

# LOVE'S GREAT ADVENTURE

The exclusive magazine from Elizabeth Ellen Carter

**STAKE IT ALL ON  
LOVE!**

SNEAK PEEK READS FROM  
THE WEDDING WAGER

**FASHION FEATURE**

A CORNUCOPIA OF  
DELIGHT FROM  
VICTORIA VANE

**SAUCY!**

THE EROTICISM OF  
BACKGAMMON

**FAST FOOD 18TH  
CENTURY STYLE**

DIRECT FROM JOHN  
MONTAGU, FOURTH  
EARL OF SANDWICH

**INSIDE:**

- FUN & GAMES: TAKE A SPORTING CHANCE
- LONG SHOTS: GAMBLING IN FILM & SONG

**LOVE TO  
BET ON HEARTS**

*Interview*

**Has The Lady  
GONE TOO FAR?**

LORD HARRISON WARFIELD, VISCOUNT HARCOURT  
REVEALS ALL ABOUT LONDON'S PREMIER  
MATCHMAKER

**LOVE'S GREAT  
ADVENTURE**

Issue 19 Sept 2022



# AUTHOR'S DESK

## IT'S A TAKEOVER TRIPLE TREAT

This is the third anthology takeover we've had this year, and I couldn't be more delighted. It's exactly what Love's Great Adventure magazine is all about – it introduces you to what your favourite authors are up to as well as introducing you new authors too.

In this edition, I'm delighted to present *The Wedding Wager*, an anthology featuring wonderful award-winning historical romance writers.

The stories within centre on creating love matches between unlikely lovers as a result of a bet between two matchmakers and sometimes between the couples themselves.

I want to thank Chasity Bowlin who came up with the concept and led the way. Do enjoy her character interview in this edition.

Just as with March's *Desperate Daughters* anthology, it is so much fun writing with friends!

Also in this edition, there's the history of one of the most popular styles of food presentation in the world. Did you know that gambling created the sandwich? Or that backgammon was associated with erotic poetry?

Do read on! I hope you'll get as much fun out of this edition of *Love's Great Adventure* as we've had bringing it to you.

*Elizabeth Ellen Carter*



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from Elizabeth Ellen Carter

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**BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS  
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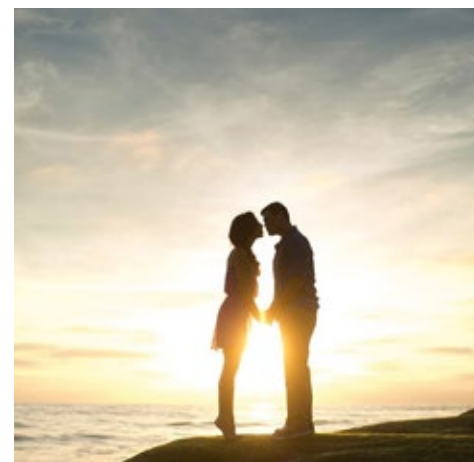
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INTERVIEW  
EXCLUSIVE

# THE FORMER LUCY DAWES - NOW VISCOUNTESS HARCOURT - IS NOT YOUR TYPICAL YOUNG LADY IN SOCIETY

COVER STORY

*I HAD the pleasure of an illuminating chat with Lord Harrison Warfield as I offered felicitations on his recent marriage to Lucy Dawes. Viscount Harcourt and new Viscountess Harcourt met and were married at a house party with much assistance and support from Lady Pandora Osbourne.*

*It's a juicy tale, but, alas, the Viscount was too much a gentleman to reveal all the details. For that, you will simply have to read *A Private Wager* and learn them all for yourself.*

*In the meantime, I did learn a few fascinating facts...*



by Special Correspondent  
CHASITY BOWLIN

**CB:** Thank you so much for agreeing to speak with me again, Viscount Harcourt. I don't often get a chance to follow up with my characters once their stories are completed.

Viscount Harcourt: Well, I do owe you a debt of gratitude. After all, had you not agreed so kindly to tell my story, I would not now be living that most envied of results—the happily ever after.

**CB:** It is happy, then? You and your viscountess are enjoying your newly wedded bliss?

VH: Very much so. She is a delight. A prickly delight at times, but still a delight.

**CB:** Happy does not necessitate simple. You are a gentleman who appreciates a challenge... and independent nature. Aren't you?

VH: \*smiling\* You've found me out. Indeed, my dear Lucy is not the typical young lady in society. She knows her own mind. And I hope, as time goes on, that she also very much begins to understand her own worth. I know that I do.

**CB:** Ooh, that is rather swoonworthy. You do that very well.

VH: Thank you for noticing. When Lucy is cross with me, you must remind her.

**CB:** Does she have many reasons to be cross with you?

Continued on page 7

# A PRICKLY DELIGHT



Lady Pandora Osbourne and Lady Octavia Sewell are matchmakers who've bet on who's the best. The degree of difficulty in their wedding wager increases with each successful match. But has Lady Pandora bitten off more than she can chew with one couple?

## AN EXCERPT FROM **DICING WITH THE DUKE** BY ELIZABETH ELLEN CARTER

"Anyone could have predicted Lady D and Lord R would get together," Lady Octavia Sewell sniffed.

Lady Pandora Osbourne hid a smile behind a raised tea cup.

"You didn't," she observed.

Octavia sniffed again.

My, her cousin was quite out of sorts today, noted Pandora. A more circumspect woman would hold her tongue, but Octavia rose to the bait so well.

"Neither did you predict Lord Crispin Tilson and Miss Vanessa Claxton—" she pointed out.

A snap of her fan punctuated Octavia's irritation. "Oh, don't go on, you're being tiresome."

Pandora, better known to her intimates as Pansy, smiled confidently and raised her cup in a salute.

The matchmaking skills of Lady Octavia Sewell and Lady Pandora Osbourne were without parallel. Their patronage was sought by each year's crop of new debutantes. And the rivalry between the two women had been going on for quite some time. In truth, no one in the Beau Monde knew exactly when it began.

However, it was to be noted that, for the past two seasons, Pansy's patronage was preferred.

This had not gone down well with her cousin. So, every now and again, to add a frisson of excitement to an otherwise dull Season, Octavia's bruised ego would be exercised enough to set a wager with her cousin.

Now the two matrons surveyed those who attended the daytime assembly today. Not less than twenty eligible young ladies were in attendance, along with their duennas. An almost equal number of eligible young men had been persuaded to attend with the promise of a card party later that evening.

A tea cup crashed and shattered. Cries of dismay cut through the hubbub. A pretty young girl stood up and squealed. Beside her, a tall, gangly young woman also rose to her feet, before bobbing down and wiping at the other

girl's skirts. All around them, servants fussed to clean up the mess.

"There," said Octavia, nodding her head in the direction of the melee, "I have your challenge. Lady Rosaleigh Ayres, the Earl of Parkhurst's youngest daughter. She's as clumsy as my husband's basset hound, as a graceless as a newborn foal, and with no discernible talents that I can see to commend her."

Pansy looked over at the young woman in question, silently evaluating her without comment.

"If you can find a suitable match for a creature like her," continued Lady Octavia, "I might very readily concede you matchmaker par excellence."

Pansy regarded her cousin with a gleam in her eye. "Will you now?"

Lady Octavia raised her chin. "She comes from a good family, so the match must come from stock of equal status, otherwise her family won't consent to it."

Pansy cast her gaze across the room. She knew all the families here. After all, that's what her reputation was built on. She spotted the new Duke of Witherin.

If his pedigree were not enough to make him the catch of the season, his poise and good looks – hair the color of wheat and striking blue eyes potentially mixed with an athletic physique – were. But he'd deftly avoided the parson's mousetrap for years.

Lady Pansy said nothing, but her cousin had watched keenly and saw the speculative expression on her face.

"To add to the challenge, my dear Pansy, my wager is that you will not be able to make a match between him and that unfortunate creature," she said, nodding over to Lady Rosaleigh.

Pansy set down her tea cup resolutely.

"I accept."

“SHOPPING FOR NEW GOWNS? NEW BOOKS, I'D IMAGINE...”

## SHE'S A PRICKLY DELIGHT

Continued from page 5

VH: I endeavor to give her as few as possible. However, I am male and she is female, and thus, we will always disagree on some things. But life would be very boring if we did not.

**CB: On a slightly more unpleasant note than minor marital disagreements, what has become of your cousin?**

VH: \*glowering menacingly\* I neither know nor care. Wherever he is and whatever he is doing, he should content himself with it as he will never again be welcomed here.

**CB: I see. Not the type to forgive and forget?**

VH: Some things, madame, are beyond all forgiveness.

**CB: And Lady Osbourne? Has her meddling been forgiven? After all, you aren't the only one who had a wager going.**

VH: Yes, well, at least we were not working at cross purposes. It is very difficult to be angry with someone who wants you to have what you want most—even if their motives are self-serving.

**CB: And where is your dear wife? Is the viscountess in the country?**

VH: Oh, no. She is shopping.

**CB: New gowns for a new season?**

VH: \*laughing\* Not at all. New books I would imagine. Perhaps a new quill or ink well that she might begin working, in earnest, on her own novel.

**CB: That is rather egalitarian of you, my lord. As a rule, most gentlemen would frown on their wives undertaking such a pursuit.**

VH: You should know better than anyone... I am not most gentlemen. Now, I really should be going. My wife will no doubt require assistance in carting home all the heavy tomes she will have acquired. And, as always, I endeavor to stay in her good graces.

**And on that note, ladies and gentleman, I, and the Viscount, bid you adieu.**





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## WHAT IS THE WEDDING WAGER?

### The Boast—pride goeth before the fall...

After facilitating the match of the season, Lady Pandora ‘Pansy’ Osbourne has boasted that she is the best matchmaker The Ton has ever seen. Always willing to bring her cousin down a peg or two, her cousin, Lady Octavia Sewell, insists that was no feat of matchmaking at all as the couple involved were clearly destined for one another despite Pansy’s meddling. A bitter argument ensues and a dreadful challenge is issued. Pansy must do more than say it... she must prove it.

### The terms of the wager are set!

Pansy must produce no less than one match per month between people who have been notoriously unmarriageable—spinsters, bluestockings, rakes and fortune hunters, oh my! But there’s more riding on this than simply Pansy’s pride. If she loses, she will have to give up her most prized possession—a tiara that belonged to their grandmother will be forfeited into Octavia’s grasping hands.

### The Ends Justify the Means... or do they?

Desperate to make these matches, prove her claims of matchmaking prowess to be true, and make Octavia eat crow in a very public fashion, Pansy resorts to the greatest weapon in any matchmaker’s arsenal—the house party. Not just one, but a series of them. For two weeks out of every month, she will open her home to an assortment of victims... er, guests. At the end of each party, one couple will emerge either betrothed or wed... by fair means or foul.

Turn the page for more about the stories, the authors and the games in *The Wedding Wager*

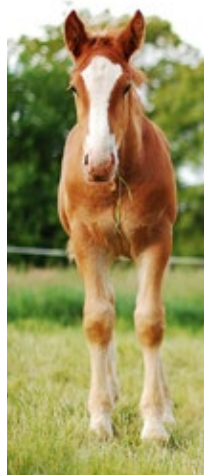


## Odds On An Earl

by Anna St. Claire AUTHOR INFO

Betrayed in love, Nicholas de Lorris, the Earl of Crewe, swore to never marry. He'd rather be sent to his grave than allow a woman near his heart. And no matchmaker, regardless of her reputation, will tempt him to give up his bachelorhood. Or so he thought...

It was her choice. She chose spinsterhood. Why was that difficult for others to understand? Preferring the company of her horse to a gentleman, Lady Alora Owens agrees to attend one more house party to please her father.



The cries of a young colt hurdle Lady Alora in the path of the Earl. When the pair discover a conspiracy to steal the feisty beast, Nicholas and Alora find themselves working together...in accord. Surprised by the sparks that ignite, neither are ready to alter their stance on love until they each faced the truth...they are nothing without the other.

## AN EXCERPT FROM ODDS ON AN EARL

By now, several men and women had walked up to observe the horse and find out what had occurred. He recognized Lady Pandora Osborne's voice among them. Her voice had one volume . . . loud.

"Regrettably, I must agree." Once again, he was lamenting bringing Chalmers with him so soon.

"Lady Alora, Lady Delilah, how surprising to see you here," Lady Osborne said, adjusting her monocle to better see the scene before her.

"Would you allow me to work with him?" Alora asked Nick, ignoring the older woman.

The small crowd behind him heard her question and went silent.

"I would not feel comfortable about that," he answered. "You have no experience training a colt, such as this . . ."

"But sir, you are wrong. My father allows me to assist with the new horses," said Alora.

Enjoy excerpts from the stories in The Wedding Wager anthology, a collection of romances from 15 of your favourite authors.

## AN EXCERPT FROM A GAME OF HAZARD

"I don't need you to improve your appearance or behavior. The man I choose for you won't care for any of those things."

Gazing at Lady Osbourne's determined expression, Alexandra spared a moment's sympathy for whoever the unlucky fellow might be. No doubt he had been—or was about to be—blackmailed in a similar fashion to herself. Maybe they could be fellow conspirators and escape both the leg shackles of marriage and the influence of the implacable Lady Osbourne.

"If I can't beautify myself, how will I attract a beau? Unless you've inveigled some poor fellow in the same way you have me. I wonder that your conscience can allow you to importune people so."

"Perhaps one day you'll find out and understand my motives. But for now, be assured that I won't

force you to marry. Once you've been introduced to your suitor, I'll leave you in peace and play no further part in the courtship. And if, by the time the Bath season starts in earnest in October, neither of you has seen the sense in your marrying, our arrangement will be at an end. You may both continue depressingly, joylessly single."

Lady Osbourne came to stand before Alex's chair, so she rose and unwillingly shook the hand that was extended to her.

"Do we have an agreement?" Her ladyship's hand was as cold and hard as her nature.

"We have an agreement." At least for now. "So, may I take my leave?"

Her ladyship's mouth widened, and her eyes sparkled. "Which way do you intend to go, may I

## A Game of Hazard by Elizabeth Keysian AUTHOR INFO

*There's a price on her head...*

Miss Alexandra Isaacs learned many things at finishing school but how to run a vast smuggling empire wasn't one of them. She's desperate to protect this perilous inheritance because so many lives depend on it. However, there's a traitor in their midst, and Alex must risk exposure to unmask him. There's external danger, too, in the shape of a clever—not to mention compelling—excise officer. It would be utter folly to allow the captain any closer, but that's precisely what a blackmailing matchmaker forces Alex to do.

*...and he means to claim it.*

The reward for capturing the smugglers' ringleader is hugely tempting to Captain Giles Harewood.

His sisters are in dire need of dowries, and the Bath Season is in full swing—the perfect opportunity to find husbands for them. But the implacable Lady Pandora Osbourne has other plans for this confirmed bachelor—plans that could destroy all his hopes.

Who will win and who will lose in this deadly game of Hazard?

Collective inhales of breath sounded behind them.

"He allows you to break the horses?" he stated, more than asked.

"My lord, we never break a horse. That destroys its spirit. I grew up learning to gentle the animals. I would need a few days with your colt, but with your permission, I would like to try," she said, unable to hide her agitation. "Ultimately, it would be an honor to ride him."

"Alora, your father would not approve," whispered Lady Delilah, loud enough for Nick to hear.

"Lady Alora," her aging maid wheezed, having finally located both girls. "I must insist, we return to the house," she whispered to her charge, nodding almost invisibly toward the small crowd of women and aging men behind them.

She whirled on the maid and spoke in a barely hushed tone. "Mrs. Carrington, I know you

worry, but you know I have done this repeatedly with Papa's new stock." Turning back, her eyes brightened, and she looked into Nick's own. "Are you willing to let me try?"

He was intrigued and started to say so.

Lady Osborne stepped forward, an interesting arrangement of ostrich feathers bobbing atop her coiffed hair, and interrupted. "The lady makes an interesting proposal, my lord . . . if you consider yourself a gaming man."

"Lady Osborne, I do not game with my money, but I will hear your proposal," Nick answered, irritated at even acknowledging the meddling biddy.

The woman turned to Lady Alora. "My dear, how long do you think it would take for the horse to allow you to ride it safely?"

Caught off-guard, heat colored Alora's face. Despite her obvious unease, she answered, "Three days."

# STAKE IT ALL ON



ask? Shall I have you escorted to the front door? Or will you scramble back over the wall? I must have some prickly bushes planted beneath it and ensure that this door is locked at all times."

Alex knew how much servants talked, and dared not test her disguise out on the main street. "I'll leave the same way I entered," she said stiffly.

## AN EXCERPT FROM A SCANDALOUS WAGER

by Jane Charles AUTHOR INFO

"You kissed me once. Long ago," Vanessa said as a blush crept along her cheeks.

Crisp's heart warmed. "I remember." It was his last night in London. He was boarding a ship the next day for Greece. The one and only time that he'd had the nerve to kiss Vanessa.

"It was sweet."

"We were young," Crisp reminded her. It had been one of the tamest kisses he'd ever shared with a woman.

"I have never been truly, deeply and passionately kissed."

This statement took him by surprise.

"That is what I will demand of you when I find the heart."

Crisp could only stare at her. Vanessa did not know what she was asking. Yes, he wanted to kiss her, and so much more.

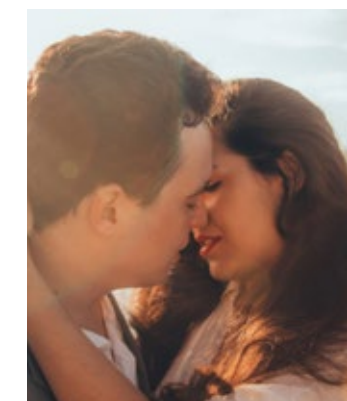
"Unless you do not think you could find the desire to do so." She bit her bottom lip as if she was afraid to hear his response. Did she think he

would reject her?

His blood heated. "I can assure you, finding the desire to kiss you as such will not be a difficulty."

Her cheeks were now as bright as a freshly picked autumn apple.

"A deeply passionate kiss," he



confirmed.

"Yes. The kind that makes a girl's toes curl." She looked up at him. "My toes must curl. Could you manage such?"

Oh, her toes would curl just as her limbs grew weak. It would be a kiss she would never

forget. "I can manage," he promised.

"Good." Vanessa brushed her gloved hands together. "If you find the ruby first, which you will not, what would you like to win?"

As she wanted a bone-melting kiss, he'd ask for something better. "Your company for a day, without anyone else around, in which we will do what I wish."

Vanessa raised an eyebrow. "That sounds rather scandalous, Lord Crispin."

"Only slightly more scandalous than what you wish to win, Miss Claxton," he challenged.

"I suppose so," she chuckled and held out her hand. "To our scandalous wager."

Crisp took her hand. "Scandalous wager indeed." It didn't matter who won as he would not lose either way.



## Dicing with the Duke

by Elizabeth Ellen Carter

Tall and somewhat clumsy, Lady Rosaleigh Ayers has been given the unfortunate nickname of 'Rosa-lethal' by the catty girls of the Ton. How could someone so awkward and gauche make the match of the year with Simon Quinn, the new Duke of Witherin?

Matchmaker Lady Pansy is willing to take the bet that once Rosaleigh has faith in herself, she will find both self-confidence and love.



## AN EXCERPT FROM DICING WITH THE DUKE

AUTHOR INFO

Lady Rosaleigh chose the white pieces. She rolled the dice between her palms contemplatively, as if planning her move despite the fact the cubes had not yet left her hands. He watched those long fingers at work, momentarily mesmerized. Then she cast her throw – a three and a one.

"Ah," she said, clearly delighted. She slid her pieces the requisite number of moves.

It was a strong opening, and Simon was already on his mettle. He leaned forward to pick up the dice and caught the delicate perfume of violets.

Lady Rosaleigh bested him in the first game, then the second – and the third and fourth.

"Forgive me, sir," she said. "I seem to have an extraordinary run of luck."

"Luck has nothing to do with it," he said, resetting the board for a fifth game. "You're very skillful, and you have nothing to apologize for."

She offered him an uncertain smile.

"I'm afraid apologizing has become a habit of mine."

He glanced at their travelling companions. Both his cousin and aunt had nodded off.

"Why is that?" he asked softly.

"You've heard of my reputation. Unfortunate things seem to happen in my presence."

"I've been in your company for well over a day, and I see no evidence of it."

"You're too kind."

"Indeed, I'm not. Never that."

Simon reached out and took the hand in which she held the dice. Rosaleigh was startled, but she didn't pull her hand away. He turned her hand over gently. Her fingers unfurled like a lotus flower, exposing the dice in her palm.

He couldn't deny there was something sensual about the action, although that had not been his intention. The flare of her nostrils, the momentary widening of her eyes as he touched her had him wondering what other expressions he might coax out of her with other touches.

A small spark of desire ignited in him.

He took the dice from her hand, deliberately tracing a finger across the palm as he did so. His eyes fell to her lips as she licked them nervously.

The delicious smell of violets reached him once again.

Rosaleigh lost the next game and then the next. By the third, she had recovered her equilibrium.

Her eyes narrowed. "You're using underhanded methods in your attempt to best me."

He grinned. "In the face of a superior player, one must use all the weapons at one's disposal."

## The Lady Takes All

by Sydney Jane Baily

AUTHOR INFO

A wager on a horse race leads Rupert to end up at a matchmaking party. Not that he needs anyone's help to find a match.

Unrepentant wallflower Delia would rather be anywhere than in the midst of a party or a ball. Mostly, she loves learning about and sketching plants. They are so much easier to deal with than people.

Getting caught up in Rupert's world of wagers and horses, she holds his fate—or at least that of his prize horse—in her hands.

## AN EXCERPT FROM THE LADY TAKES ALL

"We should walk toward the house, and the next time you go dashing into the night, you must have a reliable companion. Crenshaw might have pressed his intention, and if I hadn't come upon you, it would have been a dreadful start to this blasted country party."

"I suppose," Delia said. "Although I might have been sent home, which would have been a blessing."

"In disguise?" he quipped.

"No, an outright blessing. I shall confess because it is easy to do so when I cannot see your eyes, but I do not wish to be here."

He barked out a laugh. "Nor do I."

Shocked, she tightened her fingers on his arm. "But you are a man!"

"I am," he agreed, turning to face her. "What of it?"

"It's unlikely you have a parent pushing you to make a match. You don't have the threat of becoming a spinster hanging over your head. Nor did you have to inconvenience a family member into coming all this

way. What's more, you don't look like an unmarriageable wall-prop."

"The idea!" he said, clearly affronted. "I am perfectly eligible and have never propped a wall at an assembly in my life."

"I admit I dislike large gatherings, or small ones, for that matter," she continued, sorry to have pricked his pride. "I am averse to speaking with strangers—although for some reason I find you easy to converse with."

He squeezed her hand, and she felt another sizzle snake through her.

"I am here taking the place of a friend to whom I lost a bet," Lord Perish said.

"Coming to a matchmaking party is so odious, it was the penalty," Delia mused. "Do you think all the male guests were coerced in some way to attend?"

"No more than I think all the women were," he replied. "I believe most of the women hope to find a husband, and I think some of the men hope to enjoy a dalliance in a dark garden."

# STAKE IT ALL ON LOVE



## AN EXCERPT FROM A WAGER WORTH WINNING

by Nadine Millard

AUTHOR INFO

"Lady Osbourne will have wanted the coup of getting Montvale here. But she has to know that even the hardest or the most desperate of men won't try to get anywhere near the hit. Nobody is worth the ire of Montvale, Avondale, Barnbury, and Dashford."

A wicked flame flickered to light inside Will at Fitz's shudder. Indeed, it would take a madman to go up against four of the most powerful and influential peers of the realm. He knew that. And he'd been called a lot of things in his day, but mad wasn't one of them.

And yet...

The lady presented a challenge. A real one. Something that he might even have to work at. Something that would be quite the feather in his cap. Did he want to marry her? *Of course not!* But would he like to be the one who got, say, a first kiss? *Hell, yes.* All the better if he could talk his friend into betting against him being able to do so.

"Agreed," he said thoughtfully. "Nobody could be worth that. But we could make the effort worthwhile," he added with a sly grin.

Fitz turned his pale, brown eyes on him. "Whatever it is you're thinking, Will. Don't."

"I'm not talking about utter ruin," Will jumped in, feeling mildly affronted that Fitz would think he would stoop so low. "You know I don't dally with virgins. But a kiss? That should be easy enough to secure."

"Easy? I doubt it."

"Then bet that I won't," Will said with a shrug.

Fitz stared at him for an age before shrugging as he shook his head. "You know, one of these days you're going to make a wager that won't be worth winning, Will. For any reason."

Will knew his answering grin was nothing short of wicked. "Every wager is worth winning, my friend," he said with insouciant grace. "So let us set the terms."



Continued on next page



## AN EXCERPT FROM WINNING IN WEDLOCK

AUTHOR INFO

by Tabetha Waite

"That kiss in the gardens was rather intriguing."

"I don't care to remember that," she snapped.

He lifted a hand and ran his thumb lightly over his lower lip. "Wouldn't you?" he taunted.

Her expression quickly shuttered, but he could see the hitch in her breathing and he knew she wasn't as unaffected by the memory as she might like to believe.

"It's vulgar to discuss such things at the dinner table."

"And where might one discuss them?" he asked. He lowered his voice, added a hint of suggestion. "In the bedchamber?"

## AN EXCERPT FROM GAMBLING ON A GENTLEMAN

AUTHOR INFO

by Rachel Ann Smith

Praise the saints—the light pitter-patter of rain had stopped. Autumn was a fickle season. One day it was pleasant and sunny, and then the next could be pouring with rain that chilled you to the bone. On her hands and knees in the middle of Lady Pandora Osborne's prize-winning flowers, Miss Beatrice Turner sighed and paused her search. Hmm. If one really considered it, the weather was much like the attention span of a gentleman—short, temperamental, and unpredictable.

With a head shake, she leaned forward once again and pushed the pretty pink blooms—asters—to the side. Where in the blazes was her coin?

Beatrice froze at the staccato rap of heels striking the stone walkway behind her.

Ugh. She had been caught, yet again, in another unladylike endeavor. Lady Osborne, her host and dearest friend of Beatrice's mama, would most certainly have something to say about her unbecoming behavior. Rummaging about the gardens was not how a lady should comport herself when on the hunt for a husband.

"Miss Turner."

Beatrice rolled to her feet, brushed out her skirts as if ridding her gown of lint and not mud, and squared her shoulders. Physically prepared for the forthcoming lecture on what does and does not constitute lady-like behavior, she inhaled a deep breath and swiveled to face the matron. Lady Osborne's wise and all-knowing gaze fell directly upon her. There was no possibility that the woman could know about her predicament. Yet the twinkle in Lady Osborne's eyes led Beatrice to suspect that her godmother knew exactly what she was up to.

## AN EXCERPT FROM A PRIVATE WAGER

AUTHOR INFO

by Chasity Bowlin



As he neared the folly, Miss Dawes looked up from her book. She did not acknowledge him in any way. Just looked at him and then returned to her book immediately.

"Good afternoon, Miss Dawes," he said.

"Have we been introduced?" she asked, again not looking up.

"Many times," he answered. "At Almack's last year. At the Cavendish ball and we met again at Herrington's house party last year."

At that she did look up. "I see. Well you certainly have an excellent memory, my lord."

"So do you," he answered. "Since you are apparently well aware of my title."

A blush stole over her, climbing up her neck and into her cheeks, coloring them a pretty shade of pink that was a perfect foil against her dark hair and pale skin. "I'm well aware of your identity, Viscount Harcourt. After all, this is a very small party. The guest list has been of much discussion by the young ladies gathered."

He stepped up into the folly and seated himself on the bench opposite her. "But not you. You, Miss Dawes, would never be

so undignified. Your behavior is always above reproach."

Miss Dawes closed her book then, heaving a heavy sigh as she did so. A sigh which caused her rather impressive bosom to rise and fall in a manner that a man would have to be dead not to notice. He was suffering for his unintended excesses of the night before, but he was far, far dead.

"Is there some point to this, my lord? We have apparently met on numerous occasions and I cannot recall that we engaged in conversation beyond introductions and simple hellos on any of them."

"That isn't true," he countered. "We danced at the Herrington's. And you dance quite well."

"I dance passably well," she denied quickly. "My point, my lord, is that there must be a reason for your sudden insistence that we communicate in a more in-depth fashion."

It was a valid question and one that he would have to answer with, at best, a half truth. "It is time for me to take a wife, Miss Dawes—to seriously pursue marriage with a suitable prospect. I have elected to pursue you for that purpose."



## AN EXCERPT FROM WINNING A WALLFLOWER

AUTHOR INFO

by Wendy Vella

"Hello. Is this seat taken?"

Her eyes shot to her right. He was pulling out the chair next to her.

"I am Mr. Nightingale. Lady Osborne insisted I sit here with you, and I have to say, the company down this end of the table is a great deal more agreeable than the other end."

"Isn't that where your family is sitting?" Ivy said, looking left.

"It is. Those eggs look good." He smiled at her, and it added another layer of disturbing. The man was far too handsome.

"Miss Birdwhistle," she said quickly. "I am she." Idiot. She shot him a look to see if there was any recognition on his face. Thankfully, there was none.

"Are you really? What an outstanding name. Do you?" He smiled again, and she saw the creases at the sides of his mouth.

"Do I what?"

"Bird whistle?"

"She does actually, and is quite outstanding at it," Thea said, looking around Ivy. Clearly, she had been eavesdropping.

"My cousin, Lady Dorothea Stanton," Ivy rushed to add, wondering if she'd committed some society no-no by introducing her cousin. The rules were vast and confusing, and in her first season she'd muddled through until she hadn't, but she'd never quite perfected them. "And Miss Wainwright," she added hastily as the lady peered around Thea.

"Ladies." He nodded. "Give me your best bird whistle," he then said to her.

"I'm hardly about to do it here," Ivy said, her eyes shooting left once more to find most of the guests looking her way, which made her uncomfortable. Ivy liked her invisibility status.

"It's been a while since I was in polite society. Forgive me, I should not ask that of you."

She nodded.

"And how did the archery practice go last night?" he continued, this time in a softer voice so only she heard. "I understand there is a competition starting soon, and I have to warn you, it's likely I will win."

There was no point in denying it had been her last night. "I am not competing." Ivy forked eggs into her mouth and watched out the side of her eyes as he signaled that he wished for tea.

"Why not? You must be proficient."

"You don't know that," she said after swallowing.

"I saw you sneaking out of this house last night with your quiver. To me that would suggest you wanted to either kill or maim someone covertly, or practice. My hope is that it's the latter."

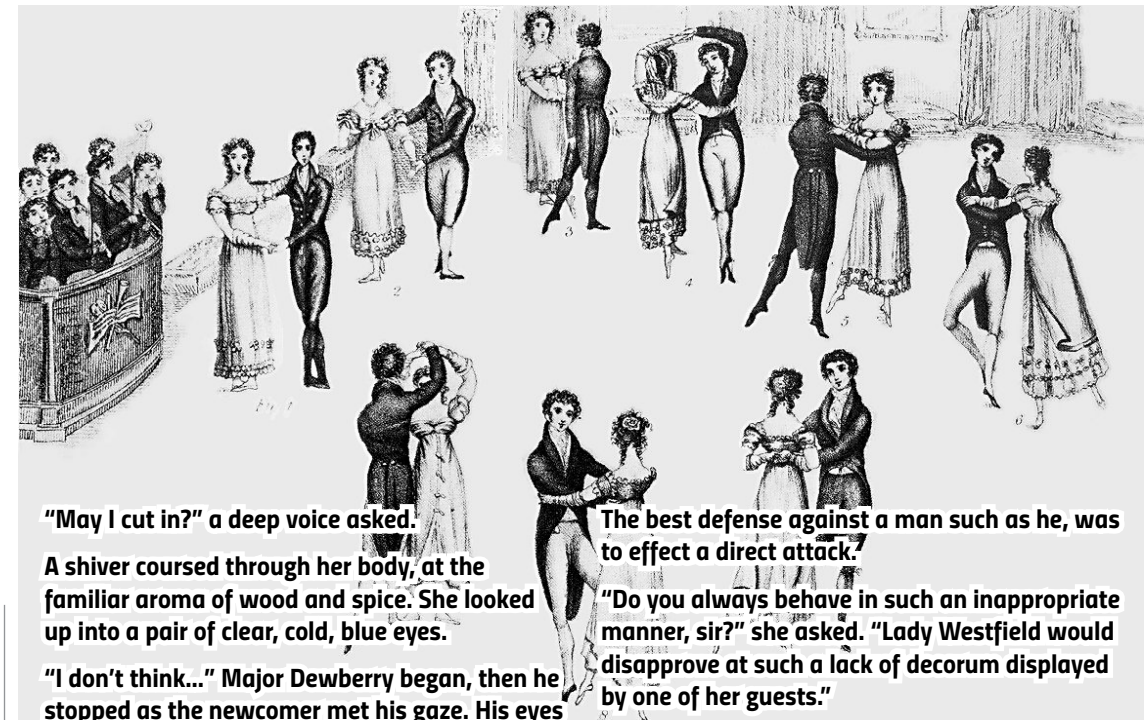
# STAKE IT ALL ON LOVE



## AN EXCERPT FROM A CHRISTMAS WAGER

AUTHOR INFO

by Emily Royal



"May I cut in?" a deep voice asked.

A shiver coursed through her body, at the familiar aroma of wood and spice. She looked up into a pair of clear, cold, blue eyes.

"I don't think..." Major Dewberry began, then he stopped as the newcomer met his gaze. His eyes

widened, a flicker of fear in their expression, then he released Eleanor and stepped back, lowering his gaze in submission.

Before she could react, Eleanor's hands were taken in a strong grip, and she found herself swept into the center of the dancefloor. She drew in a sharp breath, her senses overpowered by his nearness. Though she had dreamed of having him take her in his arms at a ball, the reality—the raw, male potency of him—threatened to overpower her.

No—I must be strong!

She was no longer a giddy debutante. She was an independent woman, capable of protecting her heart.

She closed her eyes, while she fought to maintain her composure. When she opened them again, he was staring directly at her, his eyes the color of dark sapphires. Her body shook with a jolt of recognition, but she maintained her gaze, determined not to let him intimidate her.

The best defense against a man such as he, was to effect a direct attack.

"Do you always behave in such an inappropriate manner, sir?" she asked. "Lady Westfield would disapprove at such a lack of decorum displayed by one of her guests."

A flare of amusement shone in his eyes, then it was gone, replaced by cold arrogance.

"If Lady Westfield was a rigid observer of decorum," he said, "she shouldn't include a waltz at her ball—a dance that is altogether far too—intimate."

A secret thrill coursed through her body as he curled his tongue around the final word.

"Nevertheless," she said, "you had no reason to insult Major Dewberry."

"I had every reason."

She waited for him to elaborate, but he steered her across the floor in silence, his powerful body moving in time to the music.

"How so?" she asked, at length.

"Major Dewberry is a puppy—a mere boy."

Then, he pulled her close, until their bodies touched, and his voice reverberated against her chest. "For a dance as shocking as a waltz, you should be partnered by a man."



# STAKE IT ALL ON LOVE



## AN EXCERPT FROM THE HUSBAND GAMBLE

by Jude Knight

AUTHOR INFO

Pritchard returned to his folding. "I might add, my lord, that Lady Osbourne moved Miss Fernhill and Lady Barker to the rooms previously occupied by the Turnbull ladies. Their own room was uninhabitable. They are in the first two rooms on the left in the ladies' wing, my lord. First, Lady Barker, and then Miss Fernhill. Should you wish to slide a note under the door, my lord."

Enter the ladies' wing, and slide a note under a door? It was the sort of thing Hythe's new brother-in-law might once have done, or the Duke of Haverford back when he was a wild young man. Hythe had never indulged in such indiscretions. He found it impossible to forget that every lady was somebody's daughter and usually somebody's sister.

On the other hand, his intentions were honorable, and he could not bear to let Miss Fernhill go without at least having her agree to visit him.

Pritchard had finished packing away Hythe's clothes, leaving out what he would wear to travel tomorrow. He picked up the bucket with the waste wash water and paused. "You may



wish to know, my lord, that Miss Fernhill sent down for a posset after she and Lady Barker went up to bed. Apparently, Lady Barker has a sick headache."

He turned towards the door, and then back again to face Hythe. "Miss Fernhill is highly regarded in the Servants Hall, my lord. She always behaves in a ladylike manner even when no one is

there but the servants, she is always courteous, and—I might add, my lord—very tidy in her room and her person." He bowed. "I will wish you a good night, sir."

That was a very strong recommendation from Hythe's exacting valet, particularly since Pritchard made it a point of pride to never state an opinion on anything Hythe chose to do or anyone with whom he spent time.

The valet had a thousand silent ways to communicate disapproval. It seemed, however, that Miss Fernhill had Pritchard's unqualified support.

"Good night, Pritchard. And thank you."

Left to himself, Hythe stared at the banked fire and thought about creeping through the house after everyone else was asleep to deliver a note. It was a ridiculous idea. He was the Earl of Hythe. He didn't do that sort of thing. He could not stop thinking about it.

## AN EXCERPT FROM A RECKLESS WAGER

by Christine Donovan

AUTHOR INFO

"A wager?" Georgiana queried.

"Yes. Don't play coy and tell me women don't wager, because I have it on good authority that they do."

"So I hear. I've never participated myself, but there's always a first time. Will it involve money, and will we keep this wager clandestine? To make it even more exciting?" Good Lord, she was flirting with the viscount and loving every second of it. Her feet barely touched the ground and her head tingled, making the room sway slightly.

Pausing, Blackstone leaned close and whispered for her ears only, "I think we should keep it to ourselves. I wouldn't want your father to find out and get upset. Besides, I think most everyone would frown upon a supposed gentleman making a monetary wager with a young, unmarried lady."

They began to stroll, and her steps faltered. When their conversation started, she'd planned on a money wager. As their conversation progressed, she wanted something else. Another new something she'd never done.

Did she dare shock him and speak her mind? Had the healing waters turned her into a courageous woman? Perhaps that person hid beneath the surface and waited until the most

inopportune time to emerge. Or, more importantly, waited until the proper gentleman came along.

"Instead of money, I was thinking something along the lines of a...kiss."

The clearing of Blackstone's throat had her muscles tensing up. Two seconds, ten seconds...still waiting. When twenty seconds must have ticked by she went to remove her hand, when his hand covered hers.

"Easy. I wasn't expecting that. Let me get this correct. You want to bet me a kiss. And what precious is the wager?"

Instant relaxing of her muscles. So he wasn't against betting. "Hmm, I was thinking whoever kills the most grouse."

Booming laughter escaped his mouth, which he quickly covered with his free hand. His eyes locked on hers. "Oh, you are serious? Well then, Lady Georgiana, I bet you a kiss that I can shoot more grouse than you."

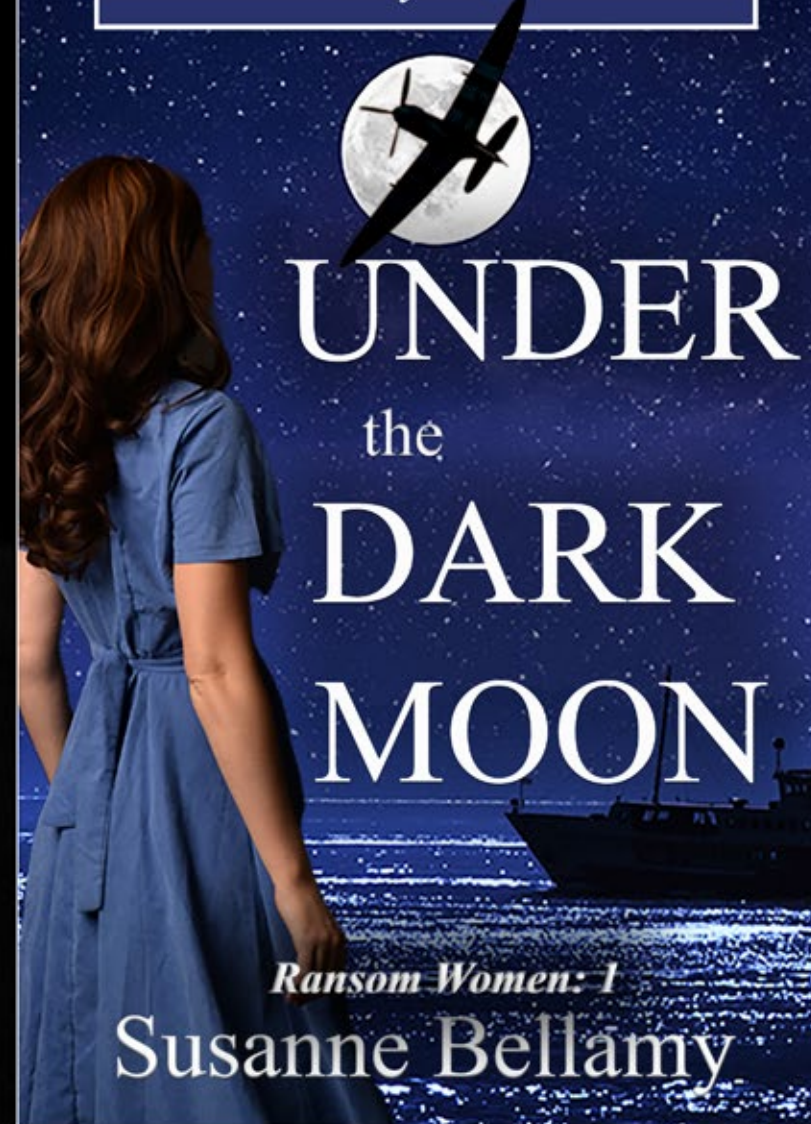
"So let me understand," she began. "If you win the bet, I kiss you. What if I win? What do you forfeit?"

His sly smile had her insides humming as he breathed, "I kiss you like the French kiss."

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# TURNING THE TABLES ON SEDUCTION

by  
ELIZABETH ELLEN CARTER

When thinking about games that evoke amorous thoughts, backgammon wouldn't necessarily be your first choice - or your second.

But it appears if you read between the lines of some Irish and Provençale poetry of the Medieval period, you'll find all sorts of double-entendres...

According to Professor James A Doan, formerly of Harvard University and now at Nova Southeastern University in Florida, there's a history of double-entendres associated with the game of backgammon.

First we have to understand a little of the history of backgammon. The name of the game only came into common usage in the 17th century, prior to which it was known as 'tables'. There was a variation known as tick-tack.

Tables dates back thousands of years to the Persian empire, but oddly enough the game's governing body, the World Backgammon Federation, only came into being as recently as 2018.

Okay, so what about the 'naughty bits'? Well, the black and white draughts or checkers-like pieces one uses to play the game are also known as 'men'. The 'table', depending on the context, can also be a euphemism for a lady's skirts.

And as for the pair of dice used to play? Imagine them rolling around in a lady's hands. It might cause a gentleman to imagine those hands on an anatomical pair of... well, you get the point.

Backgammon is a game of strategy and endurance, something that would be very appealing to a fellow trying to seduce a lady who knows the subtext full well.

Consider this 12th century poem from Guillem IX, Duke of Aquitaine and Eleanor of Aquitaine's grandfather:

*Mas elha-m dis un reprovier:  
'Don, vostres datz son menudier  
Et ieu revit vos a doblier.'  
Fis m'ieu: 'Qui-m dava Monpeslier  
Non er laissatz.'  
E leviey un pauc son taulier  
Ab ams mos bratz.*

It roughly translates as:

*But then she reproached me: "Sir, your 'dice' are too small and I challenge you to redouble."*

*I said: "I wouldn't give that up if I were given Montpellier." And I lifted up a little her 'table' with both my arms.*

A few hundred years' later, Irish poets had picked up the mantle.

According to Doan, a poem in the early 16th Century Book of the Dean of Lismore is full of such double-entendres.

Here is a translation of a couple of the stanzas:

*She settled my 'man' down and shock out my two 'dice';  
the third man she held until the points were filled.*

*One of her 'boards' came to be completely filled and my  
'man' quenched; but the points of the tãispleasc (table)  
were empty, and myself 'on high'.*

Having discovered the Eroticism of Backgammon, I decided to include it in my contribution to *The Wedding Wager*, calling *Dicing with the Duke*. Again, this is also a little play on words given that 'to dice with' infers taking part in an activity which is risky.

In *Dicing with the Duke*, the heroine, Lady Rosaleigh Ayres, is considered a clumsy, gauche young woman, but in truth all she lacks is confidence. The only thing she can do well in public without stumbling over her own feet is play backgammon.

When her head is in the game, the rest of the world doesn't exist and neither does her nervousness.

Rosaleigh finds a willing backgammon player in Simon Quinn, the Duke of Witherin who finds her beguiling.

In honour of the research done by Professor Doan, I referenced in my story another poem he mentions, a work attributed to 17th Century Irish poet Tadgh O Ruairc...

“ A few hours later, Simon concluded choosing the book of poetry was a rotten idea. It turned out to be erotic poetry. Euphemistically described, but erotic nonetheless.

*The lime-like bosom, the round breasts which a man never yet fondled; the slender smooth body. I don't deny a share of my love to them.*

The volume was still in his hand when the candle guttered and finally went out. He lay back and sleep claimed him.

The lover in his dreams had raven black hair and beautiful grey eyes. She responded to him with equal passion, so he made love to her in the dappled sunlight beneath a tree by the stream.

I hope you enjoyed discovering a little more about the hidden history of backgammon and enjoy all the stories in *The Wedding Wager*. To find out more about the games chosen by the other authors, turn the page now!



# ON WHAT WILL YOU WAGER?

## A very brief history of Chess

THE history of chess goes back over one thousand years! The game originated in 6th century India and spread to Persia, the Muslim world, eventually finding its way through Spain and Southern Europe.

Changes to the game in 15th century Europe began to create the game of chess that we know of today. And it wasn't until the late 19th century that tournament play began, with the first ever world chess championship being held in 1886.

- Nadine Millard (*A Wager Worth Winning*)



## Passion and excitement...

IN my novella, Hythe and Rilla get to know one another while playing chess. What could be less romantic? Chess, after all, is a game of war, a game of logic. Yet, both chess and love are filled with passion and excitement. Both chess and love require the players to focus on one another, tensely wondering what the next move might be, and watching for clues.

In long centuries when society frowned on such a close focus between a man and woman, dancing and chess has allowed interested couples to meet. Chess allowed them to spend hours in one another's company, talking and getting to know one another better.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, chess was used both to facilitate courtship and as an allegory of courtship, as can be seen in paintings, carvings, and tapestries of the time. Likewise with literature of the time, where the language of chess and the language of seduction merge.

The queen was not in the original Persian and Indian game. She replaced

the vizier, whose moves were limited. Our modern day queen, with her expansive sweeps, may have arisen in medieval Spain at the time of the powerful Queen Isabella. Certainly, the new movements were first described in a Catalan poem called "Love Chess", although the vizier lingered on in some places until the early 18th century.

The connection between love and chess continued. In 1801, in her book *Belinda*, the novelist Maria

Edgeworth wrote:

*O, you novice at Cupid's chess-board! Do you not see the next move? Check with your new knight, and the game is your own.*

Chess even made it into Victorian valentines:

*'My little love do you remember,  
Ere we grew so sadly wise,  
When you and I played chess together,  
Checkmated by each others eyes?'*

- Jude Knight (*The Husband Gamble*)

## A roll of the dice

I loved the idea of having *A Game of Hazard* as the title for my story in the *Wedding Wager*, but then ended up getting lost down a rabbit-hole trying to learn more about this ancient dice game.

It has been suggested that "Hazard" or "Asart" was invented by Crusaders besieging a fortress in the 12th century. The game is referred to by Chaucer in the 15th century, and became popular in Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries. It's likely that Hazard was the originator of the American game of Craps.

Despite passing reference being made to Hazard in numerous places, nowhere was it clear exactly how to play the game, and not being a gambler myself, I wasn't too sure of how the betting system worked.

My partner Tim, who misspent his youth better than I did, was on hand to assist. We took the two most comprehensive sets of instructions we could find and merged them, then attempted to play. Trust me—there is very little logic to this game. Someone made it up and persuaded all their chums that it was a Good Idea. If you are new to the game, which relies on the fall of two dice after having anticipated what they'll add up to, you definitely need to have a list of what the different combinations of numbers mean.

Hazard, which can be played by any number of players, comes with its own terminology. The person whose turn it is to roll the dice is called a "caster" or "shooter", there is a "setter" who acts as the house or banker, and the score the current player is aiming for is called a "main".

How did our game go? Well, I found it too illogical to enjoy. Can I remember who won? No. We were playing for matchsticks and then someone tidied the table and put the matches back in the box before we were finished. We couldn't be bothered to start again from scratch. Personally, I considered that a lucky escape.

- Elizabeth Keysian - *A Game of Hazard*



## Fun for all ages

Battledore, or the French, jeu de volant, is an early version of badminton, and some might argue it was the precursor to racquetball, pickleball, and tennis. The early version of the game has been around for centuries.

Two or more people used small rackets and batted a shuttlecock back and forth with the intention of keeping it from hitting the ground for as long as possible. There was no net and no court boundaries. It was meant to be a fun game without the necessity of competition and could be played by all ages.

Popular in various countries from around the world, the materials used to make the rackets could vary from parchment or rows of gut stretched across a wooden frame. The shuttlecock would generally be something light, like a cork with feathers to trim the top.

- Tabetha Waite (*Winning in Wedlock*)

## You've got to pick a pocket or two...

Eleanor, the heroine in *A Christmas Wager*, is a skilled pickpocket ("cut-purse"). While living on the streets, she picked pockets out of necessity and became very proficient. Now living with her wealthy guardian, she has no need to pick pockets, but she can't avoid the temptation to practise her skill.

Pickpockets often worked in pairs. Eleanor's friend acted as her lookout, and distracted the "mark" (the victim), while Eleanor used sleight of hand to take whatever was in their pocket. Eleanor justified her thievery using two arguments—one, she needs to eat, and the other, she's wreaking revenge, however small, on the well-to-do society that abandoned and ridiculed her.

In *A Christmas Wager*, Eleanor challenges herself to pick the pocket of every man in the room. She's on her own, so she distracts them herself while dancing with them, by pretending to stumble against them. In one scene she's caught, and her mark threatens to summon the authorities.

Though pickpocketing was a hanging offence, only a tiny percentage of those caught were hanged.

The stolen item had to be worth

more than a shilling for hanging to be considered, and where there were two or more pickpockets involved, the

accomplice couldn't be prosecuted. This meant that if the authorities couldn't prove which one was the thief, they both escaped prosecution. Understandably, pickpockets targeted marks who were drunk—and it was a common crime among prostitutes who stole from their customers. A drunken mark was deemed partially responsible for the crime, so the thief was often acquitted. Victims of prostitutes were reluctant to report a crime that would expose their own immoral behaviour; those who went to court were often laughed at.

Sleight of hand is, of course, a skill employed by magicians. When I was younger, a friend of the family who was a member of the *Magic Circle*, taught me various skills such as how to palm a coin—something Eleanor does in *A Christmas Wager*. Had Eleanor been in a more enlightened age, she might have earned a respectable living as a magician—but then, she may not have been reunited with the man she loved!

- Emily Royal (*A Christmas Wager*)



more than a shilling for hanging to be considered, and where there were two or more pickpockets involved, the

## Liberté, égalité, fraternité!

The wager I chose for my hero and heroine in *Winning A Wallflower* revolved around archery. Unlike other activities in the Regency period, archery was considered an acceptable pastime for women, and especially for proper young ladies.

During this period, social restrictions and condemnation of what was seen as unfeminine behaviour meant most sports were barred to women. However, through archery, a woman could demonstrate both grace and form in a way that was not considered vulgar.

Women archers shot at a distance of approximately fifty yards. Men often shot up to one hundred yards. Two targets were placed opposite each other, and the archers shot from one end to the other. When the entire group was finished, they would walk to the first

target, collect their arrows, then shoot back to where they started.

Like most sports, archery requires ease of movement, so sporting clothes were designed to reflect this need. Women also wore uniforms.

In 1787, the Royal British Bowmen were the first archery society to allow women full membership. The Royal Bowmen were a lot more focused on the sport than other archery clubs, who often chose drinking and revelry over the actual act of competing.

- Wendy Vella (*Winning A Wallflower*)

Continued on next page



# ON WHAT WILL YOU WAGER?



## Scandalous scavengers

### Gambling on the throw of a card

The success of a house party was often dictated by the type of entertainment a host was able to provide. In *Gambling on a Gentleman*, house guests are asked to participate in a talent show.

Our hero, Richard Arbor, the Earl of Bixley, attempts a card trick, one that was popularized by stage magicians during the 1800s.

However, the exact origins of card throwing – also known as ‘scaling’ – are not known.

To perform the ‘flying card’ trick, stage magicians had printed special cards that were heavier than normal playing cards.

They bore the name and image of the magician, and a number of them might be tossed into the audience as souvenirs at the end of the show.

Our dear Lord Bixley has a difficult time mastering the feat while also navigating his feelings for the lovely Miss Beatrice Turn. But do not fear – the gentleman does succeed in the end.

- Rachel Ann Smith (*Gambling on a Gentleman*)



In *A Scandalous Wager*, Lord Crispin Tilson and Miss Vanessa Claxton are tasked with finding a heart-shaped ruby, which they must search for under the guise of participating in a scavenger hunt during a house party being hosted by Lady Osbourne.

No one truly knows the origin of scavenger hunts, which likely have ancient roots and evolved from folk games. However, the credit for popularizing the game came about in the 1930s when author and columnist Elsa Maxwell, who had an affinity for throwing entertaining parties, started to include organized scavenger hunts.

One of the riddles Crispin and Vanessa have to solve is: ‘To find the sweet golden joy, one must look beyond the prickly surface.’ Did you figure it out? The answer is a pineapple.

- Jane Charles (*A Scandalous Wager*)

### Not a sport for ladies (and no wonder!)

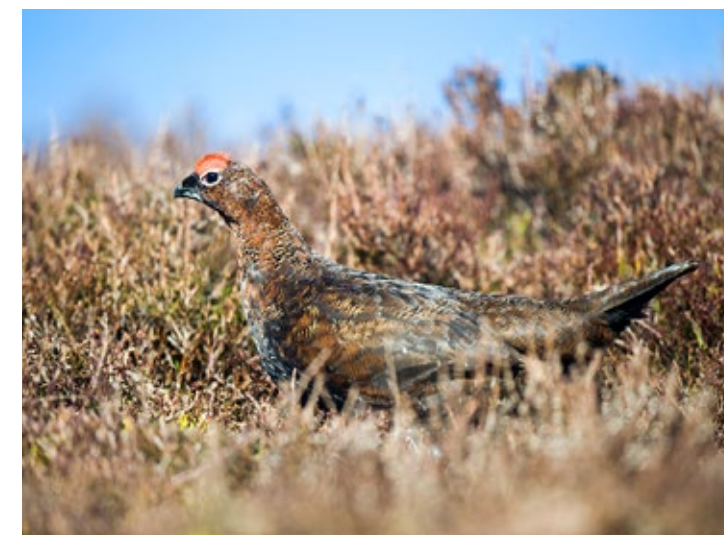
The grouse is a bird unique to the British Isles, and is known as the ‘king of gamebirds’.

While most grouse hunting parties would have taken place in the country, in my story, *A Reckless Wager*, I chose to have the party in Bath as it wasn’t unheard of for wealthy people to take grouse to other localities for sport.

In 1817, the grouse hunting season began on August 12 and concluded on December 10. In Regency England, aristocratic ladies did not partake in grouse hunting.

Gentlemen were, however, accompanied by their mistresses or courtesans...

- Christine Donovan (*A Reckless Wager*)



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# NINE MOVIES & SONGS ABOUT GAMBLING

by LGA Associate Editor  
DUNCAN CARLING-RODGERS

## Casino (1995)

Director Martin Scorsese's hit movie *Casino* is an outstanding depiction of the transition of mob-run Las Vegas into the corporate-owned landscape it is today. It's also a frequently stomach-churning, brutally violent film that wallows in viciousness to a disturbing degree. The performances of Robert De Niro, Sharon Stone (pictured), and Joe Pesci are excellent, and the staging of the film is superb in terms of capturing the look and feel of the period in which it's set (1972 through to 1986). But it's hard to get past the utterly vile nastiness of nearly all the characters and the detailed depictions of torture, cruelty, and bloody violence.

[View the Trailer: Click or Tap Here](#)



IMAGE: ROLAND GODEFROY/CCA 2.5

## Bugsy (1991)

Actor Warren Beatty was obsessed with the character of Benjamin 'Bugsy' Siegel, the real-life gangster whose vision of a desert city where gambling was allowed led to the founding of Las Vegas. So he produced the film *Bugsy* and played him in this glamorized but still gritty \$30m movie.

Siegel wasn't just a gangster who ended up being killed for stealing from the mob to finance his dream - he also dreamed of being a successful Hollywood actor himself. The movie shows how he met actress Virginia Hill on the set of gangland-adjacent actor George Raft's film, *Manpower*. With his wife and children safely ensconced in New York, Siegel immediately began an affair with Hill, played here by actress Annette Bening who Beatty married the following year.



IMAGE: © DUNCAN CARLING-RODGERS

Siegel's demise has been characterized as 'a quiet evening followed by a quick death' - he was shot through the window of Virginia Hill's Beverly Hills home. Appropriately, his remains are interred at the Hollywood Forever cemetery in Hollywood (pictured). The lipstick kisses and occasional leaving of coins are said to be an offering for luck in Vegas.

[View the Trailer: Tap or click here.](#)

## From A Jack To A King

The country music song *From A Jack To A King* was written and first recorded by artist Ned Miller. His 1957 release bombed, but he persuaded his record label to re-release it in 1962. The producer, Fabor Robison, added reverb to his original production to give the sound more depth, and the song became a worldwide crossover hit. It was the sixth-most-played single of 1963 in the UK.

*From A Jack To A King* was also recorded in 1962 by Jim Reeves for his tour to South Africa where

his recording charted. Among the many other artists recording the song over the years was Elvis Presley, who delivers a drawling and somewhat over-slick performance, and, in 1988, Ricky Van Shelton made it his fifth consecutive number one on the Billboard Hot Country Singles charts.

It's not so much a song about gambling as a song which uses card terms to express how the singer won his true love's heart. The linked version below is the 1962 Ned Miller re-release. Enjoy!

[Listen on YouTube: Tap or click here.](#)



NED MILLER



STAND-INS DOUBLE FOR NEWMAN AND REDFORD AS THE STING FILMS ON LOCATION IN PASADENA, CA. IMAGE: A.T. SERVICE - CCA-SHARE ALIKE 3.0

## The Gambler

Written by Don Schlitz, the song *The Gambler* was recorded by several artists with the most successful being Kenny Rogers. Schlitz wrote the song in 1976 when he was just 23 years old and shopped it around Nashville for two years before it became an album track for Bobby Bare but not never released as a single. Schlitz recorded it himself, but failed to chart higher than #65.

Johnny Cash recorded it in 1978, but, again, as an album track. Then Kenny

Rogers hit number one in the country charts and crossed over into the pop charts with it - quite an achievement at the time. The song about a veteran gambler giving advice to a younger man won Rogers the Grammy Award for Best Male Country Vocal Performance in 1980.

Rogers went on to make five hit telemovies based on the character of the veteran gambler and a sixth was planned before the singer-actor's 2020 passing.

[Tap or Click to watch on YouTube](#)



## The Sting (1973)

Regarded as having one of the best screenplays ever written, *The Sting* was a huge hit in 1973 and '74 (it was released on Christmas Day). It was nominated for ten Oscars and won seven, and revived Paul Newman's career after a series of flops.

Set in 1936, it focuses on a complex plot by two professional grifters (Newman and Robert Redford) to con a mob boss. The screenplay was inspired by a pair of real-life conmen brothers.

The film's anachronistic ragtime soundtrack spawned a top-ten chart single, Scott Joplin's *The Entertainer*, while the movie was added to the US National Film Registry of the Library of Congress for being culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant.

## Ocean's Eleven (1960 & 2001)

One of those rare occasions when a remake matched the original, the 2001 *Ocean's Eleven* adds a modern edge to the heist comedy first made in 1960. Back then, it was a vehicle for some of the members of 'The Rat Pack' - Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., Peter Lawford, and Joey Bishop, along with Rat Pack 'mascot' Angie Dickinson.

In 2001, *Ocean's Eleven* gained an equally stellar cast with George Clooney, Brad Pitt, Matt Damon, Don Cheadle, Andy Garcia, Bernie Mac, and Julia Roberts. The story details a heist of \$160 million from a casino owner who is the lover of Danny Ocean's ex-wife Tess.

There were two sequels - *Ocean's Twelve* (2004) and *Ocean's Thirteen* (2007). *Ocean's Eight* was a 2018 spin-off with an all-female lead cast including Sandra Bullock and Anne Hathaway.



ABOVE: OCEAN'S 11 1960 MOVIE POSTER

[Continued on next page](#)



# NINE MOVIES & SONGS ABOUT GAMBLING

## Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels (1998)

*Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* features the first movie role for Jason Statham. It's a black comedy British crime film written and directed by Guy Ritchie about an over-confident young card sharp who loses £500,000 to a crime lord in a rigged card game. To settle his debt, he talks his friends into robbing a small-time gang who operate out of the flat next door.

The film was a commercial success and spawned a brief-lived TV series.

Statham was a model for the fashion brand French Connection when he was introduced to fledgling director Guy Ritchie. He cast him to play a street-wise con artist, for which he was paid £5,000.

[Watch the trailer on YouTube – click or tap here.](#)



IMAGE: FACEBOOK/ALINGIRL / NAURA ORTEGA OCA 2/06/15

## The Cincinnati Kid (1965)

The Cincinnati Kid got mixed reviews in 1965, but when it was released on DVD 40 years later, modern critics praised star Steve McQueen's performance as an up-and-coming poker star as 'a masterclass', co-star Edward G. Robinson as 'simply fantastic', and the film itself as 'one of the greatest poker movies of all time'.

There's a romance in the story which has a hopeful resolution in the final moments of the drama, but this scene is cut in some versions for a '60s-style downbeat freeze frame of another scene just seconds earlier.

Shot on location in New Orleans, Louisiana, not the original St. Louis, Missouri, setting of the novel, the movie saw early difficulties. The producer fired director Sam Peckinpah shortly after filming began for 'vulgarizing the picture', presumably a reference to Peckinpah's predilection for graphically depicting brutal violence.

Replacement Norman Jewison scrapped black-and-white footage already shot by Peckinpah to evoke the 1930s setting, feeling it a mistake to make a film about poker with the red and black of the playing cards in greyscale, but muted the overall color.

Spencer Tracy was cast, but withdrew due to ill health, and Strother Martin was cast in the film, but got fired by Jewison.

[Watch the trailer on YouTube – click or tap here.](#)

## Queen of Hearts

Penned by Hank DeVito, a member of Emmylou Harris's backing group, Queen of Hearts was first recorded by Welsh rocker Dave Edmunds for his 1979 album Repeat When Necessary. As a single, it reached #11 in the UK, but the record label declined - against Edmunds's wishes - to release it in the US.



© SWAN SONG - FAIR USE, COMMENTARY.

American pop and country artist Juice Newton started playing the song live in 1980 and the following year put it to the producer of her 'Juice' album. He wasn't sure about it, but Juice thought it was cool and had hit potential. She was right - her note-for-note copy of Edmunds's arrangement was a smash around the world, earning her a Grammy nomination. In 2014, her version of the song was ranked #92 by Rolling Stone on its list of the 100 greatest country songs of all time.

Like the song From a Jack to a King, Queen of Hearts isn't about gambling per se, but uses the card as a metaphor for gambling on love, while the video clip is a humorous outing laden with gambling references.

Check out the Newton clip in the link below and the Dave Edmunds version as well. Which is your favorite?



© CAPITOL RECORDS - FAIR USE, COMMENTARY.

Incidentally, there was a German-language version in 1982 from Nickerbocker retitled Puppe (Du bist a moderne Hex) (*Puppe – You're a Modern Witch*). It doesn't really work...

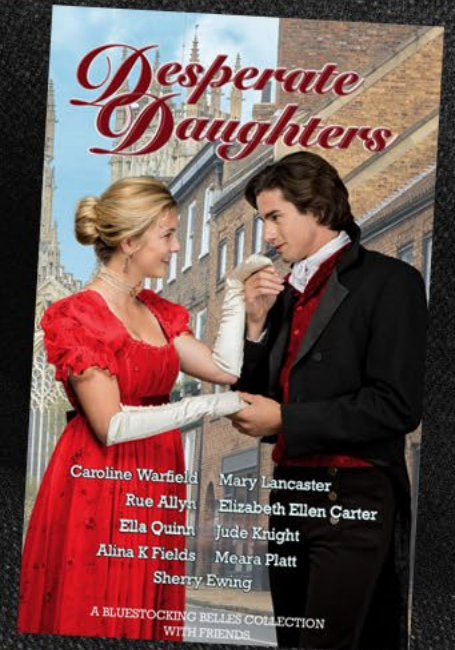
[Juice Newton video clip on YouTube – Tap or click here](#)

[Dave Edmunds version on YouTube – Tap or click here.](#)

# NEW IN 2022 FROM USA TODAY BESTSELLER ELIZABETH ELLEN CARTER



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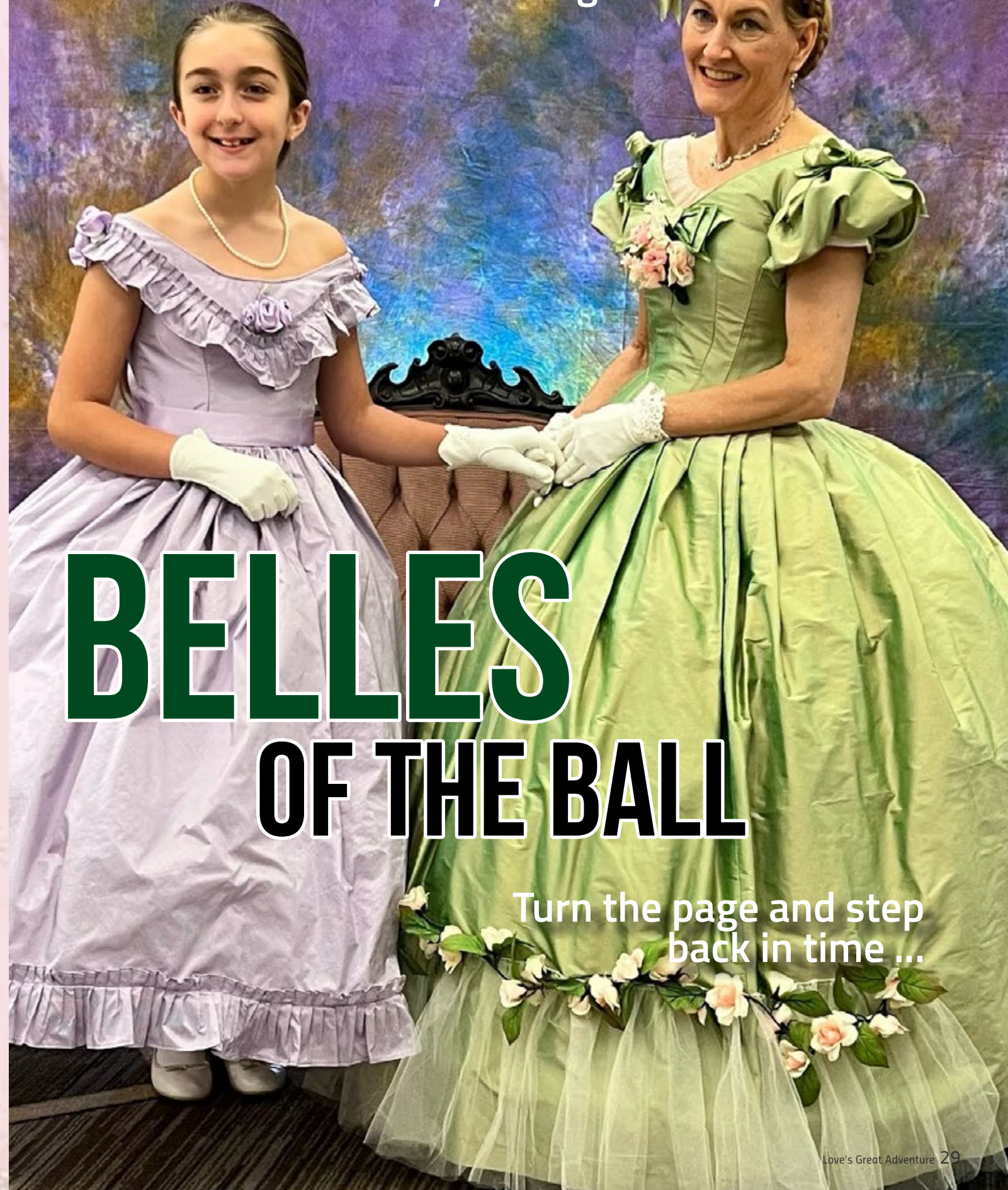
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A traditional southern-themed ball to mark the end of summer is all the excuse our fashion belle Victoria Vane needs for a fabulous fantasy evening.

LOVE FASHION



# BELLES OF THE BALL

Turn the page and step back in time ...



# BELLES OF THE BALL

The end of summer in Upstate South Carolina marks the date of The Olde South Timeline Soiree, a traditional southern-themed ball.

by Fashion Correspondent  
VICTORIA VANE

Although the period of dress is open to anything from 1700-1899, which leaves many options for those who love historical clothing, many attendees opt for 1860s fashions for the simple joy of twirling about the dancefloor in a giant hoopskirt. It's a truly magical experience. Try it just once if you don't believe me!

Last year, wanting to stand out from the crowd of hoopskirts, I opted for a close-fitting 1890s gown in floral brocade, but this year my eleven-year-old niece wanted to join the fairy princess crowd, so I elected to do the same!

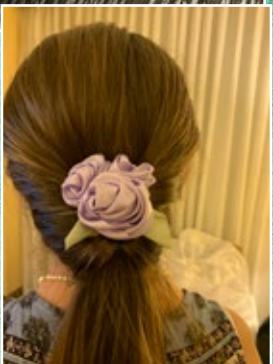
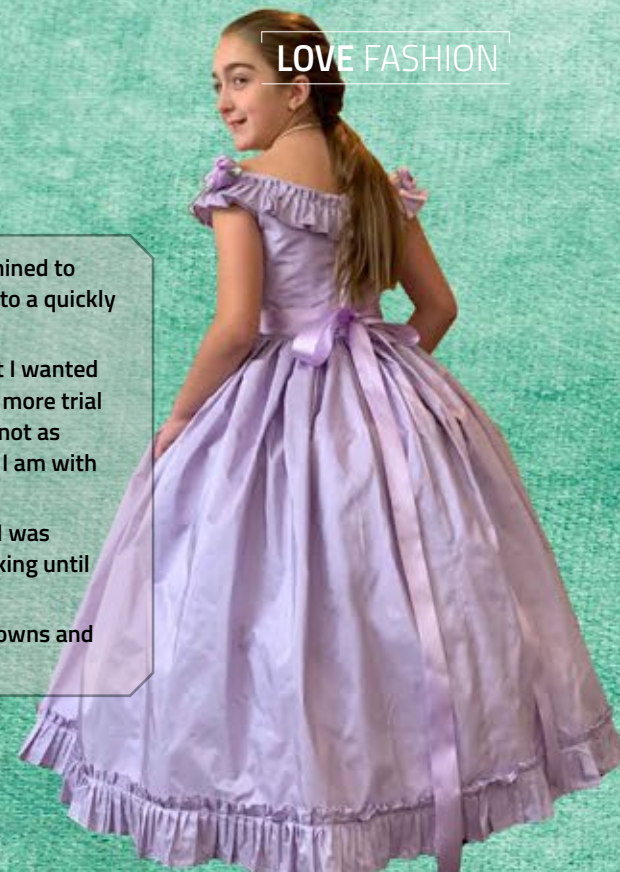
I chose a lovely micro-checked lavender silk for her gown and decided to use a gorgeous piece of pale

green shot silk for myself. I was also determined to embellish both with flowers as my homage to a quickly closing summer.

Although I had a pretty clear picture of what I wanted for my niece's dress, my ballgown was a bit more trial and error than I would have wished as I am not as familiar with mid-19th-century fashions as I am with other eras.

I had to go through several versions before I was completely happy with it and ended up working until two in the morning on the day of the ball!

In the end, we were both thrilled with our gowns and had a truly enchanted evening!



ALL PHOTOS © VICTORIA VANE  
WWW.SEWVANECOUTURE.COM



# THE SUPER SANDWICH

## The Bacon Butty

A bacon butty is one of the names for a bacon sandwich, AKA a bacon sarnie. A sandwich of hot cooked bacon between bread slices. Often served in British cafes and delis, and in parts of Ireland where it may be called a rasher sandwich.

Some 'caffs' fancy it up by toasting the bread on only one side, but those who serve it on the same type of roll used for hamburgers aren't really making a bacon sandwich (see main story).



IMAGE: BEX WALTON CC BY 2.0

## The Croque Monsieur



IMAGE: MICHAEL BREWER CC BY SA 2.5

A croque monsieur is a hot sandwich that originated as a quick snack in French cafés and bars.

Made with ham and sliced cheese between slices of bread, it's topped with grated cheese, lightly salted and peppered, and baked in an oven or fried in a frying pan. The bread may also be browned by grilling after being dipped in beaten egg.

The name translates to English as 'bite mister'. One imagines it was a waiter's question: "Croque, monsieur?"

## The Bologna Sandwich

The bologna sandwich, aka a baloney sandwich, is sliced bologna sausage between slices of white bread. Add mustard, mayonnaise, or ketchup.

It's common in North America where you can find it served at small lunch counters, and fried bologna sandwiches are on many restaurant menus in the South. Other garnishes for fried bologna includes cheese, pickles, tomatoes, and onions.

In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, it's called a jumbo sandwich, while in Knoxville, Tennessee, locals sometimes call it a 'Lonsdale ham sandwich', a commentary on the poorer neighbourhood of Lonsdale.

Indeed, many sandwiches aren't lavish and can rightly be called 'poverty food' – which brings us to the sandwich at its most basic...



IMAGE: DIDEROTS DREAMS CC BY 3.0

## The Jam Butty and The Tomato Sauce Sandwich

The jam butty is simply strawberry or blackcurrant jam spread between two slices of buttered white bread.

It was recently elevated to royal status when it was revealed Queen Elizabeth II ate not a Paddington Bear marmalade sandwich, but a jam sandwich every day as far back as she could remember. No doubt it was a 'fast food' energy boost for the young Princess Elizabeth when driving ambulances in World War II London. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOhYrBQFSTQ>

For children from poorer families in Britain's lean post-war years, a common tummy filler was the tomato sauce sandwich – tomato sauce or ketchup spread between two slices of unbuttered white bread.



IMAGE: © DUNCAN CARLING-RODGERS

## The Cucumber Sandwich

The traditional cucumber sandwich is a crustless tea sandwich (or finger sandwich) with thin slices of cucumber between thin slices of lightly buttered white bread. It originated in the United Kingdom.

They're often a light snack or for a formal afternoon tea, or in the early evening before the main supper.

Cucumber sandwiches are also traditionally served in the tea break at club cricket matches in England.

The cucumber sandwich reached its zenith in the Edwardian era and, though still frequently served at teas, luncheons, and gatherings, has declined in popularity in the UK since.

Cucumber sandwiches are still beloved in parts of India. The Indian variant is flavoured with green chutney and sometimes contains slices of boiled potatoes. Variants developed in the United States add so many differences as to be a completely different sandwich!



IMAGE: JAMES PETTS CC BY SA 2.0



IMAGE: ERIK FORSBERG CC BY SA 2.0

## Sándwiches de Miga

Sándwiches de miga are popular in Argentina and Uruguay as party food. A toasted version is common bar food.

Though the Academia Argentina de Gastronomía says they were introduced by immigrants from Northern Italy, a Buenos Aires newspaper suggests that they were invented by local bakers seeking to recreate English-style bread for homesick British engineers in the early 1900s.

Sándwiches de miga are single, double or multiple layered and are made from thinly sliced bread with no crust, filled with thinly sliced cold cuts, hard-boiled eggs, cheese, tomatoes, bell peppers, tuna and lettuce, also featuring butter or mayonnaise.



IMAGE: JESÚS GORRITI - FLICKR CC BY SA 2.0

## The Club Sandwich

A club sandwich consists of bread (traditionally toasted), sliced cooked poultry, ham, fried bacon, lettuce, tomato, and mayonnaise. It is cut into quarters or halves and held together by cocktail sticks.

Modern versions can have two layers which are separated by an additional slice of bread, but this makes them hard to handle and more akin to a Dagwood sandwich.

The club is said to have originated at New York City's Union Club.

## The Chip Butty and The Vegemite and Fish Finger Sandwiches

A chip butty is a sandwich filled with English-style thick-cut deep fried potato chips between two slices of buttered bread with either tomato sauce, brown sauce, ketchup, or malt vinegar if desired.

Fish finger sandwiches are another comfort food from Britain and also Australia. Slap fish fingers between two slices of buttered bread and add tomato sauce/ketchup or other sauces as you like it.

The Vegemite sandwich or Vegemite on toast has delighted Aussie kids ever since the spread made from leftover brewers' yeast extract with various vegetable and spice additives was developed in Melbourne in 1922.



IMAGE: ANNE MOLE CC BY 2.0



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# GAME PLAY ▶

LOVE GAMES

## Card Games WORD SEARCH

B	C	E	K	T	A	E	H	C	K	A	T	H	D
L	E	Y	E	K	N	O	D	B	H	T	A	A	D
A	R	R	Y	D	B	A	Y	M	M	U	R	P	H
C	E	D	I	A	M	D	L	O	E	U	E	P	E
K	R	S	B	A	C	C	A	R	A	T	P	Y	A
J	H	E	L	P	A	P	N	U	D	G	I	F	R
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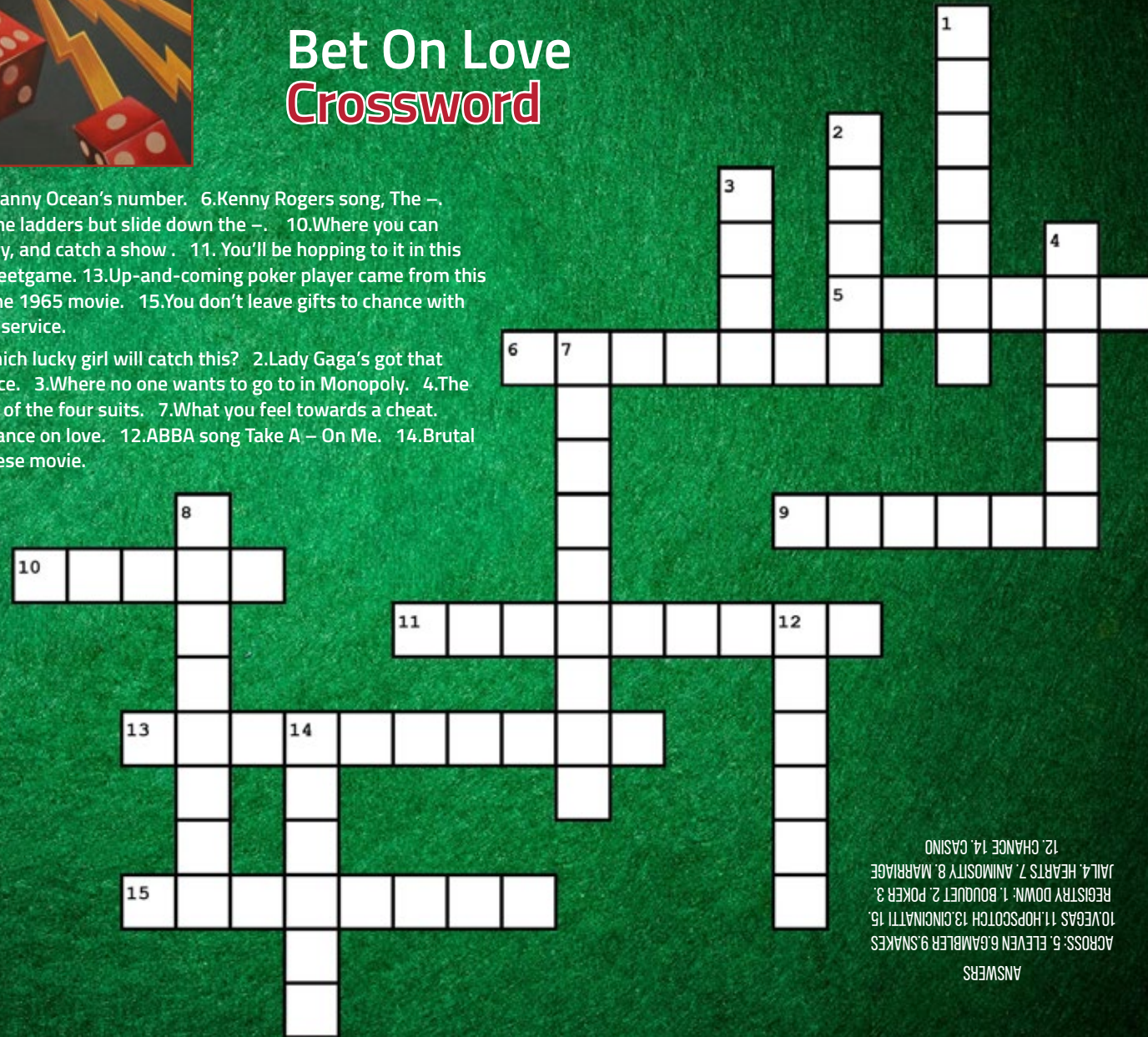
EUCHRE  
 SNAP  
 PATIENCE  
 DONKEY  
 UNO  
 BEZIQUE  
 RUMMY  
 HAPPYFAMILIES  
 SLAPJACK  
 BACCARAT  
 CHEAT  
 BRIDGE  
 SPADES  
 WHIST  
 GOLFISH  
 OLDMAID  
 POKER  
 HEARTS  
 PINOCLE  
 BLACKJACK

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/4001533/>

## Bet On Love Crossword

ACROSS 5. Danny Ocean's number. 6. Kenny Rogers song, The —. 9. You climb the ladders but slide down the —. 10. Where you can gamble, marry, and catch a show. 11. You'll be hopping to it in this children's streetgame. 13. Up-and-coming poker player came from this Ohio city in the 1965 movie. 15. You don't leave gifts to chance with this wedding service.

DOWN 1. Which lucky girl will catch this? 2. Lady Gaga's got that card game face. 3. Where no one wants to go to in Monopoly. 4. The romantic one of the four suits. 7. What you feel towards a cheat. 8. Taking a chance on love. 12. ABBA song Take A — On Me. 14. Brutal Martin Scorsese movie.



ANSWERS  
 ACROSS: 5. ELEVEN 6. GAMBLER 9. SNAKES  
 10. VEGAS 11. HOPSCOTCH 13. CINCINNATI 15.  
 REGISTRY DOWN: 1. BOUQUET 2. POKER 3.  
 JAIL 4. HEARTS 7. ANIMOSITY 8. MARRIAGE  
 12. CHANCE 14. CASINO



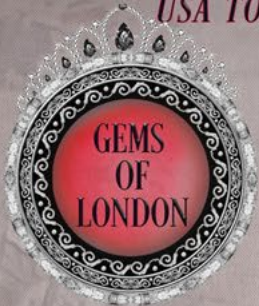
# NEW IN 2022 FROM USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR ELIZABETH ELLEN CARTER

HATE BROUGHT THEM TOGETHER. WILL LOVE TEAR THEM APART?

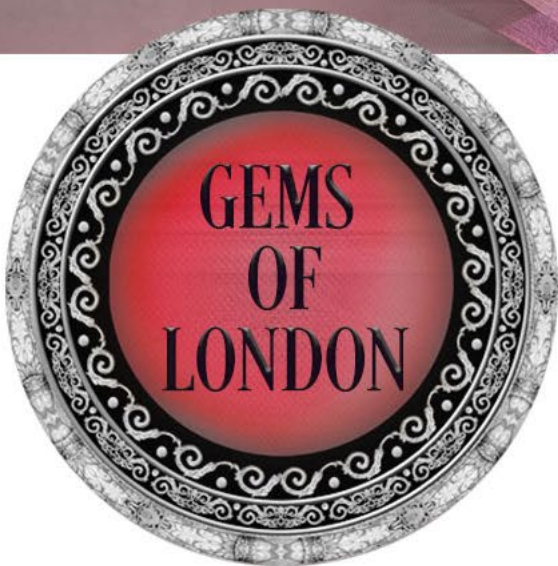
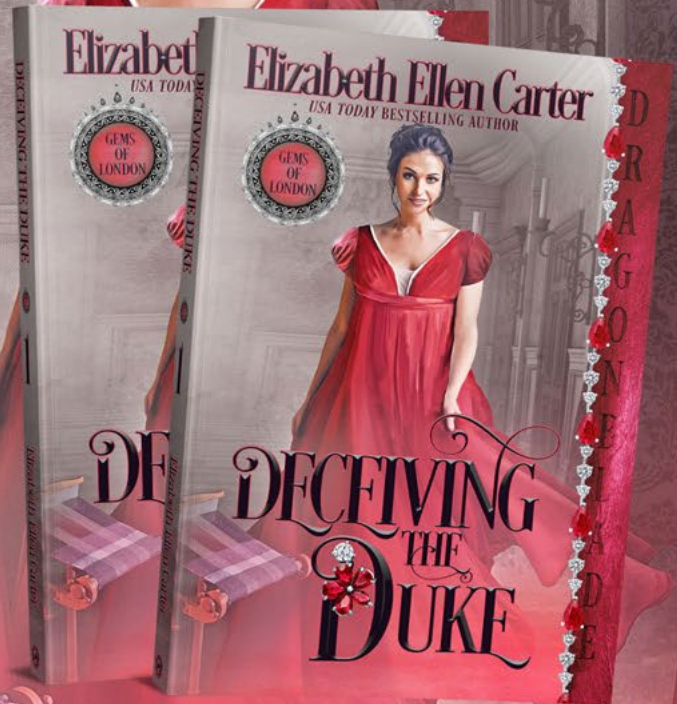
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# DECEIVING THE DUKE



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