



To Sin with a Viking

Michelle Willingham

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To Sin with a Viking Michelle Willingham Playing With Fire!

Caragh Ó Brannon defended herself bravely when the enemy landed—only, now she finds herself alone with one very angry Viking...

Styr Hardrata sailed to Ireland intending to trade, never expecting to find himself held captive in chains by a beautiful Irish maiden.

The fiercely handsome warrior both terrifies and allures Caragh, but he is forbidden territory. He is the enemy...and he is married. Yet Styr harbors a secret that just might set them both free...

Forbidden Vikings

Resist them if you can!

To Sin with a Viking Details

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Author : Michelle Willingham

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From Reader Review To Sin with a Viking for online ebook

Zoe says

I read this book in 1.5 hours. This was supposed to be a full length book. So suffice it to say that I was not particularly entertained by reading this book.

I wasn't sure what I wanted to read yesterday, not being exactly in the mood to start anything in particular. I thought I'd shake things up by reading a sub-genre read. So I decided on a viking story.

The Viking theme is fine. The tough Viking hero and kind Irish maiden are also fine. But other than that I could not say that I liked anything else in the book. It has little substance, flat characters, an inconvenient background (hero was married and his wife is the heroine of the 2nd book in the series). For the first 50% of the book Styr was thinking about how to save his wife who he felt so protective of so I assume he loved her or at least there was some tender feeling?? I was really confused. What was Styr thinking? He liked his wife and still tried to be a good husband but at the same he was falling in love with Caragh by going fishing with her? (WHAAAAAT?)

I want to say that I have no problems with a married couple being featured in 2 books as hero and heroine but being paired with someone else. It does not bother me. But I think the writing and story must illustrate their despair and loss of hope so that we as readers could understand why they did what they did. I would like to refer readers to Mary Balogh's The Secret Pearl for a married hero falling in love with another woman. Now that is how you do an unsuccessful marriage as a ruse in a romance novel.

There is little emotional depth in this book. The hero was married but fell in love with the heroine. I mean, this is one hell of a story driver. But it is so ill-used. Heavy weight ruse, really unsatisfying execution.

I have read quite a few Michelle Willingham's books. I have the impression that she has good ideas for characters and is not a bad writer (please forgive me when I say this: not a great one either). But some storytelling skills are lacking because while she could create a very interesting backdrop and characters for a story, what follows in the book rarely does the background and lead characters justice. It is really quite a shame.

Heather *Awkward Queen and Unicorn Twin* says

This is the second Harlequin I've read this month, and I didn't like it any more than I did the first. These books are just not for me.

One thing I don't like about them is that there seems to be sections of information missing in parts of the story. I don't know if this is just bad writing or an effort to keep the word count down, but I noticed it in both Harlequins. For example, in one part Caragh is looking at a group of men, hoping to see her brother. Then it's revealed that these men will be a sacrifice. And suddenly she's upset because her brother is among the group. No one tells her this and there's no mention of her catching sight of him, so I have no idea how she arrived at that conclusion.

What I disliked most about this were the characters. Caragh was too nice and meek, although I think she was

supposed to be strong-willed. Styr didn't come off as a badass Viking. Both of them were too plagued by their consciences and inner voices for me to sympathize with them. Their inner musings were repetitive and didn't give me enough insight into their characters. Caragh was literally starving, and she didn't go out on her boat to fish because she was afraid. Yet her fear wasn't explored in depth, so she just seemed like an idiot for not trying harder to find food so she wouldn't die.

By the time the sex rolled around at the very end of the book, I didn't even care.

I liked the setting well enough, and the writing was serviceable other than the issues I mentioned. But it took me way too long to read a book that's less than 300 pages.

Carmen liked this a lot more than I did. You can read her review [here](#).

Leea says

‘What do you want from me?’ she whispered. ‘Everything.’ His voice was resonant, pushing past her defenses.

Something rare happened when I stepped into my first Michelle Willingham novel, the historical romance world that I know and love became a little less unpredictable. There is just something new and fresh about *To Sin with a Viking*.

What takes place within the pages of *To Sin with a Viking* may ruffle the feathers of some. You see Styr Hardrata is a married man, he's taken prisoner by Caragh Ó Brannon because her brother in a fit of stupidity and youthful ignorance takes Styr's boat with his wife still in it. Styr's finds himself chained to Caragh's home and from the moment he sees her he's infatuated with this starving young woman.

So here lies the dilemma. Styr's married to Elena, their arranged marriage has produced no children and they're almost living separate lives. He loves her, provides for her and protects her but there is no spark and Styr's making a last ditch effort to take Elena away from their home, to start anew somewhere else. In hopes that they can be happy. His loyalty for Elena is touched on again and again in his internal monologs but at times Styr's actions are not very loyal. You know the scene i'm taling about if you've read the book. Trust me it's hot but at the back of my mind I also knew he would hate himself in the morning.

This continued back and forth between Caragh and Styr's is like weeks for foreplay. They're intensely attracted to each other and Ms. Willingham writes this attractions beautifully.

He was the sort of man to carry a woman off and claim her. Without warning, her mind conjured the image of kissing a man like this. He would not be gentle but would capture her mouth, consuming her. A hard shiver passed over her, for she'd never before imagined such a thing. It was madness to even consider it.

She has you in this constant state of anticipation. Waiting for either Caragh or Styr to snap, breaking his vows and promises to Elena. At the same time you have Caragh, this young, strong, and vibrant woman who doesn't know how beautiful she is from the inside out and these feelings are so new to her. But it was this new found attraction that Styr found that was so interesting to read.

He couldn't remember the last time a kiss had affected him in this way. His body and mind were at war, his honour caught up in the softness of a woman's mouth.

This book is chaste until almost the end but it's not tame at all. Caragh and Styr's feelings for each other and the attraction they share is moving. I found myself grinning when Ms. Willingham wrote a scene with an early dildo...

'Tying up your lover,' he explained. A snort erupted from Styr, and finally he burst out in a broad laugh. Caragh's face turned scarlet, as she suddenly understood what the man had been selling. Not only chains to tie up a lover, but the ivory cylinder was a perfect replica of a man's— Oh dear God.

In conclusion, I enjoyed the uniqueness of this book. It was a fun fast read with a few twists I didn't see coming, which was great. If you're looking for something a little different, then this is a great choice. Vikings are in right now, I for one am loving the new History Channel Show, Vikings. This is a great way to get my Viking fix while the show is on hiatus. This may have been my first book by Michelle Willingham but it's not my last. I'm excited to read her next book in the Forbidden Viking Series.

This ARC was provided by Harlequin thru Netgalley for an honest review.

RedL. says

4 I'll always be your prisoner Stars

Don't let the title of the book or the publisher fool you. This is much better than you could ever surmise by these things alone. Of course there are Vikings, it is a romance, there is a HEA, but the storytelling is strong and incredibly compelling, especially on a couple of very serious themes treated surprisingly well.

I have no other Viking book in my shelves to compare this with, unless we're talking real historical books, even so I am pretty confident that this is above the average out there, especially with the theme being in fashion right now. If you are looking for accurate, detailed, fully rendered descriptions of the Viking world and traditions, you'd be sorely disappointed, it is history light, yet not empty, there are very well placed scenes about sailing, fishing, longhouses, raiding and trading. The Irish reality is also well rendered, even if a very specific bit of it.

More than anything, I think this is a story of two miseries meeting. On one side an Irish community decimated by hunger, desperate for scraps, on the other a group of Norwegian Vikings that chose Eire to start

their lives over, their leader and his wife giving one final go at trying to save their marriage. The clash of these two groups will lead to fighting, captivities, escapes and rescue parties, with a lot in between. What really made the book for me, was the attention to the personal relationships. The viking leader Styr is strong, skilled and powerful, yet I never felt him as the cold hearted killer he was feared for and supposed to be. He gets clubbed in the head and made prisoner by a tiny, starving Irish woman after all. He's a man bound to duty and traditions, incredibly alone behind all the layers. Such Irish woman, Caragh, scared, weak, emaciated, still has the strength to defend her younger brother, the will to keep him alive starving herself even more, and the compassion to share her almost non-existing food with her prisoner, feeling guilty for such imprisonment. It's their miseries that meet, that understand each others. The slow burn and ensuing UST was OFF THE CHARTS, finally! It's more than that though.

What really gripped me were the quiet, painful, spot-on observations and reflections of Styr over his marriage, an arranged one which he had positively embraced at the beginning. A childless marriage, reason alone to divorce a wife in their culture. His wife Elena is beautiful, quietly strong, he feels compelled to protect her and find her throughout the book, he never sees her as an enemy or the guilty one. He doesn't know her and feels like he will never reach her. The more he sees her pain grow, the farther away he feels shut out. There is no communication, sex has become a duty and he feels not only rejected but completely unwanted. He had adjusted to what she wanted and gave up his desire to sail around the world, trying hard to give her a child instead. Unwanted, unloved and probably infertile...Styr's self-esteem is shattered. And both of them are smothered in silence and their community expectations. It is painful, very.

Caragh is a woman fighting to stay alive, with dead parents, an ex fiancé who decided to go shag someone else the day they were supposed to get married, who threw herself into helping the community afterwards and three brothers who basically left her alone when she most needed help, even if not intentionally. She's used to take care of everyone but herself. She's fiercely loyal to her family, very generous too and always trying to do the right thing, she has her own mind and stands her ground, she's self-conscious over her extreme weightloss and has given up on love and relationships, finding food is the only priority. She has only a couple of naive moments that turn into foolish, dangerous decisions, but for the rest she proves determined and very mature, unselfish to a fault perhaps.

Needless to say, Styr will get free, will feel compelled to help Caragh survive, even teaching her how to fish, and will keep her with him during the search for his wife. Their ever growing attraction and need through all the action (which will include saving Caragh's brother from the slave market and Danes raiding Duh Blin) is so real, the writing will make you feel it rub against your skin, burn like a heavy stone in your stomach. They want it, they fight it, they acknowledge it...they're still bound by honour, duty and simply trying to do the right thing.

You will have to make your own mind up about infidelity and cheating. Caragh and Styr will have intercourse only after he's no longer married, but they are in love long before that and they manage to share some of their desire and bodies somehow, in a scene simply combustible, of raw, undiluted desire. I was not offended nor angry and I usually don't appreciate cheating. But nothing is perfect in life and there is no point in sitting on a high horse when one's emotional life is in tatters. We're not talking of a husband fucking around for kicks on an unsuspecting wife or a young nymphette seducing the older guy in a power-game. These are two people who really find each others and know they can't have each others. What they have is beautiful and they deserve it. The way every little spontaneous physical touch from Caragh came as a shock to Styr really had me in knots...so ignorant he was of a loving, wanting touch. He's starved for love and he doesn't even know it, his conviction of being cursed and inadequate running deep. Caragh risks her heart on him even knowing that he could still choose his wife over her once they find her, because she couldn't do anything else but being true to her own feelings. They will both heal and break each others. When Styr finally finds Elena and it seems she is pregnant after all, your heart will break along Caragh's, knowing he has only one choice at that point.

What felt incredibly refreshing to me was Caragh's reaction after Styr goes back to her. His time back with his wife had not been easy at all, silences, even more isolation, guilt, pining...until Elena divorced him, she wasn't pregnant after all and she finally stopped holding on to their misery, she even blesses him and Caragh. He expects Caragh to pick up where they left off and marry him...but she shoots him down. Because she's rightfully hurt, she didn't like being broken, he needs to grovel and convince her she's not the second best choice, someone who he could easily set aside if, again, no children came from their union. I was proud of her. No fits, no stomping feet, no accepting him back immediately either...I don't know if I could have been so steady. She will go back to this important point every time they're together, until she gets the answers she needs to hear. His big atonement scene was absolutely **FAB**: chained himself in her house again, practically begging her to use him for her pleasure, pleasuring her several times every way he could and as she asked, including with the chains, before he finally lets go. Even in this scene, where they both speak of love and are finally free to explore all their desires, she has to break through Styr's fear of failing her too, she will insist that she wants him and his permanence at her side above all else, no matter what, children or not, she has to convince him she really loves *HIM*, just him.

I think in this sense the author has done a superb job at treating delicate, painful, real couples situations in a light historical romance, with all its shortcomings. It was not dramatic but truly touching. The UST was drugging, its explosion fulfilling, the MCs are good for each others in every aspect. I didn't rate it five stars for all the things I wished had been treated: what was really going on in Styr's village with his brother in charge, the life in such village, more tales of Viking's travels and pillaging, more background on Caragh, what did her brothers really have to do to get provisions for the village when they left, what happened to their little brother in captivity...just to name some. I will be reading the sequel, I want to know Elena's voice as well.

Melann says

Je vous pris, la prochaine fois que je tente de lire un historique de chez Harlequin, de me l'interdire. À chaque fois je dis plus jamais, et de frustration face à l'absence de diversité et bonnes nouveautés de chez A&P, je flanche.

Le héros est donc marié. Il ne se passe rien de concret entre les 2 protagonistes durant tout le livre car c'est un homme d'honneur, hors de question de faire cocu sa femme ! Ils ne consommeront donc qu'à la page 194 sur les 200 pages du livre, après que sa femme à lui ne le répudie (oui les femmes vikings sont des femmes modernes).

Carmen says

FIRST READ: February 1, 2014

SECOND READ: May 11, 2016

875 A.D.

Caragh went to fetch a linen cloth, soaking it in more cool water. Without asking his leave, she went and touched the sore spot, bathing it to prevent the swelling from growing worse.

He stared at her in disbelief. "Do you always strike your enemy and then tend to his wounds?" His eyes held suspicion, as if he weren't accustomed to anyone taking care of him. It made her feel foolish, and she pulled the cloth away.

"I've never taken a man prisoner before." Her cheeks burned, and she retreated, wishing she'd never dared to touch him. Everything about this man threatened her, from his fiercely handsome face, to his raw strength. It was like charming a predator, and she needed to remember that he was not to be trusted.

Carmen highlights entire book

Well. If I tell you this book is about a starving Irishwoman who bashes a Viking over the head with a wooden staff and chains him up in her hut, you'll probably buy it instantly. And yes, I mean, obviously I understand this urge, however, this book is **EVEN BETTER** than what you are thinking, so I want to explain to you the **HIGH GOODNESS** of this book so that you know what you are getting into here.

Caragh O'Brannon is starving. Her two brothers, Terence and Ronan, left weeks ago to find food, leaving her alone with her 17-year-old brother, Brendan. She spends her days wandering around in desperate search of meat or vegetables, fighting off dizziness, headaches, and struggling to stay upright.

When she and Brendan see the Viking ship in the distance, they fear Death has finally come for them, not the slow savage hand of starvation but the bloody battleaxe of a Viking raid.

The Lochlannach were here. Caragh's heart beat so rapidly, she could hardly breathe. There were a dozen men walking through the shallow water, and their size alone dwarfed her kinsmen. Battleaxes and swords hung from their waists, while they carried round wooden shields. Several of the men wore chainmail corselets and helms with narrow nose guards. One man was taller than all the others, possibly their leader.

When Brendan gets the brilliant (read: extremely stupid) idea to steal supplies from the Vikings, a battle occurs. Styr's, the Viking leader, wife gets taken hostage at knifepoint by Brendan and Styr is knocked unconscious by a blow from Caragh's staff.

Styr Hardrata is searching for a new life. Trapped in a miserable and barren marriage with Elena, he has long despaired of ever finding any happiness. Although he works very hard to make his woman happy, Elena is devastated by their inability to have children. Both are wretched and consumed with sadness. After being married five years,

No man ever wanted to admit his marriage was dying.

Styr Hardrata stared out at the grey waters cloaked with mist, watching over his wife Elena. She stood with her hands upon the bow of the ship, her long red-gold hair streaming behind her in the wind. She was beautiful and strong, and he'd always been fascinated by her.

But that strength had now become a coldness between them, an invisible wall that kept them apart. She blamed herself for their childlessness, and he didn't know what to say. He'd tried everything until now, she grew sad every time he tried to touch her. Lovemaking had become a duty, not an act of passion.

Though he'd tried to ignore her growing reluctance, he was tired of her flinching whenever he tried to pull her near. Or worse, feigning pleasure when he knew she no longer wanted his touch.

The slow burn of frustration coiled inside him. This was a war he didn't know how to fight, a battle he couldn't win. Styr approached the front of the boat and stood behind her. He said nothing, staring out at the grey waves that sloshed against the boat.

"I know you're there," she said after a time. But she didn't turn around to look at him. There was no smile of welcome, nothing except the quiet acceptance she wore like armour.

Styr is constantly trying to reach out to his sad wife.

But Elena rarely spoke to him any more, never telling him what she was thinking. He couldn't guess what was going on inside her head, and when he demanded answers, she only closed up more.

He didn't understand women. One moment, he would be talking to her, and the next, she'd be silently weeping and he had no idea why. It made him feel utterly helpless.

But there's not much he can do about their inability to have children.

But he strongly suspected that there was nothing he could do to make his wife happy again. He stole a last look at her, and at that moment she turned back. Her pale face was shadowed, her eyes holding such pain, he didn't know how to heal it.

In the end, he busied himself with the ship, unable to bridge the growing distance between them.

He hopes to make a new life for them in Ireland, or, as it's called in this book, Éireann. However, he and his men are not expecting to be attacked by the starving villagers.

Although Caragh is shocked and dismayed to see her brother take Styr's wife captive by knifepoint, she knows she can't let the Viking kill him, and delivers a blow to his temple that knocks him out.

He awakens chained in her hut.

I know what you are thinking... super-hot erotic fun-times are going to happen now, right? Wrong. (Sadly?) Caragh's starving and let me tell you that nothing kills your sex drive like starvation.

Styr is baffled at Caragh's decision not to kill him and her insistence on feeding him - sharing what precious little food she has - and tending to his wounds.

This whole scenario leads to very hot sexual tension slowly building up as she cares for this dangerous, wounded man who is chained up in her house.

Frustration drew his face taut with silent rage. "I have to find her. Let me go." His command was spoken in a steel voice, one meant to be obeyed.

Though she understood his need, she couldn't possibly free him from the chains. "I can't release you," she protested. "You'll kill me if I do." In her mind, she envisioned him taking his chains and wrapping them around her throat.

"I don't usually kill women. Even the ones who try to crack my skull." He tested the post, straining against his bonds.

Styr also feels pity and compassion for the rail-thin Irish woman who soft-heartedly tends to his needs. He wants to teach her how to fish and is loathe to leave her starving when he makes his (in his mind) inevitable escape to rescue his wife.

...

THE GOOD

- Incredible built-up sexual tension. First, Styr is Caragh's prisoner. Tons and tons of sexual tension builds up as Caragh sweetly cares for this murderous warrior and he's baffled by her soft heart. THEN, he (view spoiler). Super-hot. Other things happen, but the sexual tension is building and building and building and Styr is SO honorable, he's fighting this attraction so hard because he is married and his wife could be dead or enslaved somewhere.

- The story is very heart-wrenching due to the MCs circumstances. He's married. She's falling in love with a married man. He is too honorable to betray his spouse even though he is trapped in a miserable marriage.

- The writing. Willingham is a strong writer.

- The sex. OMG. OMG. So, there's this one scene where it's 73%... they don't have any kind of "sex" until 73%, I wasn't kidding about the slow burn here, and he (view spoiler)

Then, in a scene which is even better.... OMG so much goodness, is when due to reasons, Caragh refuses to see him or have anything to do with him, and (view spoiler)

Let's talk about Elena. It would have been so easy for Willingham to go the usual route and make Elena a horrid woman whom you have no sympathy for. But no. Not only is it stressed how attractive Elena is all the time, but she is an honorable and good woman (just not the right one for Styr). You see her going through some shit about her marriage and her inability to deal with her childlessness peripherally here, AND she's going to be Willingham's heroine in the next book in which Elena finds happiness with her hero. And you're thinking, how is Willingham going to pull this off? But it's fucking brilliant and Willingham is brilliant and the next book is good and you're going to feel such pity and sympathy and empathy for Elena in the next

book.

CHEATING

Obviously this book involves cheating. If that bothers you, please skip it. I often avoid cheating books because authors are unskilled or unable to write this in a good, thorough, and sympathetic way, but Michelle Willingham - much like Robert James Waller - writes about infidelity and the motives that drive it in a very human way.

INFERTILITY

I also love the kind, gentle, and heartfelt way Willingham deals with the issue of infertility in this book and how it can affect marriages and romantic relationships. Excellent job.

THE BAD

There is bad in this book. I hated the dildo scene (it's not a sex scene) which I felt was humiliating to poor Caragh, and I hated the whole extended plot with (view spoiler) And that made up a lot of the book, unfortunately. I couldn't understand or tolerate how stupid Caragh was being about (view spoiler) and it really pissed me off.

That being said, I still feel as if this book deserves five stars.

Tl;dr - I picked up this book quite by accident, and was completely blown out of the water by how good it was. I immediately bought the sequel, which is also excellent (but this one is better). Harlequin Historical really puts out some gems sometimes which just baffle you with how amazing they are.

So much Viking romance is crap. Unreadable, unsophisticated garbage and Willingham just delivers on everything a Viking romance CAN be without even once resorting to stereotypes, garbage plot and garbage motivation, or ridiculous over-the-top writing. You can read 20 Viking romances and not find anything that holds a candle to this, AND I HAVE. It's extremely sad. So, extra points for Willingham. Vikings, starvation, infidelity, infertility and marriage are topics she delicately and exquisitely explores here - seemingly without any regard for the more crass and idiotic tropes of the genre.

The fact that I enjoyed a book that deals with infidelity is a testament to Willingham's good writing and my heart also blossomed reading the next book and seeing Elena find her HEA after everything she's suffered. Even though Elena is the "frigid wife" in this book, Willingham never paints her that way - or unsympathetically or in an ugly way. You feel her despair and her pain just like you feel Styr's and the fact that Willingham can pull this off IN A ROMANCE NOVEL is honestly mind-boggling.

A perfect duology in my opinion.

Harlequin Historical July 2013

Lisa Kay says

★★½?? Well written, but I'm not into one of the main characters being married to someone else while lusting after another.

Jill says

I have been addicted to Viking books since Johanna Lindsey introduced them to me about 15 years ago.

Sadly there aren't that many books around based around these hunky stud muffins :)

To Sin with a Viking is on a completely different level from any of my old steamy viking novels, but when I requested to read that I didn't know.

This book was very well written but not really what I like in a book, or maybe I was just disappointed because of my expectations of hot plundering Vikings. Yeah, my bad for being a horn dog. There is attraction and a few stolen moments between the characters but because Styr is actually married to someone else, it doesn't go further than that. It is more of a relationship building book. There is obviously emotional cheating in this story and if that is not your thing I advise you to stay away.

All in all though this was a very well written book with an interesting story, just not for me.

Jess the Romanceaholic says

This is a Quickie Review. For the full review, please visit The Romanceaholic.

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Author's Website: <http://www.michellewillingham.com/>

My Source for This Book: Netgalley

Part of a Series: Yes, Book 1, Forbidden Vikings

Series Best Read In Order: N/A

Steam Level: Steamy

Pet Peeves: Emotional Affair (Minor Issue)

Favorite Tropes: Captive/Hostage, Starving Heroine

The one thing I loved the most about this book was the fact that the author was able to explore the despair of the end of a marriage, and the emotional torture of falling for someone that is unavailable, without ever actually falling into the realm of physical adultery. That is no easy feat, and Ms. Willingham did an wonderful job in creating characters and a relationship that was both sympathetic and realistic.

Throw in the hostage situation, the search for Styr's wife and Caragh's brother, and the wonderful historical tidbits, and I was in love.

A very solid 4/5 Stars

UniquelyMoi ~ BlithelyBookish says

I adore Michelle Willingham's Viking and Irish historical romances! They're sweet, sexy, intriguing, and I love being swept away to those ancient places in time. Her latest book, *To Sin with a Viking*, gave me more of what I've come to love about her stories, but was disappointing in a major way.

In her introduction to the story the author says:

Author Note

Sometimes arranged marriages in historical romance end in happily-ever-after. And sometimes two good people are never meant to be together. I wanted to explore the idea of a marriage between a husband and a wife who want to make it work but are unable to connect. And what will happen to them when they meet their true soul mates?

This duet of books, beginning with *To Sin with a Viking*, explores that theme without trespassing into the realm of adultery. Both Styr and Elena Hardrata deserve a happy ending...but it will not be with each other...

The thing about this statement is that infidelity is not just a sexual betrayal of vows, infidelity can also be manifested through the heart and mind. Such is definitely the case with this story. While sexual intercourse doesn't occur until after Styr is divorced, there are other physical, sexual, and emotional intimacies taking place between he and Caragh, and so I was horribly disappointed in them as people - and in the author for going there, while stating she *hadn't* gone there.

This is so out of the norm for this author, so by no stretch of the imagination am I thinking of giving up on Ms. Willingham's stories. I have every intention of reading the next book, but I'd be lying if I said I enjoyed this one. In fact, it broke my heart. As brilliant as the characters are, as poignant as the story is, dishonoring ones vows, however it's done, is as unacceptable to me in my romance reads as it is in real life.

Had there been zero infidelity, this would have easily been a 4 star read but, I cannot, in good conscience, overlook what took place between Styr and Caragh and rate it more than 2 stars. That said, other reviewers have given this story 4 stars and higher, so please, if infidelity isn't an issue for you, read *To Sin with a Viking*. There's much to love about the story, so you'll probably enjoy it!

My thanks to Harlequin and Netgalley for providing me with a copy of this story in exchange for an honest review.

Stacia (the 2010 club) says

He wished for a moment, that another life could be his.

What a compelling story! I honestly thought *To Sin With a Viking* was going to be a 5 star rating because I was completely enraptured with my read...until *one* scene evoked feelings of extreme frustration in me. But we'll get back to that nitpick later. :p

In short, this is the story of a Viking lord who was captured under unusual circumstances by a woman that managed to intrigue him more than he was expecting...

No man ever wanted to admit his marriage was dying. He'd been married to her for five years, and it still felt as if they were strangers.

Trigger Warning : Emotional Unfaithfulness. I almost didn't put in the trigger warning because the book explains over and over that Styr was in a loveless, arranged marriage in which he honestly tried to be faithful, when his wife wasn't wanting him at all. So this isn't cheating in the traditional sense of the word.

It was as if she'd awakened a part of his spirit that had been shielded for a long time.

So there you go. I can't say that there weren't feelings and desires and a few stolen moments, but the story was not meant to be about cheating. This is about a man who went without love for his entire life, and how he discovered the meaning of love.

Because of the success of the t.v. show *Vikings*, it looks like there might be a new trend arriving with an assorted batch of Viking romances. Sure, there had been Viking romances penned before the show (case in point, *Believe in Me*, which I recently read), but this is still a fairly untapped market for mainstream romance. While I tend to despise trends and tons of authors jumping on a bandwagon just to make money (death to gajillionaires!), I can't say that I'm sorry to see any sort of historical romance outside of the tired Regency set getting some attention.

After all, the world of the Vikings is extremely interesting to observe, especially when you get to see how layered their culture was. We know something about the raping, pillaging and conquering, but when you peel back that initial layer and see how they worshipped (there's mention of the different gods and even traditions, such as human sacrifice), how they ran their households (the scene which showed Styr's knowledge of fishing was a great one), and how they lived their every day lives, you realize that there's a lot to discover. And who knew that they were making ivory dildos back then? IT'S ALL JUST SO FASCINATING!

Many fans of romance like to read a story in which a rough, hard-edged man is somehow softened by love. This story does not disappoint. Styr is not quick to waver from his responsibilities. It takes time and care from Caraugh to melt the ice around Styr's heart. There is a beautiful love story, full of moments in which both characters need to learn to bend and listen to the other person. What I most appreciated about this story was that all of the obstacles were real, and not imagined in the characters' heads. There wasn't time for ridiculous misunderstandings and people running away out of misinformation, because there were *actual* issues at work trying to keep these two people apart.

There was such a depth of storytelling present. I fell in love with each phase and stage of this book, never skimming to get ahead, because each intriguing moment led to another intriguing moment. I was engaged in a way I haven't been very often with any kind of romance lately.

You might be wondering why there was a scene which angered me, if I didn't have an issue with Styr having feelings for Caraugh, in spite of having a wife. For those who have read the book (or those who don't mind

being spoiled), this is why : (view spoiler)

Even though there was one scene which could have been handled differently, I still relished Styr and Caragh's journey. I look forward to the next tale that's been planned for Elena and hope that this author adds even more stories in the future. If you're curious about Viking romance or are a fan of the Vikings show like I am, I'd highly recommend giving this a try.

This book provided from the publisher through Netgalley in exchange for an honest review. All quotes taken from the pre-release copy and may either be altered or omitted from the final copy.

Gaufre says

The writing was ok but there seems to be jumps here and there in the narration. I never liked the characters enough to root for them. In fact, the best chapter was the one with Styr's wife, Elena.

The sexual tension at the beginning felt out of place and did not do much for me. But the sex scenes were good, once I got there (chapter 12 out of 15).

Dorine says

Rating 3.5 Stars - Also posted at my blog, the TBR MOUNTAIN RANGE.

If you've often wondered what it would be like to have a Viking chained as a prisoner in your home, Caragh and Styr's story explores that fantasy as part of their reality. Alpha Viking Styr Hardrata has met his match in strong-willed Irish lass Caragh Ó Brannon. An unusual plot increases the anticipation for book two.

Struggling to survive during a terrible famine, Caragh Ó Brannon and her youngest brother, Brendan, are starving along with the rest of their tribe in Ireland. Her two oldest brothers should be home soon, having traveled to trade for supplies to sustain them. Their parents died last year while trying to provide for their family, so hope is wearing thin. Under these circumstances, it's overwhelming when they must fight for their meager existence against Vikings about to invade their shores.

Styr Hardrata and his wife, Elena, have tried for years to have children, without results. They have become more and more distant as a couple when the pressure of a childless marriage becomes too much for Elena to bear. Their arranged marriage wasn't her choice but her father's wish. So add in the strain of not having a child as a benefit of their arrangement and Elena is pushed deeper within herself, not wanting to bother with Styr's advances. When Styr suggests that they travel to a new land to make a fresh start, Elena surprisingly agrees to go with him and his men to start over.

When Styr and his men arrive in Ireland, they're hoping for a quiet life, trading amongst the Irish. Caragh's brother and his friends capture Styr's wife with the full intent of using her to bargain for much needed supplies from the Vikings' ship. The Vikings give chase and in the end, Caragh's brother disappears with Elena, then Caragh captures Styr when she catches him off guard.

When the battle and confusion is over, Caragh has a Viking chained up in her home and Brendan and his

friends have disappeared with the man's wife, along with Styr's men. Even though he is captured and imprisoned by Caragh, Styr is moved by her kindness in tending his wounds, as well as sharing her paltry amount of food with him. He realizes that he can't leave her alone to starve when he finally escapes to find his wife, so Styr plans to take Caragh with him whether she wants to go or not...

Filled with adventure, *TO SIN WITH A VIKING* looks at the possibility of finding love elsewhere when two people are in a loveless marriage and are separated by the cruelties of aggression. In this first book of the *FORBIDDEN VIKINGS* duo, Styr struggles with his attraction to Caragh, who is everything his wife is not. He cares deeply for his wife's well-being and is committed to her welfare, but does he love her? Caragh is the temptress without realizing what she's doing to this very alpha male.

There's a fine line when introducing an attraction to another woman in a married man's life in traditional romance. It's not easily done without showing someone as the injured party and for the most part, I felt satisfied with how this was handled. I'm still not sure that I like that part, yet, and I don't think I can be sure until I read Elena's story. Personally, I think I would enjoy this book more if I knew I could jump right into Elena's story right away. I just have too many unanswered questions and I think that the two books should have been published closer together. That said, the fact still remains that neither spouse knew if they would ever see each other again, so who knows what any of us would do in that situation.

Although I prefer reading historical romances with more detail, this book contains enough flavor to envision the historical setting. Caragh is a strong heroine and a good offset to Styr's extra alpha maleness, which seems a bit over the top for a modern male, but perfect for a Viking who knows what he wants and isn't shy about going after it. When the characters travel and end up in a marketplace, the setting comes alive and drives the plot, adding some tension and realism that I did not expect. I especially enjoyed that part of the story.

All in all, a very unusual plot that's both emotional and clever makes *TO SIN WITH A VIKING* a thought-provoking way to spend an afternoon. I'm really curious about Elena's story, *TO TEMPT A VIKING*, which will be available in February 2014. In the end, isn't that what we all want? Stories that make us think and wonder and wish for more?

Book and Review courtesy of Romance Junkies.

Miranda says

4.5 stars!!

Oh my! Where do I begin?

I enjoyed this book very much! Michelle Willingham captured my attention and held it until the last page.

I **love** reading Viking romances. I don't think enough authors venture out and write about them but more should. I'm no stranger reading Viking romances and so I devoured this one. Devoured. It. So, how does *To Sin With a Viking* stack up to others I've read? This has to be one of my favorite Viking romances (so far).

What makes it stand out? The hero is married to another.

Styr, the yummy hero, is married to Elena. While they wanted to make the five year marriage work, they've really grown apart. Styr decides to travel to Ireland with Elena to find a fresh start and to save their marriage. Upon reaching the shore, Styr is captured and Elena is kidnapped and taken out to sea.

Styr is Caragh O'Brannon's prisoner. Her brothers have left her alone and she's slowly starving to death. She intrigues Styr more than he cares to admit and yet he remains faithful to his wife (physically, emotional unfaithfulness is another story).

Styr is a fiercely handsome warrior. I liked him immediately. He's spent without love his entire life and he finds by the end of the book. This story is so unlike any romance I've read lately and it doesn't disappoint.

Caragh is a strong willed heroine. While I wanted to **not** like her, I found myself loving her personality. She's a tiny slip of a woman that makes the rough and tough Viking fall hard.

"Every day I've spent with you is a betrayal of her." The words were like a blade twisted inside her, wounding her heart. Then he added, "I won't forget a single moment of it, Caragh. Or you."
His embrace only deepened the heartbreak. But leaving him now would only heighten the loneliness. Her eyes blurred, and she admitted, "I shouldn't have come here."
"Why?"
"Because it only makes me desire you more."

His deep voice was a breath of heat upon her skin. "From the moment I saw you, Caragh, you captured me."

Michelle Willingham is brilliant! She writes with such passion and all the research that goes into her books isn't overlooked. One example in this book is when Styr and Caragh played the board game. I loved reading about researched things like that.

I cannot wait to read Michelle's next book. I simply can't resist those forbidden Vikings!

****ARC graciously provided by Harlequin via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review****

Barbee says

Michelle's Willingham has a way of captivating from cover to cover, I read this book in one day. It is one of those I can't put it down books and thank goodness it was a weekend. If you are fan of Ms. Willingham's previous books you will be thrilled to know this book is about Styr Hardratta who is the ancestor of Tharand Hardratta in her previous book *The Viking Hidden Love-Slave* and later Kaal Hardratta hero of *The Holly* and

The Viking in Warriors in The Winter and the heroine is Caragh Ó Brannon ancestor of Kieran Ó Brannon My Warrior Slave book 1 of The MacEgan Brothers series.

Styr and Caragh are both two troubled souls who have both been hurt by the past and very mistrusting of others as to guard their hearts from more heart break. Styr only comes up to this starving clan with the intention to trade and start a new life with his wife hoping to mend his troubled marriage, but then he meets Caragh under let's say not too comfortable circumstances, but as they get to know each other the magic starts to happen is all I am going to say. I don't want to give much away all I can say is this book is really beautifully written and it had me from page one to the very last sentence. I loved this book and also if you love viking book or a fan of the new television series The Vikings on the History Channel this book is one you don't want to miss . There is even a Ragnar in this book though a minor character in this book, but to be a major one in the next to follow this series To Tempt A Viking which I can't wait to read myself. Michelle Willingham is really so gifted as a storyteller and I look forward to more books in this series? Loved this book as I can't praise it enough!
