tempted to revive an affair that almost began so long ago, on one scandalous evening?

## That Scandalous Evening Details

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## From Reader Review That Scandalous Evening for online ebook

### Tammy Walton Grant says

In 1809 unmarried ladies weren't supposed to think about, much less sculpt, the male figure. Why, the attention to detail a sculptor gives to the male physique even makes ME blush:

As "That Scandalous Evening" opens, our heroine has done just that. Deep in the throes of unrequited, virginal love for Ransom Quincy, Marquess of Blackburn (who is *completely* undeserving, I might add) she has poured her heart and soul into a sculpture of her beloved.

This sculpture, of course, is never meant to be seen, but through a series of catty manoeuvres it is unveiled at a ball attended by both the Hero and the heroine. The ensuing scandal ruins Jane Higgenbothem and humiliates Blackburn beyond reparation.

Cut to ten years later: Jane reappears in London chaperoning her niece's first season. Lord Blackburn has also returned to London; injured in the battle of Talavera, he has been retained by the Foreign Office to ferret out a network of spies for Napoleon among the *ton*. Time and circumstance have changed them both tremendously. They meet again, sparks fly, and I sat back to enjoy watching it all play out.

I really had fun reading this one. I loved the premise - and the main reason for the Marquess' humiliation is absolutely hilarious. Even when seeing the sculpture ten years later, Jane still has absolutely no idea what Ransom is so upset about. She sees nothing but an example of her work, he (view spoiler).

There were some absolutely wonderful secondary characters in this romance, not the least of whom were Adora, Jane's charge and Blackburn's older sister Susan, Lady Goodridge. The hint of romance between Susan and Fitz, her manner of speaking and her *bon mots* were so appealing it made me hope that she got her own book.

The intrigue angle is deftly handled. All of Blackburn's intelligence is based on supposition and rumour, and in order to flush out the spy he must use every tool at his disposal, including Jane. This means the dreaded Big Mis occurs, but thankfully the author doesn't make us suffer through it for very long.

An entertaining read by a "new-to-me" author: witty, with an amusing take on the spinster/bluestocking trope, sizzling scenes and a dash of intrigue. I'm off to look up Christina Dodd's backlist.

4 stars.

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### Chitra \*CJ\* says

"That Scandalous Evening" is the story of Jane and Ransom.

A young belle Jane Higgenbothem was infatuated by the handsome Lord Ransom Blackwell, and adoring

him with her artistic eye, decides to sculpt him nude from her imagination, only to be betrayed by a "friend" and ousted from society..

Eleven years later, she returns to the society as a chaperone for her beautiful niece Adora, and to face the demons she had not fully buried. But as she crosses paths with Ransom again, sparks and intrigue both ignite. And how the artistic passion leads to deeper feelings makes the story.

My first ever book by Christina Dodd was an engaging read from start to end. I adored how the spirited heroine a lot, and it was a 3 star until the epic grovel at the end- which totally made this an overall good reading experience.

If you like scandal filled books with little mystery and funny banter, look no further.

SWE (view spoiler)

3.75/5

PS. GORG GORG cover! #humpable

PSS. That fig leaf humor though..LOL

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### **Kinga says**

This started off really strong, even despite some mild rapey vibes.

Angst, hatred, scandal, passion!

And then halfway through it just really, really lost the momentum and fizzled into endless passionate kissing and passionate sulking that wasn't following a clear logical, emotional structure.

The sex scenes were really cringe-worthy. But hey, I made it all the way to the end and must say the spy intrigue was more believable than the romance.

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### **Barbara says**

I thought Ransom was a real jerk, and my opinion never wavered from that. Jane should have moved to Paris to live her dream as an artist, but of course she got duped by a man with way more experience than her, and fell in love. My favorite reads are historical romances and this same scenario is in every book so I don't really know why it bothered me so much. I'm normally not so "I am women hear me roar" but this book really p'd me off ;)

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### **Jupiter394 says**

I did enjoy the book but it was just okay.

Some of my complaints are:

- the current day language was a little out of place.
- I really didn't feel the ending. It was just lacking in emotion and was just like a quick wrap-it-up.
- some of the other characters seemed more interesting than the main characters.
- the main male character was not very likable.

- for someone who suffered great public humiliation before, the main character certainly doesn't mind putting herself in danger again.

A few things I did like:

- I liked the art angle
- I liked some of the details of the espionage
- the main female character was likable

I've read other similar books in the past that I liked more.

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### **\_inbetween\_ says**

Surprisingly good. All the reviews I saw spoil for something that the book manages to hide and tease about until rather late in the story, which is a shame. They also indicate the hero is being unloveable and the heroine unfairly treated, which made me wary - and was luckily untrue! I have read way too many current romance novels that all delight in the subjugation of the heroine in various ways, and this is actually completely the opposite.

Bearing in mind that Dodd writes a lot and is a mainstream romance writer, she still manages to hint at something especially fen do, that is (re)create what they love in some form. Jane is an artist, and she created a clay sculpture of the man she adored as a teenager. The reason this becomes a scandal is both "funny" and true to human nature, and for once I don't want to spoil it.

While the flashbacks initially seemed clunky (but so do most modern romance novels), the theme of how Jane sees things and wants to paint or sculpt them was well maintained - not in the foreground as it would be in literature, but certainly the way it feels when one itches to create and immortalise and in a way take possession of something by capturing it.

The niece is genuinely nice, non-cliché, and I'd have loved to read more of his 44 year old sister and how she finally got together with his 34 year old no-good charming friend who nearly turned traitor, because Dodd does hint that the man actually does fancy this woman a lot, but (unheard of) it is not once mentioned directly. Hm.

When other romance novels would end, there is still a good chunk of book left over - the couple finally copulated in a really good scene where she investigates his body with bits of clay still dried to her fingers etc.; then they have to marry, and he still needs to subjugate her, which was the fly in the ointment in the sex scene ("she would soon learn that the man was always in charge in the act"). But instead of doing the fashionable woman-on-top thing, or him "allowing" her graciously to dabble a bit, she makes a stand, turning the relationship into something more satisfactory.

Many of Dodd's other books sound like the usual bad mainstream (from medieval non-con to modern-day), but considering the reviews for this were misleading, I'd like to read more after all. I think I need very very detailed SPOILERS for that BDSM one, please?

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## **Katy says**

3.75

This book was a little strange for me, this is my first Christina Dodd and I have to say I'm not sure how I feel about it; one minute I'm smiling and the next I am confused and a little whiplashed. The story itself was fun but I felt like the writing, timeline, and POVs could have been tighter, that said it was still a fun book.

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## **Anna Marie says**

Three and a HALF stars.

If you mention Christina Dodd to me, I tend to light up. I love most anything she writes... but not so much this one.

When Jane Higgenbothem (LOVE the name, \*giggle\*!) was 16 and had her first season, she was instantly smitten with Lord Blackburn. It was painful - she stared, she put herself in his way, she couldn't concentrate. And being an artist, she sculpted a likeness of him. When another gent showed an interest in her (instead of the girl he was close to proposing to), the thwarted girl hauled in Jane's statue and presented it to the ton.

Blackburn was furious, but it was Jane who was ruined. Exiled from society, she went home with her sister, who died shortly after. The husband allowed Jane to stay and care for their daughter, but she was abused and neglected, forced to work as a servant with no pay. Eleven years later she's sent as companion to her niece to London, where - in spinster garb - she would attend the beauty in her first season.

Blackburn couldn't believe Jane was back. And at just the time when he (working as a British spy) needed to cause a great scandal. If wooing Jane wouldn't work, nothing would... everyone remembered that naked sculpture she'd done of him in her youth. And it worked to his benefit, as she's been seen going to and from French residences. Is Jane working as a spy to pull herself from poverty? He has to know.

The book was good. All Christina Dodd books are. But I have a hard time with men who are emotionally abusive to women, and Blackburn really did a number on Jane in this book. The WHOLE book. Yes, he loved her. She drove him crazy. He didn't know how to deal with her. But I don't like to see him taking it out on her. That, and I hate groveling heroes at the end, and this one did that. It's painfully uncomfortable, and I don't like books to make me feel that way. That's why I deducted stars.

\*SPOILERS!\* But Susan and Fitz? LOVED it. Adora and Daniel? PERFECT! And homiGAWSH, it took until page 262 before we understood just WHY the statue was so shocking: sixteen year old Jane had never seen a naked male, so she'd put a little fig leaf over that part of the statue, making him look like he was barely endowed, at all. It was the size of his privy member that had him so damn pissed off at her! Hysterical... I wasn't expecting that. ((Wasn't expecting him to whip his pants down by way of explanation, either, but it was CLASSIC.)) Very fun story... if only he hadn't been so mean most of the book.

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## **Catherine says**

This was my first book by Christina Dodd, and I was pleased by how much I enjoyed it. She's got such a

large backlist that I'll have a lot of reading material to catch up on, yeah!

The beginning of this book was almost painful to read. Not in a bad way, more in an embarrassed for the character way. Poor Jane. I found it amusing that she assumed that people didn't like her statue because it wasn't good enough. Jane lived in society, but at times it seemed as though she marched to a different drummer. Maybe it was the artist in her.

Jane, like many young girls, found an object of worship in her first season. She stared at Ransom, the Marquess of Blackburn, in absolute adoration, and all the ton knew that she had puppy love for him. One night, the worst came to pass. A statue Jane had sculpted of Ransom was stolen and presented at a ball for all the ton to see. Both Jane and Ransom were humiliated, although only Jane was ruined. Over a decade has gone by, and now Jane is back in London. She's trying to keep a low profile, but all that is out the window once she encounters Ransom again.

I really liked Jane. She was pragmatic, but also a little bit of the lost dreamer she used to be. I was so pleased to see that she did not pine for Ransom the whole time she was away from London. Life beat her down and she grew up. I loved that she was still baffled by why everyone was so upset by her statue. She was quite proud of it. It cracked me up when I finally figured out why Ransom hated it so much!

Ransom is less than pleased to see Jane, although he can't help but enjoy the memory of the last time they saw each other. He decides to pursue Jane for his own ends. I loved that he actually had to work for it this time around. Jane's focus was all for her niece (who was a little darling) and Ransom had to fight for the attention that used to make him so uncomfortable.

This book had a sort of farce feel to it. Characters' actions work at cross purposes and misunderstandings abound. Ransom seemed to be the worst perpetrator. The man could misunderstand the statement "the sky is blue" if Jane was the one who said it. Those misunderstandings also led to some very funny situations.

Ransom drew out his snobby superiority a little too long for me. I was so glad that Jane wasn't just willing to take it though. There at the end when they were by the boat...if it hadn't been so close to the end I would have suspected a different outcome. That was quite an impressive apology though. I really felt that he *finally* understood. Even though it was a long time in coming it was heartfelt.

Ransom's sister was my absolute favorite character. I loved that the author wrote her dialogue like that. It really made me feel the drama that permeated her sentences. Also, how can I not love someone who still calls her brother Figgy when she thinks he's getting too arrogant. She was a brilliant character! I loved the scene where we found out what happened to the statue. It was hilarious.

Even though it wasn't a perfect book I still enjoyed it. I look forward to trying more by this author.

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### **Lucina says**

4.5 stars

"That Scandalous Evening" was surprisingly good (after I didn't like "One Kiss From You"), although I doubt that I will read more books by Christina Dodd. The next novels in this series don't sound interesting enough.

I always love "secretly (or in this case not so secretly) in love for years" stories and Jane was an amazing heroine. I liked her so much, more than Ransom! And that doesn't happen very often. ;-) She wasn't behaving like a 28-year-old woman (more like "new adult") but I liked her strength and that she wasn't forgiving Ransom everything just because she was in love with him. He had to fight and grovel in the end, which doesn't happen nearly enough. And Ransom definitely deserved the set-down!

Contrary to other readers I liked Ransom (most of the time), he wasn't as asshole-y as I expected. My biggest problem with him was that I simply didn't understand his feelings and behaviour in many scenes, although we have his POV. When was he acting because of revenge, desire, love? Sometimes I didn't get it, especially what he felt in the library scene (eleven years ago). Or when did his feelings change? He was so confusing, his emotions and intentions seemed to change from one minute to the other. XD I really wanted his POV in the last scene or at least an epilogue! I wanted and needed the latter, I just love good epilogues!

Jane and Ransom had an intense chemistry, they had so many sizzling hot scenes together, without it being explicit for me. Although Ransom's "sex talk" definitely needs improvement. Who wants to be called "girl" when making love? That's so strange! And him telling her in the end that she moves like a "good horse" made me laugh so hard! XD

And the second big problem with "That Scandalous Evening" was that stupid and unnecessary spy plot. I generally don't like them, BECAUSE they are executed so badly in historical romances most of the time, with "That Scandalous Evening" being one of those novels. It was soooo ridiculous that Jane drew the right conclusions in minutes (or probably one evening), when Ransom and the other involved people had NO clue. Sorry, Ransom wasn't that stupid!

### **Conclusion:**

A very good "in love for years" story, with a strong heroine and a hero who behaved like a cad now and then. Sadly the spy side story was unnecessary and stupid.

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### **Vintage says**

I was looking forward to this, but the story lagged and the hero, hah the hero, needed a two by four upside the head. Oooh, new category!

Plot: Backstory is the heroine was having a mediocre season in part due to her desire to be an artist and in part she's in love with the high-flying hero. She knows she is not in his league, but is happy to adore from afar. She is humiliated, as is he, when another sneaky deb unveils a statue, a nude statue, the heroine sculpted of the hero. She is laughed out of the ballroom. The hero is furious.(view spoiler) Game over.

Present day, eleven years later, she is to accompany her ravishing niece to London. The hero dreads it.

The H, in the meantime, was injured out of the war and has lowered himself to spying for England. *Sidetone: spying was considered a scoundrel's game as it was without honor. This book and others drive that little interesting factoid home.* The H is less than pleased to see the hero back in London, but decides to use it to his advantage. He will stalk/seduce/woo her while the Ton watches in amusement as a screen for his spying, kind of Zorro deal but without the mask. Wow, what a guy. He ruins her the first time, and now he's really going to finish her off.

Quite a few secondary characters rule that provide side plots that merge into the main story at a later date: some dubious French aristocrats and tutors, a half-Irish roguish BF of the H who has more charm than he

knows what to do with, the H's commanding but fair older sister, an ex-beau of the h's, and my fave, the seemingly vapid niece of the h. Almost any of these deserved more story than were given especially the niece. Despite her seeming ..stupidity... the niece has an understanding of the male psyche her aunt does not, provides a nice supporting role in one of the minor story threads and has an entertaining choice of fiancee at the end.

Many elements of the story were 4 star worthy: the spy story, the h's desire for and experience in art, interesting secondary characters, etc. But the hero was a dud. Vain, arrogant, and blatantly dismissive of the heroine's background, he has all the negative points of a Darcy without any of the charms, at least for me. I will say he does a supreme grovel at the end, an on-his-knees grovel, but it wasn't enough for me.

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### **Jackie says**

2.5 Dodd often has great concepts/hooks, but I find her plotting to be rather silly and her character development all tell and no show. Though this book got positive reviews elsewhere, I didn't think it much better than any of the others of hers I've read. Guess I'm just not a fan of the "excuse any plot/character confusion, as long as it's funny" type of romance...

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### **Brenda says**

I finished a book called Strange Capers that claimed to be a romance but was more of a mystery with spies, traitors and the dreaded French. All that reminded of this long time favorite. So I have reread it. It is still such a good way to pass an evening. It has spies, traitors and the dreaded French. It has so much humor. It has two powerful personalities butting heads. It has some very sexy scenes. It has a hero that doesn't realize he is up to his eyeballs in love with the amazing Jane and that makes it extra delightful for me.

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### **Maria says**

I prefer my historicals to be somewhat knowledgeable about the times written about. I couldn't get much idea of what time in history in which this book was supposed to occur. The sudden inclusion of 21st century dialogue was jarring, to say the least, and the plot was so fictional that I had to finally decide to read it as a fairy tale so that I could enjoy it. After that I did, in fact, enjoy the book. Ms. Dodd can write well enough to keep one's interest. Evidently she has no desire to create the manners and mores of historical times but does enjoy the possibilities inherent in those times, as unrealistic as they may be.

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### **Keri says**

This was just an ok read for me. Ransom never redeemed himself to me. He was a priggish idiot 10 years ago and he never lost that status for me. I thought Jane was a bit too doormattish in some ways. The last 10 pages of the book just didn't make up for the rest.

