



Seduction & Scandal

Charlotte Featherstone

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With the scandalous nature of her birth to live down, Isabella Fairmont dreams of a proper marriage—even if a passionless one. She saves her deepest desires for the novel she dares to pen, wherein a handsome lord with dark powers seduces her. But then her courtship with an appropriate suitor is threatened by the sudden attentions of the reclusive Earl of Black...whose pale blue eyes and brooding sensuality are *exactly* as she described in her book.

Isabella tries to resist the mysterious Earl of Black.

Yet as he pursues her, with inexplicable knowledge of her past and kisses that consume her, Isabella fears she *will* succumb.

If only the earl could tell Isabella the truth. With very real, and treacherous, thieves endangering her life, Black will need to protect Isabella from the very people she trusts the most...

Seduction & Scandal Details

Date : Published (first published 2011)

ISBN :

Author : Charlotte Featherstone

Format : Kindle Edition

Genre : Romance, Historical Romance, Historical, Historical Fiction, Fantasy, Paranormal

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From Reader Review Seduction & Scandal for online ebook

UniquelyMoi ~ BlithelyBookish says

There's just something about Charlotte Featherstone's writing that sweeps me away into another time and place, and I don't feel like I'm merely reading a story, but living a dream!

The first time I met Death, it was at a ball and we danced a waltz, and I feared him, feared the things he made me feel, made me want. That night I ran from him, but Death was right behind me, chasing me and I wanted him to catch me.

Isabella Fairmont is a young woman who has known hunger, pain and scandal. The illegitimate daughter of a woman who gave her heart and her body to a man who she fancied herself in love with, Issy has had to live with the memories of what it was like to be poor and looked down on by the *ton*. When her mother passed away, Issy was taken in by her uncle and was given the kind of life she should have had all along. But she can't put her mother's past behind her and doesn't plan to make the same mistakes, so she's settled on an appropriate, respectable man to marry. But Isabella lives out her dreams in her writing where love, desire and passion are safe emotions to experience. But when she meets Lord Black and he evokes those feelings in her outside of the pages of her book, she finds herself torn between longing for what he offers, and fearing it.

Never tell what you know. Never say what you are. Never lose faith in your purpose, for the kingdom to come will have need of you and your sons.

The mysterious Earl of Black is no stranger to scandal. Having been suspect in the death of his mother, brother and fiancée, he's become reclusive, hiding dangerous secrets of his own. As a member of the Brethren Guardians, he protects valuable, centuries old artifacts that, should they fall into the wrong hands, could destroy the world. He knows of Isabella's past, and knows the woman she's become - and he wants her with a depth of desire that is nearly uncontrollable.

"Why, Isabella Fairmont - " Lucy beamed incredulously "- you have, at last, been properly seduced!"

Isabella tries to resist the mysterious Lord Black, but with his pale blue eyes and brooding sensuality that are exactly as she described Death in her book, she finds herself drawn to him like a moth to a flame, and realizes that she may not have the strength to refuse him.

"I will admit it is a rather strange concept."

I truly enjoyed the very unique storyline, and while there were some slow moments that are common when we're being introduced to a new series and its world, *Seduction & Scandal* was a beautiful tale full of intrigue, excitement and passion. Issy and Lord Black are a perfect match and I was anxious to see them finally get the *happily ever after* they so deserved!

I'm looking forward to the next installment of the Brethren Guardians, *Pride & Passion*, the story of Issy's cousin, Lady Lucy Ashton, and the "stuffy" Duke of Sussex.

Ms. Featherstone's inspiration for Lord Black

This book was provided to me for review by netgalley.com.

Rane says

I adore how Charlotte's Featherstone seems to weave a dark and seductive web with her almost poet writing, with her characters that are heartbreakingly real in their love and passion that ignites between them- molds them, changes them, heals them.

CF starts off with a almost dark velvet web that binds the reader in the first of The Brethren Guardians series Seduction & Scandal.

Isabella Fairmont is a dreamer, whom writes her most fondest and darkest desires into a book, keeping herself separate from the passion that burns inside of her, to the proper marriage and stability she craved for many years, as she watched her mother waste away from one man to another. Bella doesn't want that, and she'll do anything to suppress her emotions, and live through them with her writing and dreams. Until across the ballroom one night she meets the mesmerizing eyes of one Lord Black and deep down knows she's lost her heart even as her deepest fears want to hold her back.

Lord Black has watched Bella from afar, craves her and wants her as his own. Finally feeling the time was right, makes himself known to Bella, even as his darkest secrets start to emerge along with him from the shadows. Black will do anything to have Bella, even if it means protecting her from himself, but outside dangers forces the two together, much of their fears, secrets and desires will finally take flight from the shadows into the light...

As I read this, I kept being reminded of scenes from old gothic romance novels much of the vein as the Brontë sisters. This tone was very gothic in nature and I was quickly drawn into the book that CF knows how to set up perfectly with snippets of Bella's own novel of Lord Death and his bride. Which were preshadowing in some cases, giving a peek into Bella's past and memories that perhaps were suppressed...?

Bella is a dreamer, but in a family torn apart and a mother having to make do with her beauty to support her child, Bella didn't want to suffer that again, so she turns inward. At times it was very hard to connect to Bella. I as a reader, have to have a sort of empathy for the characters in some form or fashion and with Bella, she truly evaded that connection. On some levels I understood where she was coming from and others I felt she was just running away, carrying her troubles with her like chains around her neck. Even when Black laid his heart on the line, she still held a part of herself back or ran away. She finally did glow when her strengths in being non-judgement toward Black and his own past, and willing to risk her life for those she loved. She was also smart where she didn't have some TSTL moments which if any reader has gone through- is a blessing onto it's self!

Lord Black, oh, dear Lord Black. The tragic hero whom loves so greatly, yet fears to touch the gentle bloom of love. CF knows how to write this type of hero that is neither Alpha or Beta. With a seductive whisper and smile that has you glued to your book, flipping through the pages then going back to re-read them again. From the moment Lord Black walks into that ballroom, you like Bella are drawn to him, and early on unlike Bella, reasons are given but not all. But enough to understand as to why he acts and does the things he does. He stole my heart away, I'm not ashamed to say, and felt saddened as his own lost of pain, and his undying belief in love! *sighs*

The romance went hand and hand with the mystery behind The Brethren Guardians and a new take on the

old Knights of Templer. I find CF's story very engrossing, with a lot of loose ends to be picked up through the series. With it picking up between the secondary characters of Sussex and Lucy, whom have a connection that I can't wait to read about, especially the tiny cliffhanger between the time that was left to be pick-up.. Seduction & Scandal was everything I loved to read in a romance and more and I can't wait to fall in love with rest of this series.

Lord Black:

Emily May says

"THE FIRST TIME I MET DEATH, IT WAS AT A BALL AND WE DANCED A WALTZ..."

Well, with an opening line as intriguing as that I found my already high expectations sky-rocketing. I admit that I don't usually read historical romances as I tend to be rather against the patronisation of women and the whole death-by-corset thing they had going on back then. This, however, had excellent ratings by the few lucky enough to get an ARC copy and also that title speaks to me - I cannot resist a bit of scandal (or seduction, for that matter).

As one of my first historical romances (I'm not going to count Outlander), the novel was fairly good. I've heard it said before that Charlotte Featherstone writes with a poetic style that you either love or hate... well, I beg to differ because it was just rather so-so. I like beautiful, flowy writing; I think that's why I can't resist those books written in verse. However, apart from the opening that made me sit up straight and take notice, the rest of the book's writing bored me somewhat. In fact, there were quite a few things about this book that were, at best, dull.

The romantic aspect held all of my attention. I found the love scenes both sweet and steamy, and you could also see how the relationship would develop from curiosity and attraction to love and caring... without any of the unconvincing jumps to insta-love that romance novels today seem highly fond of. Isabella was a far better developed character than Lord Black, as a reader I felt an instant connection with her that was only strengthened by the delving into her past and writings. I loved the idea that she wrote as an escape from a society that holds such high and restricting expectations of people - and especially women. Lord Black, on the other hand, never seemed *real* to me. I mean that we never got inside his head properly and I felt constantly distanced from him throughout the novel, despite the author's attempts to bring out his character through discovering the mysteries of his past. I did think he was incredibly sexy and dark and dangerous and many other characteristics that are attractive in a romantic hero... but he was also highly one-dimensional.

The thing about romance stories is that romance alone is rarely enough. There needs to be a subplot or two going on to make it work - maybe a mystery or family problem to fill the blanks in between our lovers getting together. This book had that, but I found it incredibly weak and boring. I didn't care at all for the mysterious murder stories, the seances, and the attempts to delve into a bit of Greek mythology. If I'd just read the romance scenes then I would have enjoyed the book a whole lot more, but then it wouldn't have even been long enough to get published as a full novel.

I'm not sorry I read it and I would recommend the book to fans of the romance genre but I thought there were a great deal of things that needed improvement - most importantly, it needed a more engaging subplot.

Many thanks to netgalley and the publisher for providing this for review.

Anzu The Great Destroyer says

WARNING: If you're actually into this genre and want a serious review avoid this. There be demons ahead!

You may think I've lost my mind for reading this but there's a reasonable explanation for it. I'm in the mood to make fun of something. My friend Aly, who's a huge fan of historical romance novels, couldn't finish this. So of course I did the obvious thing.

No, I didn't kill it with fire you silly monkeys. I got the book and set out to read it just to make fun of it. You know, make the routine go away and all that.

It had nothing to do with the chick wanting to bang Death. Absolutely nothing to do with that.

So what I was expecting? Cults, necrophilia, suicide, curses and floating underwear. Of course I skimmed most of it (I can't handle reading a historical romance without skimming) while hunting for some creepy scenes. What I got? A cheesy pun loving peeping tom Death and a desperate female novelist owning a sick imagination. Meh!

I actually found some pretty good stuff around here. Let's have a look!

"Am I to die?" I asked, and he stopped, raised our joined hands to his mouth and gently kissed my knuckles.

"You are, my love, and in your sleep, you will become Death's bride."

chokes on the apple she was eating

Lord Black never emerged from his town house, which was across the street from her uncle's town house.

This reminds me:

It's perfectly normal to mix things up; you're an innocent girl after all. Good thing you have me to open your eyes *winks*

"Would you let me learn everything about you? Discover you as I want?"

Does that include a dissection?

"My lord—" she warned as he angled his head, lowering his mouth to hers.

"Black," he murmured, his lips brushing her cheek. "Just call me Black."

Wtf?!? Who in this world names her main character Black? That's just lame..

Bla bla bla magical objects got stolen bla bla bla he who owns them will rule the world bla bla bla stupid story skim skim skim

I was expecting this to be more.. blasphemous. I'm really disappointed with this! I mean come on you had it right there! Why did you make Black be just a normal person who's cursed or whatever the hell's wrong with him?? No freaky events, just boredom *sighs*

Shawna says

5+ stars – Victorian Historical Romance

Charlotte Featherstone's *Addicted* and *Sinful* are two of my favorite historical romances, so I was thrilled when I heard she was coming out with a new Victorian historical romance series from HQN Books. I was very fortunate to receive an early copy of the first book in The Brethren Guardians, *Seduction & Scandal*, from NetGalley, and it far surpassed my high expectations.

Charlotte Featherstone's writing has a unique, lyrical quality and such beautiful, resonating eloquence to her words. *Seduction & Scandal* is a dark, sensual, gothic tale that captivated me from the very first haunting sentence and never let me go. I loved absolutely everything about it, and I devoured every seductive word from beginning to end. I don't think it's possible for me to adequately express how much I enjoyed this book, but I'll give it my best effort.

Isabella Fairmont's past is riddled with scandal, and she longs for a proper marriage and life of stability, even if it means a staid future devoid of passion. Although she misses the simplicity and romantic, rugged beauty of the moors of her childhood country home in northern England, she barely survived the poverty and painful ramifications of her mother's notorious indiscretions with men. Isabella is determined to free herself from the devastating secrets of her past and her mother's scandalous reputation, and a possible suit with steadfast, ambitious archaeologist and scholar Wendell Knighton seems to be a perfect means of getting the respectable life she craves.

Isabella's one escape is penning gothic stories about a dark, mysterious figure who haunts her dreams and seduces her, and she keeps her inner yearning and wish of becoming a novelist a closely guarded secret from everyone but her closest friend and cousin, Lady Lucy Ashton. But when Isabella meets and dances with the scandalous, reclusive, enigmatic Earl of Black at a ball, everything in her virtuous, safely erected life of propriety changes. Lord Black's tempting dark beauty, exotic blue eyes, and intoxicating sensuality are exactly like the hero of her story, and when he makes it clear that he desires Isabella, she finds herself lured into a dangerous world of seduction.

Lord Black has guarded scandals and secrets of his own, so he's remained hidden in the shadows of society. Although he's yearned for Isabella from afar, he's stayed away to protect her. But after one dance, one touch, sets him ablaze, he knows he can no longer deny the fierce attraction he feels or resist the explosive passion between them and is determined to make Isabella his. Lord Black's alluring, mysterious, and seductive nature

draws Isabella like a moth to a flame, but he also represents every wicked temptation she's vowed to avoid. He seems to know all of her secret desires, and Isabella fears she'll surrender to his enchanting allure. But when Lord Black's mysterious enemies and secrets endanger Isabella and scandals of the past resurface, their tentative relationship and fragile romantic attachment is threatened.

It's a beautifully written, haunting, and evocative romance with gothic mystery, secret legends and treasure, clandestine societies, a sense of occult, a touch of magic, and lushly sensual love scenes. Lord Black is a sexy, brooding, mesmerizing, possessive, decadently sensual, and swoonalous hero, and his amorous obsession with Isabella is sigh-worthy romantic. He's so emotionally intense, sexually potent, and deliciously tantalizing that I was amazed Isabella didn't faint in an aroused heap at his every touch. He's like an exotic combination of robust, full-bodied red wine and spicy, rich dark chocolate that I'd gladly sip, taste, and indulge in with utter gluttony. Isabella's resistance to Lord Black and denial of their passion was frustrating at times, but it was also understandable considering the pain of her past.

Seduction & Scandal is a very strong 5+ star read that I devoured and savored in one sitting, which is exactly what I long to do to delicious Lord Black. *sigh* The gothic tale that Isabella pens throughout the book adds an enthralling, hypnotic (and steamy!) element to the story. I also loved the intriguing, complex secondary characters, the Duke of Sussex, Lady Lucy Ashton, the Duke's sister Elizabeth, and rogue Scotsman Alynwick, and I'm desperately eager to read their stories now.

I didn't want it to end, and if the second book in The Brethren Guardians, was already out, I would have delved straight into it and kept on reading until I'd finished it as well. This series is that addictive! I highly recommend this for fans of dark, sensual historical romances with a touch of mystery and brooding, sinfully yummy, to die for heroes. I can't wait for the Duke of Sussex's and Lucy's story, *Pride & Passion*, to come out in December'2011. Big 5 stars!

I received this as a galley, courtesy of NetGalley.com.

My Lord Black:

Ruth says

My thoughts about this one are quite mixed. It's the first Charlotte Featherstone I've read, and there were some things I enjoyed and others that just felt they weren't as good as they could have been.

I received it through netgalley.

Things I liked:-

- The theme of the series is really a nice mixture of the mythical, romantic and historical. I think this is what actually made me read on and finish the book - I just wanted to know what happened. It also left me really

wanting to read the other two books in the series, which is actually quite an achievement for a book which didn't leave me inspired.

- The second half is much better written than the first half, equally dark and angsty, but with much more substance, flowing more easily and the characters feel more real. There is much less single-minded focus on the over-gothic romance, which I found quite tedious, more interesting characters involved and more details of the pasts of both the hero and heroine.
- The character of Lucy. She just came across as quite like a real person - totally overshadowed by something, and yet nosy, gossipy, but essentially well-meaning.

Things I didn't like so much:-

- I have to admit, I found the story-within-a-story bits a tad boring. So, the heroine is a wannabe gothic novelist, do we have to be subjected to page after page of her verbal wanderings? I ended up just skipping over these I found them so tiresome. Maybe these bits would have been better handled as dreams or something..
- I found it incredibly difficult to warm to the heroine during the first half, and only slightly more during the second half, for two main reasons. The heroine is clearly virginal, even if brought up a witness to her mother's man-chasing behavior, which has made her vow to never do the same. She has seen the pain and poverty it inflicted on her and her mother and doesn't want to repeat it. So far, so good. But then, as soon as the hero waltzes onto the scene she forgets everything and almost throws herself at him. Hmm. Not sure about that - she strikes me as a sensible, world-weary person, quite cynical and an outsider. I'm not sure she wouldn't have turned her back on all her good resolutions so easily, and I really wanted her to be made of sterner stuff instead of being a completely romantic no-hoper. And secondly, to top it all, I just didn't buy the virginal stuff. Er, hello? She spent most of her formative years watching her mother hopping into bed with a variety of lovers, in a small 2-room hovel, and she's trying to figure out why she likes foreplay? I don't think so. Even if she'd never actually slept with anyone, I think she'd be pretty well-versed in what was going on.
- For me, the first half was rather slow, and this overshadowed what is really a nice, intriguing theme for the series, with a mixture of myth, romance and history.
- I couldn't, and still can't figure out, for the life of me, why the hero didn't get to proposing sooner, since it was obvious the heroine needed that kind of commitment from him.
- Some of the steamy bits relied rather too heavily on describing the various contortions the hero and heroine managed to twist themselves into, which took the edge off a bit. I've not read a story where over-description of the positions of limbs or who's on top of whom, and then how they shift to knees etc. really works very well. It always seems a bit over-visual and more suited to a movie.

So, 3 stars. I liked it, but didn't love it.

Juliana Philippa says

A gothic romance worth reading, but was definitely uneven for me (3.5 stars)

So I know I'm the odd-woman-out on this one, but while some aspects of this book were really superb, I had several issues that stopped it from being stellar for me. This is my first Charlotte Featherstone book, though I've been wanting to read her book *Sinful* for awhile, and I definitely think she's a talented author and one I will seek out in the future.

Praise

The hero and heroine were wonderful as individuals and together as a couple. Isabella Fairmont (23) and Jude Sheldon, Earl of Black (33) are well-written and three-dimensional characters, both tormented by secrets in their past that they are trying to put behind them. Black is a very dark, sensual hero - reminded me of Caire from Elizabeth Hoyt's *Wicked Intentions* - and while he might have overshadowed a weaker or more timid heroine, I think that Isabella stood her ground with him (while flip-flopping a little too much for my taste).

The chemistry between them is **sizzling**, and in this area I was actually not sure what to expect, since Featherstone's books *Sinful* and *Addicted* are marketed as erotic novels. While she does an excellent job at writing sexual tension between Isabella and Jude - and it's a large part of their romance - their relationship progresses stage-wise at the pace one usually finds in historical romances.

I'll admit that I have a thing for those dark and tormented heroes - who doesn't? - and my biggest weakness is heroes who are intensely drawn to their heroines - on the healthy side of obsession, shall we say? Black definitely delivers on both these fronts with his single-minded devotion to and pursuit of Isabella. I absolutely loved how strong his feelings were for her, as well as one of the mysterious reasons it started.

We're introduced in this book to the leads of both books 2 and 3, and I found all of them very engaging and intriguing, with the exception of Lucy, Isabella's cousin and the heroine of the next book. She got on my nerves and her complete disregard for the Duke of Sussex, who seems like he will be a fabulous hero, did not endear her any more to me.

The final thing that I absolutely loved is a spoiler, so I unfortunately can't detail it. I will say that out of the 300-400 historical and contemporary romances I have read so far, this is the first one that had this incorporated into one of the main characters. I thought it was very brave of Featherstone and for personal reasons, I thought it wonderful that she included that and wish that it had been more fully explored.

Criticism

While the strength of this book was the main characters' relationship, it was also the biggest weakness for me. There was so much potential, with all the right ingredients, but while Black's feelings for Isabella felt authentic, he almost always expressed them out loud by describing their physical connection and it seemed to revolve solely around him wanting to finally bed her - and then be able to bed her every day for the rest of his life. Due to a specific aspect of how his feelings for Isabella came to be, and even some of his internal thoughts about her, I thought that the depth was actually there and *did* exist, but was not expressed enough or fully acknowledged. For Isabella's part, she is definitely attracted to Black (who wouldn't be?!), but I saw no basis for her to have an emotional connection with him so quickly in the beginning of their relationship. While at first her internal struggles added an interesting dimension, eventually I grew tired of her attempt at an "out of sight, out of mind" attitude and felt that Black deserved more constancy on her part.

This is not a paranormal romance, but I personally had to categorize it as one because there are some really weird things going on. There's the subplot, which involves mysterious powers and forces and reminded me

of Amanda Quick's Arcane and Vanza series. That in and of itself could have slipped by, but what was up with the book that Isabella is writing? As she writes it, some parts of it come to pass between her and Black, so ... Was she making it happen? Was she predicting the future? I don't know and since it was never explained, even illogically, it bothered me. There is also Isabella's entire morbid relationship with Death, which she talks and writes about as if it's a person, and her constantly seeing shadows, feeling darkness, etc. That, combined with Black's very gothic character, made the book feel extremely melodramatic at times.

The mystery subplot is one that runs throughout the series, so nothing is fully resolved in this book, though I think several things are pretty easily guessed. A great deal of the subplot action is crammed in at the end and that, followed by a quick HEA conclusion to Isabella and Black's romance, make the ending feel very abrupt.

Finally, there was an overall feeling of inconsistency for me. The romance, the characters, the mystery subplot - all of them had a stop-and-go quality that I'm not sure I can properly explain. While some points or aspects of the story are belabored (Isabella's internal struggle, that she and Black are both emotionally haunted, her fear of darkness and the shadows, etc.), others are glossed over, not fully fleshed out, and/or flimsily explained (why he initially became interested in her, why he approaches her now, Isabella's thinking behind her *unfortunate event*, etc.).

The Brethren Guardians Series

Book 1 - *Seduction and Scandal* (3.5 stars)

Book 2 - *Pride and Passion* (exp. publication date: Nov 15, 2011)

Book 3 - *Title Unknown*

Bottom Line

I would recommend *Seduction and Scandal* and might myself read it again - Black is delicious, and the attraction and connection between him and Isabella at times leap off the page, both making it worth a read. However I had several issues with the book that left me feeling as if not enough had been explained and wanting more depth or background. I will therefore most likely not be buying my own copy, and will instead check it out from the library if/when I want to read it again.

Recommendations

Wicked Intentions by Elizabeth Hoyt

Seven Secrets of Seduction by Anne Mallory

[This review is of an advance reading copy of the book from Harlequin through NetGalley]

Baba says

Lord Black said to Isabella:

"Say it, whisper it, let me hear my name on your lips, let me feel your lips against my skin as you say it."

3.5 stars. I rounded up to 4 stars since the prose is beautiful and there's one magical word: sensuality.

Where do I start? Some aspects of Seduction & Scandal were wonderful. Then again, I had a few issues that prevented it from being exceptional.

The dark and secretive hero, Lord Black (Jude Sheldon), was gorgeous, very sensual, and utterly delicious. While Isabella Fairmont could hold her own, she had a few weaker moments from time to time. Both of them are tormented by secrets in their past and they're both refusing to reveal them. Lord Black is very obsessed to gain Isabella's love and devotion. He wants her heart, body, and soul. Since he first laid eyes on her he wants her. Irrevocably. The build-up was very well done and their chemistry was incredibly palpable and sizzling hot! I loved the sexual tension in Sinful as well as in Forever Yours, and I can truly say that I felt the same way while reading Seduction & Scandal. The author took her time and the relationship grows slowly and steadily but boy, it was so worth the wait!

The best aspect of Ms. Featherstone's writing is her ability to make the reader feel this all-encompassing sensuality. It's ever present!

"You must take this book, Isabella," he whispered, and she felt the brush of his hair against her cheek, then her neck. It was followed by the subtle sweep of his nose against her skin, and at last, the brush of his lips against the column of her neck. "I want you to have it, to open the pages and reverently turn them, to glide your fingers along the paper, tracing the words, thinking of me as you read."

"Reckless, dangerous, irresponsible, yes," he murmured as he pressed against her, his chest slowly, inexorably pushing her backward till she was lying on the carriage bench and he was looming above her. "It is all those things, but it is also unavoidable, inevitable, inescapable."

What didn't quite work for me:

On the one hand, the main characters are certainly the strength of Seduction & Scandal. On the other hand, I felt that Lord Black and Isabella didn't spend enough time together. I really craved for more. While Lord Black was always very outspoken about his feelings, emotions, and cravings, it was Isabella who didn't convince me completely. Yes, she desired Lord Black but she acted too hesitantly, and she was too indecisive. Furthermore, the author dedicated too much time to the mystery for my liking. The things that happened were a bit weird, and I would qualify those elements as PNR. It revolves around mysterious powers and forces and this whole part includes the infamous pendant and the chalice. If you want to know more about the pendant, please read the spoiler. (view spoiler) Additionally, the ending was a bit too abrupt for my liking.

There's some unfinished business at the end of the story due to the chalice. However, I'm pretty sure that book 2 will pick up right where Seduction & Scandal left off, since we're introduced in this book to the lead characters of Pride & Passion, Lucy Ashton and Lord Sussex.

Overall, it was an enjoyable read and if you're a fan of Ms. Featherstone's work or if you like HR with a touch of PNR then I'd recommend you to read Seduction & Scandal.

Milica's Bookshelf says

4 zvezdice. (poslednjih 50ak stranica je ovoj knjizi donelo 4 zvezdice jer ostatak sam jedva pro?itala, pa da nije završnice koja me ostavila sa gomilom pitanja i ludom željom da saznam ostatak, ova knjiga bi dobila dve zvezdice.)

Dina says

Loved it, loved it, loved it!

Review to come later...

Death has never looked so tempting...

*Note: I received this eARC from Harlequin via NetGalley. That had **no** influence on my review/rating.*

Monty Cupcake ? Queen of Bloodshed ? says

I think I misunderstood the tags on genre for this book because I was expecting a paranormal historical romance novel. It was not. It's a historical romance with some artifacts that may have a paranormal-ness to them. There's a hint of possible otherness influence from the artifact, but it's not a fact in the book. That was disappointing as I thought the characters would be paranormal. They're regular humans.

Isabella is a former commoner now living with her aristocratic uncle and cousin. She's now attending balls, being in society, trying to catch a husband. She spends her time writing gothic stories about a romance with Lord Death. She's a heroine quite preoccupied with death since her father, mother, and grandmother are all dead. Her very overactive imagination makes her a flighty kind of heroine. I didn't really like that about her. She waffles about on her decisions and does stupid things because of her imagined notions.

Lord Black (how cool is his name?), Jude, (also a very hot guy name), has a mysterious and scandalous past. He's a recluse, but he pops up at a ball just to dance with Isabella. He's a pretty dark and mysterious hero, but totally all about the seduction. That was fun. He's also a Brethren Guardian, meaning he has to guard a Templar artifact from being discovered by the world.

The book would've been better if it hadn't had Isabella's story of Lord Death going on as well. That annoyed me to have the novel interrupted for her little imaginings of her romance with Lord Death story. That's part of why I'm not rating this very highly, I also hated how wishy washy and bratty Isabella was at times concerning Jude. Hated her bratty cousin too. I think Jude, Sussex, and Alynwick were the best characters. Also, while the couple has a HEA, the whodunnit isn't solved yet, there are 2 more books in the series. I assume the villain isn't revealed until book 3.

Holly says

PHENOMENAL STORY TELLING!!!

Seduction & Scandal is the first book in the Brethren Guardian Series, and if it's any indication as to what is to come I simply can't wait!! Now, the fact that the author is a dear friend in no way affects the fact that I think her writing is simply magical! It just is!! I loved this story and the concept so much, I am going to attempt a brief review, I know I won't be doing this story justice though, just please, check it out for yourself!!

Isabella Fairmont is a woman with a passionate soul, but who wants nothing more than to bury that passion and marry a man who will provide the safety and security that has always been fleeting in her life, but she cannot seem to resist the passion that sizzles between her and the enigmatic Earl of Black. Lord Black has been called many things, dark, dangerous, a recluse and scandal and death seem to follow him. There is also the fact that Isabelle, who is a budding lady novelist, is penning a story about Lord Death, who is strongly coming to resemble Lord Black himself....But none of this will deter Black from the one thing he wants most...Isabella - *It is as though his soul recognizes her as his.*

All of this passion and throw in the mystery of the magical Templar artifacts that the Brethren Guardians have been sworn to protect for generation. This story has everything, love, lust, passion, mystery, deceit and lots of unanswered questions that will leave you practically salivating for the next book in the series, Pride and Passion where we can spend much more time with the delicious Duke of Sussex and Lady Lucy Ashton!

I am grateful I was able to get an ARC copy of the book from Netgalley, but at the same time it feels a little bittersweet, for this is a story you DO NOT want to see end!!

Lord Black:

****This book was provided to me as an ARC by Netgalley!

Michelle, the Bookshelf Stalker Queen of the Undead says

3.5 stars out of 5

I sometimes think I'm not sophisticated enough for a Charlotte Featherstone novel. I know her writing is supposedly like poetry, full of sensuality, magical (I almost wrote magically delicious- Lucky Charms anyone?), and all that other touchy feely stuff. However, I prefer more of the direct approach with my words and my actions. If you like me, come tell me, if you want some, come ask. Nuff said!

Being in the head of a Featherstone character is like drowning on angst, misery, longing, and desire. It takes so long for two characters to come to terms with what they want, and to perform whatever action they desire, that by the time they do whatever they wanted to do, I'm screaming FINALLLYYYYY!

That being said, there is absolutely nothing wrong with the story in this book. In fact, the story could give the movie National Treasure a run for its money.

I know I'm not taking the book seriously in all its dark misery and character flowery feeling stuff but I can't.

The objects in the story- the chalice, the scroll, and the pendant and the secret society kept me in the story, the character's internal hallmark card moments kept me from thoroughly enjoying it!

Laura says

Not only was “Seduction & Scandal” my first Charlotte Featherstone read, it was also my very first historical romance read as well. I went into reading this not really knowing what to expect as I’ve always been apprehensive about the genre. Needless to say, the first page grabbed me, held me, consumed me, until I just had to sit down and read it in its entirety; until two in the morning. When it was over, I was heartbroken because I didn’t have the next one to pick up and start reading. I have no doubt that had I the second novel in this series; I would’ve kept on reading into the morning.

Isabella Fairmont comes from a past that’s full of tragedy and disgrace. Having been taken in by her wealthy uncle, Isabella realizes that she’s fortunate to have been given a chance to experience the privileges that someone from her background shouldn’t. It’s because of this background and shameful past that Isabella is content on wanting a simple marriage that’s honorable, simple, and proper; even if that means that she feels no real desire for her husband. Isabella is afraid to lose herself in passion, fearing she will succumb to the same reality her mother did. Isabella finds what she’s looking for in Wendell Knighton, who works for the British Museum specializing in ancient artifact discovery. Wendell is a safe choice, and shows no sign of throwing Isabella into a fit of sexual frenzy.

The one place Isabella lets herself free, and truly expresses her passion and longing, is within her extremely sensual writing. She shares her secret with no one other than her best friend and cousin, Lady Lucy Ashton. Isabella writes of the mysterious Lord Death who has haunted her dreams and fantasies for years. Imagine Isabella’s surprise when at a ball one evening, Lord Black (HAVE MERCY) approaches her and dances with her, eerily resembling the writing that Isabella had penned.

Lord Black comes from a past that’s full of secrets and shame. He has essentially locked himself away from the world, until he encounter’s Isabella. The desire to be with her is magnetic, and he rests at nothing until he can be with her.

As I mentioned before, the writing in this story grabbed me immediately. Never before have I read something so incredibly arousing using just words. Featherstone’s writing is unbelievably sensual. While reading this, I felt as though I could smell Lord Black through Bella’s encounters with him; that I could hear him speaking through the pages. It was so intensely erotic that there were several moments I was left breathless. Lord Black is sinfully delicious and completely enthralled with Isabella. This man is consumed with her, and when he finally gets his prize, I almost fainted with envy. The story is enchanting, darkly sexy, full of suspense, and ancient history everyone will love.

I am desperately anxious to read the next story in this series; I wish it were available now. The secondary characters introduced in this novel, Sussex, Lady Lucy, Elizabeth, and Alynwick, will all surely make for fantastic additions to this exciting series!

Now, more than ever, I am anxious to read more of Charlotte Featherstone’s novels. I was completely captivated by this. Five big stars!!

Sammy Loves Books says

3.5 Not So Scandalous Stars

Isabella's mother was a passionate woman. A rake seduced her into being his mistress.

Scandal ruined her reputation and she was forced to move away from society. Once he'd had his fill of her, she was cast aside and left to become a whore. Trading sex for money in order to survive.

After Isabella's mother passed, she moved to live with her uncle, the Marquis of Stonebrook. She has just been introduced to London society via her uncle and she has no intentions of making the same mistakes her mother made. She will not be seduced by passion, but will settle for a marriage based on friendship.

But the Earl of Black is obsessed with Isabella and he intends to seduce her. Into his Bed!!!

The passion between Isabella and Black was palpable. I just felt that it was dragged out too long. They didn't make love until the 85% mark. And honestly, that's ok if an author chooses to make me wait it out. I just got tired of all of the dream sequence sex. One or two dream sequences are fine. But I felt that it began to drag, and I began to not even care if they had sex or not.

I loved the Isabella and Black. The secondary characters had wonderful depth. Enough depth, that I look forward to each to their love stories to come.

There was also a mystery that was not resolved. It sets up the perfect introduction into book two. I only rated this a 3 star because it dragged quite a bit in the middle with the dream sequences and fictional journal writing. I can only hope that the next book will not go at such a slow pace.
