



## A Scandalous Deal

*Joanna Shupe*

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Joanna Shupe

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*Joanna Shupe returns with another unforgettable novel set in the glittering world of New York City's Gilded Age...*

### They call her Lady Unlucky...

With three dead fiancés, Lady Eva Hyde has positively no luck when it comes to love. She sets sail for New York City, determined that nothing will deter her dream of becoming an architect, certainly not an unexpected passionate shipboard encounter with a mysterious stranger. But Eva's misfortune strikes once more when she discovers the stranger who swept her off her feet is none other than her new employer.

### Or is it Lady Irresistible?

Phillip Mansfield reluctantly agrees to let the fiery Lady Eva oversee his luxury hotel project while vowing to keep their relationship strictly professional. Yet Eva is more capable—and more alluring—than Phillip first thought, and he cannot keep from drawing up a plan of his own to seduce her.

When a series of onsite “accidents” makes it clear someone wants Lady Unlucky to earn her nickname, Phillip discovers he's willing to do anything to protect her—even if it requires A SCANDALOUS DEAL.

## A Scandalous Deal Details

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Author : Joanna Shupe

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# From Reader Review A Scandalous Deal for online ebook

## Alma Torres says

Have you ever read “The Fountainhead” by Ayn Rand from the 1943? The Scandalous Deal gave me the same vibe when it came to the construction site, lies, and finally love. Definitely a good quick read!

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## Bubu says

In my goal to avoid reading the book that I actually want to read (a bit of a contradiction, I know), I thought I would read Joanna Shupe's newest addition to her *The Four Hundred* series last night.

After about 20-25% I started skim-reading. This is it. This is my last book by this author.

Yes, she is good at bringing the *Gilded Age* to life. She's good at showing how difficult it was for a woman to advance into male domains. She is good at presenting female friendships. But she seems to forget that she's writing a HR, and there's something that's chafing hard, the more I read these HR's. Apart from the romance lacking big time here to the point where it felt clinical, it sounds so very, very modern. Point in case:

Still, she didn't presume to think she was the only woman currently in his orbit. The idea of him with another twisted her stomach, but she had to ask. “Are there not . . . others?”

His mouth opened, then closed. Reopened to ask, “Do you want there to be? I had assumed we would be exclusive.”

Exclusive was good. Exclusive worked for her. She shook her head. “No, I don't. Nevertheless, I believe twice is sufficient for now.”

“Twice? Come now. I know you enjoyed yourself with me. Think of how much better it will become once we sort our likes and dislikes.”

Goodness, if this got any better it may very well kill her. “Twice, Phillip. I am quite busy these days, but we may revisit the schedule if we both feel it's insufficient.”

I think I'm becoming more and more irritable lately. I'm not even saying that 'exclusivity' was never discussed in those times. But it doesn't stop from sounding extremely modern to me. Besides, the whole dialogue sounded horribly impersonal, too.

I've tried this author again and again. At least four or five times. Enough now. Unless she publishes a book that gets high praises across the board.

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## Stacee says

I had enjoyed the first book in this series and was excited to get this one.

I loved Eva and Phillip. She's smart and stands up for herself. He's stubborn and maybe a bit cocky. Together there's a load of chemistry and button pushing. It was especially delightful to see Nora and Julius from the first book.

Plot wise, it was okay. There's a lot of push and pull and while these two talked and talked often, it was never about what it needed to be. I loved all of the mentions of working women and the women supporting women. One of the best scenes involved Eva bringing in female family members.

Overall, it had a bit more deceit and miscommunication than I wanted, but I loved these characters. I can't wait to read the next book.

**\*\*Huge thanks to Avon Books for providing the arc free of charge\*\***

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## **Ashley says**

4.5 stars! Really loved this one!

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## **Gaele says**

I haven't yet read the first in this series – but I'm hoping to remedy that this weekend! This story starts with a touch of deception and a passage to New York from England for our couple. Eva Hyde is an architect, hoping to make her own mark on the world. Her father is both famed for his work, and the one who taught her all she knows, but he's in failing health with something that feels like a dementia, and is unable to keep working. Unfortunately, Phillip Mansfield has paid (perhaps overpaid) for Hyde's work, and is determined to make his new New York hotel the talk of the town. But, with Eva claiming the work and designs are her father's, when in fact they are hers, she heads off to New York on board a ship with Phillip, someone who drew her eye and interest from the start. During the passage, the subtext for the story is built – very much one of equality and a woman's ability to perform work and tasks that have traditionally been closed to them. But Eva isn't quite satisfied with her own recognition as a competent and capable woman, and she hopes that the brashness and newness of society in New York will allow her the respect and independence that she craves as an architect who happens to be a clever determined woman, and not as 'the woman architect'. Subtle differences, but important to progress and Eva.

These two are adorable together, and Phillip is incredibly sweet, charming and laid back. Until they arrive in New York: there he is all business, determined to overcome the many obstacles placed in his path: the 'woman' sent in his architect's place, the workmen's discontent with a woman on the project, political corruption, and even some clear threats to Eva's life all make the project unstable, with the completion date being pushed further and further afield. But, there's something about Eva, and the ease of conversation with her, not to mention the attraction between them. But, the list of secrets and deceptions Eva is hiding could scupper the whole deal, and make her family's precarious financial situation even more dire.

Proving herself and her work has never been more important to Eva, both personally and professionally. Breaking through Phillip's hatred of deception to get him to understand the why behind it is the most important thing, second only to completing the hotel and having him impressed with the design and her ability to bring his concept to life. Steam, tension and plenty of subterfuge kept this story moving as pages turned. Both Phillip and Eva have reasons for their behavior, and the attraction between them could power the whole block! Wholly unique with insets of 'very American' brashness, the society, corruption and struggle to make the biggest and best, the lovely moments with Phillip's mother and even the discovery of the many forces trying to stop the construction's progress kept me engaged and whipping through – happily

smiling in the end.

I received an eArc copy of the title from the publisher via Edelweiss for purpose of honest review. I was not compensated for this review: all conclusions are my own responsibility.

Review first appeared at I am, Indeed

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## **Maida says**

Probably the sexiest book of Joanna Shupe's so far, in my opinion. Chapter 2 is a highlight for me with its combination of humor and high heat.

I like Eva's strength of will and her unwavering self-belief. But for me, Phillip had the most growth arc in this book with his acceptance of the changing roles of women in his world.

As always with Joanna's Gilded age setting, I adore "being there" at the time and place of A Scandalous Deal because she describes them exceptionally well.

I prefer for the deception to have been resolved much earlier, but I also appreciate the grand gestures both characters employed to get back together.

I give kudos to Joanna for being so very inclusive in her books, particularly this one. I also appreciate its feminist bent, although the execution could have been less forceful, especially in the last 20% of the book.

Overall, an enjoyable read. Big thanks to Avon for providing me a copy to review via Edelweiss.

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## **Laura says**

\*\*\*ARC Provided by the Publisher via Edelweiss\*\*\*

3.5 Stars

Eva and Phillip live in a time when a woman is not able to be respected in a "man's world" so even though her father is ailing, and not able to work, and the plans for Phillip's hotel were drawn by Eva, she lies and convinces everyone that she is in New York temporarily, and only in charge until her father arrives.

Phillip and Eva meet on a ship, crossing from the UK to New York. They have an illicit encounter, and they don't see one another again...she gives him a false name and leaves while he is sleeping.

So, they are both surprised when she turns out to be the architect on his newest project...although the reader sort of sees it coming. But, not in a bad way...as there had to be meet cute, and there had to be a reason for them to continue to stay together.

The parts of the story that are Eva and Phillip are interesting. And, the times where they address the

discrimination toward women were interesting at first, but they actually started to cause the book to drag for me. And, it felt like the issue was addressed, and they then addressed it again...and again. And, I am not naive, I know this is not an issue that goes away in one discussion...but, at the same time, the book is fiction and dealing with this issue caused the pace of the story itself to slow down.

I did still enjoy it, but I would have liked a little less of the plot focused on her being a woman, and attacked/disrespected/assumed incompetent...as, well, it seemed a little too much like real life for fiction that is supposed to feel like an escape.

I enjoyed this title, and I recommend it.

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## **Jaclyn says**

Honestly, Philip should have grovelled more.

Lady Eva was great and I loved that her character refused to back down from her own individual aspirations, pushing for more from her future partner, although I am of the opinion that Philip could of done more than a grand gesture since I'm not completely convinced that he's reversed his thinking on women in the workforce. Sigh.

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## **? Kimberly says**

### **Coffee Dates with A Scandalous Deal**

**First Date:** Our story begins on a ship traveling to New York City where Lady Eva Hyde meets Phillip Mansfield. Mansfield is traveling home from Paris, and Eva is traveling to oversee the building of a hotel her father the famous E.M. Hyde designed. Only her father didn't develop it. She did. Her father has been ill for over two years with Alzheimer's a disease that wouldn't be diagnosed until 1906. On board, neither knows who the other is, as they exchange more than a few kisses. I loved the set-up and appreciated this time to get to know Eva and her predicament. Right away I liked this young woman who bears the title Lady Unlucky. Upon arriving in New York, the two never get to exchange last names despite Phillip's attempts to locate her before departing. I loved witnessing their surprised faces when Eva shows up to meet Mr. Mansfield. And I am all in! The chemistry, banter, denials, and situation quickly transported me.

**Second Date:** I am currently watching *The Alienist* on television, and it is set in 1896 New York, and while it gave me a feel for the city, fashion and *Four Hundred*, Shupe wonderfully brought the city, social issues, crime, politics, and rapid changes occurring to life. Eva has shared who she is with Philip, but the two have agreed to not repeat what happened aboard ship. It was fun seeing them struggle with their attraction and the unorthodox situation of having Eva on the building site. Because her name is associated with being unlucky she is posing as Ms. Asford, Hyde's secretary. It caused quite the rumble and severed as the drama in the story. I enjoyed watching them tango. I laughed when they entered yet another arrangement. Poor Philip is flummoxed as Eva acts completely like a man at times. I adored her strength even if it all was a facade. Little side threads involving a lesbian, thugs and a renovation in Newport added interest and helped flesh out the characters. Phillip is completely swoon-worthy and with each page, and discovery, I fall a little harder.

**Third Date:** Secrets unveiled, betrayal and disappointments had me flipping the pages. Once again I am amazed at Eva. Yes she sort of lied, but her reasons and the time period have allowed me to completely

forgive her. But will Philip? The man needs to get his head out of his arse. You'll have to read to discover if these two find happily-ever-after. I concluded my final date and once again found myself impressed with Joanne Shupe. This series is my first experience with her writing. From the historical aspects to the secondary characters I felt as if I stepped back in time and joined an exclusive circle. Anyone for some Earl Grey?

This review was originally posted at Caffeinated Reviewer

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## Caz says

### I've given this a B at AAR.

This second book in Joanna Shupe's *The Four Hundred* series introduces readers to Lady Eva Hyde, an intelligent and ambitious young woman who longs to make a career designing buildings. Her father, the world's most famous architect, Lord Cassell (otherwise known as E.M. Hyde) has tutored her since she was a teenager, and she has studied and worked hard to hone her craft, but this is 1890, and she is barred from properly entering the profession because she is female. E.M. Hyde has recently been commissioned to design what is going to be America's biggest, most modern and most luxurious hotel, the Mansfield, to be named after its owner, hotelier and millionaire, Philip Mansfield – but what the world at large does not know is that for the past two years, Eva's father has been seriously ill, and in order to preserve his legacy and keep them afloat financially, his most recent designs – including those of the Mansfield Hotel – have been Eva's work.

**A Scandalous Deal** opens as Eva is travelling to New York to meet with Mr. Mansfield and to oversee the project's initial stages. Her plan is to explain that her father has been taken ill and is unable to make the trip to America and that she is fully versed on her his work and will act in his stead. The ship is not far from land when a bad storm blows up, leaving Eva and only one other passenger – a gentleman she'd met briefly a day or so earlier – prepared to brave the conditions and find themselves something to eat and drink for dinner. By the end of the evening, Eva is a little tipsy, but is still well able to appreciate the man's handsome face and impressive physique – plus, the way he speaks to her, like an actual, intelligent person rather than as a delicate flower with nothing between the ears, makes her feel valued in a way no other man ever has. Deciding to throw caution to the wind – her marriage prospects in England are zero anyway, given she's been nicknamed 'Lady Unlucky' due to the fact that she has been engaged three times and all her fiancés died – Eva has her first taste of real passion that night, although in the cold light of morning she realises she has perhaps been rather incautious.

It's not going to come as a surprise (especially if you've read the book synopsis!) that the handsome stranger Eva met on the voyage turns out to be none other than Philip Mansfield himself. The mutual attraction that flared between them on the ship has not gone away, but given the circumstances – Eva is Philip's employee and he's not happy about the fact that she's there and her father isn't – both of them agree to put it behind them and to maintain a professional distance. Even so, Eva is somewhat dismayed when she learns that Philip is a very 'hands on' owner and manager, who spends most of his time at his sites; in her previous experiences, she, as her father's representative, has been more or less left to oversee the work being undertaken, and she is unnerved at the prospect of having to maintain her deception on a day to day basis... as well as of seeing Philip every day and having to ignore the way he makes her feel. And Philip looks forward to the day that E.M Hyde is well enough to travel so that he will no longer need to see the infuriatingly desirable Eva every day.

But not seeing Eva and not thinking about her very soon becomes impossible and Philip finds it difficult to

concentrate on anything else. It's clear to him from her reactions that the desire he feels for Eva is reciprocated, so from then on there is only one solution. His proposal that they become the sort of friends who "*on occasion, might not go home separately*" is both scandalous and tantalising to Eva, who longs to experience again the passion she'd felt in Philip's arms, but is also aware that she has a lot to lose should anyone find out.

There's a lot to like about **A Scandalous Deal**. Eva and Philip are strongly drawn, attractive characters, the setting and the architectural details are lovingly described and have clearly been well researched and I really enjoyed the subplots concerning the corruption rife in the city at the time, the difficulties with the unions and Eva's wonderfully inventive solution to the problems that arise as a result. The problem, though, is that there are too many subplots in the story – there's one concerning the young woman Philip's parents want him to marry and her father's revenge when Philip makes it clear it's not going to happen; another concerning a number of 'accidents' at the hotel site which threaten Eva's safety and another about a commission from Philip's formidable mother – that there's not all that much room left over for the development of the central romance or for the principals to interact outside of the bedroom. The author establishes the attraction between Eva and Philip very well and there's no question they have great chemistry; the love scenes are sensual and well-done, and I liked the way Eva wasn't prepared to settle for anything less than a man who loved her for what she was and who would support her ambitions. I did, however, get annoyed with her when she jumped to conclusions about what Philip must be thinking simply because he looked or sighed the wrong way after they'd been intimate. It's so transparently a plot device in a book that doesn't need any more plot and makes Eva seem judgmental and unreasonable.

I did like the way that Philip is suddenly brought to realise that he had been applying one set of standards to one of his female friends and another to Eva, that he had ignored the importance she placed on retaining her independence and individuality. When he finally realises that he's gone about things the wrong way, he's big enough to admit his mistake and go all out – in a rather unusual but contextually appropriate Grand Gesture – to correct it and prove to Eva that he wants to support her in whatever she chooses to do.

**A Scandalous Deal** is an engaging and entertaining read, and Joanna Shupe continues to be one of the strongest writers of historical romance around. While there's a lot of plot in the book, it's all handled very well and there are no loose ends, but I can't deny that I'd have liked the romance to have been more strongly developed in a more organic way. Nonetheless, it's a solid addition to her current series, and I'll definitely be looking out for book three later this year.

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## **Ira says**

3.5 stars.

I like it, but the characters and the dialogues feels too current!

Love the idea a female architect, but correct me if I'm wrong, how old the heroine is? Is she 22?

She started seriously learning at 14 for 8 years. And now she is in charge for a high rise luxurious hotel in 19th century? Er...seriously? ??

Even in 21st century, when women can have any career they want that things won't happened!

Oh well, but it was a fun story and who care with the fact right? Right?

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## **Erica Chilson says**

**I received a copy of this title to read and review for Wicked Reads**

5 Stars

A Scandalous Deal felt innovated and fresh in a genre that by definition is antiquated. I read the novel feverishly, not realizing how quickly I blew through it until I hit the ending, since nothing broke my concentration.

Two new things for me: I'd never read a book that began with a ship passage from England to NYC and I've read very few books taking place in the US during this era. This was a pleasant surprise, adding lawyers of originality.

Equality is the driving force for the premise. Eva is her father's daughter, using his notoriety as an architect to pose in his place as his health declines. There is an altruistic need, as Eva has to afford to pay for her father's care, since the man was not a money-miser.

While on the passage to New York, Phillip is playful, free with his laughs, and laid-back. When he arrives back in NYC, the gruff, exacting builder emerges- a man of those times.

Not wishing to spoil the details... Eva is filled with secrets and lies, when Phillip doesn't abide by either after being burnt in the past. Eva wishes to have a career, using the gift she's honed since a child, not wanting to go from her father's daughter to her husband's wife, with no identity of her own.

Eva isn't a damsel in distress, nor is she the forced feeling of the 'spunky' spitfire- she earns her place by doing as she said she'd do, using her wit and intelligence to reach her goals.

Instead of a balance, where one is exacting and the other is playful, I feel the two exacting intellectuals draw out the playful, passionate side in one another. The novel is high on tension, the spark igniting immediately, but slow-building when it comes to trust, intimacy, and love.

There is an underlying thread, featuring a female friend of Phillip's that I appreciated seeing brought to light, showing the accuracy of what would have happened to her if she hadn't had a friend like Phillip.

Joanna Shupe is a new-to-me author. After devouring A Scandalous Deal, I'm looking forward to going back and reading her backlist.

Highly recommended to historical romance fans who appreciate today's world views taking shape back in the past, as not every woman was comfortable in their station, especially as this takes place during the women's suffrage movement.

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## **Lover of Romance says**

This review was originally posted on Addicted To RomanceI received this book for free from Avon in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review.

*A Scandalous Deal* is the second book in the Four Hundred series. The first book was a delight, but I really think I enjoyed this book even more than book one. \*gasp\* because I adored *A Daring Arrangement*. But this book, just held my attention even more. I don't know what it was, but the minute I started reading it, I LITERALLY couldn't put it down which is good that it's my day off or I might have been tempted to call in sick to work...that is how much this book held my attention, and I really didn't want to put it down...so yes it was read in one sitting which doesn't happen too often so it's always a fun delight when it happens.

*A Scandalous Deal* starts off with our main co stars....Eva and Phillip. They are both headed to New York from England on a passenger ship. Eva first meets Phillip on the first day when he is barely holding his stomach together from motion sickness. Later they meet eating snacks and drinking champagne, and realize that they have some powerful chemistry and share some sensual moments in Phillip's cabin. But on the morning of their arrival to New York, Eva disappears despite Phillip's search for her because for the first time since the betrayal years previous, he wants another woman and a woman he doesn't want to let go of.

Eva has come to New York to carry on her father's work. She was taught by her father how to be a true designer and architect. But her father has been sick for almost two years and she has been taking on his work, posing as him. When she has the opportunity to build a prestigious hotel in New York, she knows that she will have to pose as her father to get the job. So she does just that, and her new boss, is known to be brutal and strict about his properties. But when she strides into his office, she never expected her boss to be the mysterious stranger she almost had sex with on her voyage here.

At first Phillip almost refuses to let Eva work for him in her father's stead, because one she is a woman and he knows the waves it would cause with his construction crew. But also because he wants the real architect on the project, not a stand in, but what he doesn't realize is that Eva is the true designer behind the plans for the hotel. Eva needs this job desperately, with the debts her father has owed, she needs the money this venture would bring. She just never thought her mixed feelings for her boss would interfere and now she has a serious dilemma on her hands. When to tell that man she is coming to love the real truth when he has already been betrayed once before?

\*sigh\*....this story was so delicious in so many ways and I honestly can say it was a blast to read and it was so easy to immerse myself into Phillip and Eva's romance. First off, the chemistry between them is explosive and I adored the way their love scenes were written.

There's no room to ravish you properly here. I need to thoroughly consume you, to wreck us both. I want to destroy you for all other men in both England and American. Hell, any country on the planet.

They were written so well, and in such a way that it brings shivers to the reader. It had such a sensual and warm feel to the scene and I am really adoring this author style of writing. Then we have the office forbidden romance, with secrets abound. Now you understand why Eva is keeping these secrets, but at the same time, you wonder when she will tell Phillip the truth because you just know he is NOT going to take the truth well. And the way it plays out, it really makes you wish the heroine hadn't waited so long because the way it comes out isn't the best way for him to learn the truth.

Let everyone see that you're mine. And before you complain, this also allows everyone to see that I am yours. We're equals in this, Eva.

There are also other conflicts to this story. We have matchmaking mama's that want Phillip and another

debutante to get married which Phillip will never do. We see him have a real friendship...a platonic one with another woman who is secretly in love with her maid and if her parents find out she will be institutionalized for it. Then we have the construction crew who are very much against Eva working as the architect because she is a woman. So we see how well Eva can handle herself with these situations. She has spice and sass and handles herself so well. I love how she just knows men and how to make them think her way so flawlessly. She doesn't complain much about working in a man's world, just accepts it as a fact of the world and does what she can to work with men instead of against them and I really enjoyed that about her character.

You captivated me from the moment we met and I don't ever want to be apart, not for one single day. I love you and I need you by my side. That is why I must marry you. I promise I will learn to compromise and never block you from the sun.

I really fell in love with just about everything about this book, the only aspect that kept this book from a full on 5 rating was how long the secret was kept from Phillip since secrets kinda drive me crazy. But it was written pretty well so I didn't mind it too much. This was a delightful read that had me flipping those pages as fast as I could get them read and brought another fun story in the Gilded Age era which is rarely written about so I had a fun time with it. I honestly can't recommend this author enough, and encourage any romance lover to grab up this series.

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### **Jen Davis says**

As much as I love the Regency romances that are the mainstay of my historicals, I am really enjoying the foray into New York's Gilded Age I'm getting with this series. This is the second installment in Joanna Shupe's The Four Hundred and—though I enjoyed the first one—if you want to jump in here, this holds up just fine as a standalone.

Lady Eva is a talented architect who learned her craft at the feet of her renowned father. Unfortunately, her

dad has developed dementia and can no longer work. To make matters worse, he mismanaged their money and despite his success, she can't pay the bills. So she decides to use her own skill to fix the situation. Of course, no one will hire a woman as an architect, so she takes a lucrative job in New York, pretending to serve in her father's stead. After all, she's been designing in his name for years. What could possibly go wrong?

On her voyage to America, Eva meets a gorgeous and captivating man who she allows herself to indulge in a few indiscretions with. She has no idea that Phillip is actually the hotel developer she is sailing to meet... and deceive. Their lingering attraction only makes the execution of her plan more complicated, but she knows that she'll lose both the project and the man if he ever learns the truth.

I'm never a fan of a Big Secret trope. By necessity, as a reader, you're always waiting for the other shoe to drop once the truth is revealed. And here, the truth takes a long time to come out. But in the meantime, I really enjoyed Eva, specifically her independence and competence. This woman is a master of her craft, and more than that, is smart enough about people to know how to handle them. I liked how she recognized her own self worth, how she went after what she wanted, and stayed true to herself, even when it could mean losing the man she loved.

I liked Phillip well enough. In some ways, obviously, he was a man of his time, with his ideas about women, their place, and what they were capable of. He's also got some issues from a prior relationship that went bad. But he had some good moments. Most of them were during sexy times, but hey, he came through in the end.

This is a low angst romance, with a unique setting, and a satisfying HEA. I wasn't super emotionally engaged, but it was a pleasant read.

Rating: B

*\*ARC provided by publisher*

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## **Sissy's Romance Book Review says**

A Scandalous Deal by Joanna Shupe is book Two in The Four Hundred series. This is the story of Eva Hyde and Phillip Mansfield. I have read the previous book but feel if you choose to read this one first you should be okay.

Eva is the Lady Unlucky when she loses three fiancés to death and now her father's illness is getting worse. Eva's father is a famous architect who has an assignment to design and oversee Phillips Hotels in America. Eva has been trained by her father and in fact has been covering for him for a while now so she goes forward to go to America to do the job. Phillip and Eva have an encounter where they shared an intimate night together and Eva left before he awoke. Thinking never to see him again she is shocked to learn later that he is the man she is going to be working for. Phillip tries to keep things professional as they can be between the two but that doesn't work out to well.

Will the Unlucky Lady find her luck?

Really enjoyed this story!

