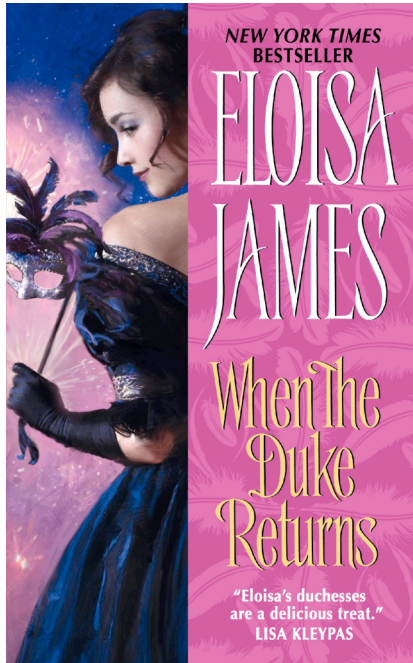




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**“My Duchess, I Presume?”**

**An Intrepid Duke Returns from Expeditions  
Abroad and Makes the Greatest Discovery of  
His Life: The Wife He Never Knew**

**WHEN THE DUKE RETURNS**

**By New York Times Bestselling Author Eloisa James**

**Avon Books η ISBN 9780061245602 η On-Sale 11/25/08 η \$7.99**

**WHEN THE DUKE RETURNS** by *New York Times* bestselling author Eloisa James (Avon Books, ISBN 9780061245602, on-sale 11/25/08, \$7.99) is the much-anticipated fourth volume in the acclaimed “Desperate Duchesses” series of historical novels, set in lavish, licentious Georgian England, an era which the *Charleston Post & Courier* calls “a fascinating time period for historical romance.” As seen by the rampant popularity of the major motion picture “The Duchess,” starring Keira Knightly and Ralph Fiennes, public interest in this sophisticated, decadent era is piqued. Avon Books vice president/editorial director Carrie Feron notes, “The Georgian era is arousing huge interest in popular culture right now, and Eloisa James’ “Desperate Duchess” quartet of novels is the only series being published currently that offers readers additional perspective into this dazzling period.”

**WHEN THE DUKE RETURNS** opens at a wild house party, held at the country estate of the notorious Lord Strange, whereupon Lady Isidore Del’Fino meets her Fate: the husband she wedded by proxy...when she was only 12 years old. She has never seen the man, who has been off to the furthest

**When The Duke Returns/Eloisa James, page 2**

reaches of Africa, India and Asia, searching for the origins of the Blue Nile, and discovering the benefits of the “Middle Way,” a spiritual path taught to him by a revered Eastern guru.

Nothing about the Middle Way prepared Simeon Jermyn, Duke of Cosway, with the reality of the wife – and the life – awaiting him at home in England. There is no quietude to be found with the tempestuous beauty... a lush beauty who’d like nothing more than to fulfill her wedding vows, become a true wife to a husband she’s never met, and rise to meet her duties as a Duchess of the realm. Isidore is shocked to learn that Simeon *does not consider them married* – a marriage by proxy is no marriage in his eyes. Furthermore, the man is still a virgin. In all his travels, he has not once succumbed to visceral temptation – and he intends not to succumb to Isidore’s obvious temptations until he considers them properly wed.

Not one to run from a challenge, Isidore follows Simeon to his ducal estate – which is literally a mire. The countless dangers that Simeon encountered during his travels abroad could in no way have prepared him for the harsh realities of life on his family seat: the late duke, Simeon’s father, seldom saw fit to pay his debts... and the dowager duchess sees no need to break with that tradition. The privies are overflowing; the plumbing rotted; the mansion and properties falling into disrepair and ruin – and the townspeople impoverished, due to lack of support from the duchy.

In the midst of this bedlam, his wife has the temerity to try and seduce him. In order to regain his inner peace, he must keep her at arm’s length: Isidore causes him more inner turmoil than any of the cataclysms surrounding him. She alone has the ability to make the duke to tremble to his very core. Can a man used to leading desert tribes through perilous danger muster the courage to confront the calamities on the home front, and learn that embracing the tumultuous fire of passion can truly *make* a man?

**When The Duke Returns [η](#) Eloisa James [η](#) Avon Books [η](#) ISBN 9780061245602 [η](#) On-Sale 11/25/08 [η](#) \$7.99**

### **About the Author:**

*New York Times* bestselling author Eloisa James’s historical romance have been published to great acclaim. A reviewer from *USA Today* wrote of Eloisa’s very first book that she “found herself devouring the book like a dieter with a Hershey bar;” later *People Magazine* raved that “romance writing does not get much better than this.” Her novels have been finalists for the Romance Writers of America’s RITA awards – the highest romance industry honor; won the National



**When The Duke Returns/Eloisa James, page 3**

Readers' Choice Award for Best Long Historical, and repeatedly been named one of the Best Romances of the Year by Amazon.com and Borders. After graduating from Harvard College, Eloisa got a Ph.D. from Yale and eventually became a Shakespeare professor, publishing an academic book with Oxford University Press. All her books must have been written in her sleep, because her days are taken up by caring for two children with advanced degrees in whining, several cats and a tumbledown house. Find out more about the author at [www.eloisajames.com](http://www.eloisajames.com).

**GET YOUR DUKES IN A ROW:**  
**The Men that Make Duchesses Despair**

In the minds of lots of Americans, romances are all the magical time before marriage, when passion (and sex) cure all ills that plague a relationship. New York Times bestselling author Eloisa James is intent upon addressing the taboos that plague marriage, from adultery to frigidity; from virginity to bad sex. Eloisa's novels are akin to *Good Housekeeping's* most popular column: **Can this marriage be saved?**

The bestselling DESPERATE DUCHESS series chronicles the licentious lives and libertine loves of Britain's most delightful duchesses...and the men who must conquer the beasts within (themselves and their relationships) to achieve wedded bliss.

**Desperate Duchesses**

**Hero:** Damon Reeve, the Earl of Gryffyn

**Historical Precedent:** Author Eloisa James incorporates the works and words of the poet Christopher Smart, as well using a stratagem from the Bard's own *The Tempest*: Much of the novel revolves around the masterplay of chess – invoking masterful foreplay. Indeed, chess was one of the few activities that a Georgian era gentleman and a lady could engage in together in private...and many such games took place by the sides of beds.

**Relationship Issue:** Mad relatives; unrequited love.

**Romantic Resolution:** Sometimes, a woman just needs to leave home...and quite often, a man needs to embark upon a concerted campaign of seduction.

**An Affair Before Christmas**

**Hero:** The Duke of Fletcher, known as “Fletch”

**Historical Precedent:** “When I wrote the prologue to *An Affair Before Christmas*, I was thinking of Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*. I admit it: wrong time period, wrong country...but oh, the lush, vivid sense of Christmas delight!” And perhaps we have a taste of *The Gift of the Magi*, as well...as our hero and heroine must truly give of themselves to recapture their love.

**Relationship Issue:** Bad sex (he thinks she's frigid; she thinks he's dissolute)

**Romantic Resolution:** It's crucial to learn exactly what one's mother-in-law taught one's wife about sex – that can truly make or break a marriage. (Oh, and a bad hair day can hurt bedroom performance more than one might realize...)

**Duchess By Night**

**Hero:** Lord Justinian Strange (“Jem”)

**Historical Precedent:** Jem is based in part upon Samuel Pepys, who lived before the Georgian period – but the *mores* of his diary, in which gentlemen routinely have mistresses, and ladies take lovers, are true of the Georgian period as well. We might turn to another diary for a glimpse of a Georgian gentleman's life. James Boswell lived from 1740-1795; by age twenty-nine, he had already detailed the seduction of three wives, four actresses, Rousseau's lover, three middle-class women, and over sixty street girls.

**Relationship Issue:** Guilt, Grief, Adultery and Gambling

**Romantic Resolution:** The love of a good (cross-dressing) woman; sensual games of sport and chance with the beautiful Harriet, Duchess of Berrow.

**When the Duke Returns**

**Hero:** Simeon Jermyn, Duke of Cosway

**Historical Precedent:** The Duke of Cosway is based upon the intrepid traveler James Bruce, a laird from Scotland. Bruce was an extraordinary Georgian gentleman who travelled throughout many remote African states, returning to England to publish multiple volumes of his *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile*. Among his other accomplishments, he discovered the source of the Blue Nile in Ethiopia (not to be mistaken with the White Nile, to its west).

**Relationship Issue:** Excessive Virginity.

**Romantic Resolution:** Practice. Lots and lots of practice.

