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The Pirate's Desire

Jennette Green

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England, 1812

Seventeen-year-old Lady Lucinda wants her freedom back. But an orphaned young woman has no property rights in regency England; indeed, she has few rights at all. . .

After Lucinda's father is killed in action, he leaves her under the guardianship of a former pirate, the devastatingly handsome Captain Riel Montclair. Riel is a barbaric rogue, however, as he demonstrates the very first evening he arrives. Montclair clearly has a will of iron, which frustrates Lucinda beyond measure.

Even more distressing, once Riel signs the legal papers with the solicitor, he will not only dictate her choice of a husband, but he'll financially control her centuries old estate, Ravensbrook, too. Neither idea sits well with Lucinda, who has ruled her own life for the past two years.

Is Montclair planning to plunder Ravensbrook for his own personal gain? Additionally, Lucinda overhears him telling his disreputable-looking first mate that if the British Navy becomes suspicious of his past, he will lose his ship. What dastardly secret is he hiding?

How could her tender-hearted father have come to trust such a dangerous man? Lucinda must protect Ravensbrook, and her future, at all costs. But how far is she willing to go to get Riel out of her life, and ensure her freedom?

Excerpt:

LUCINDA PEEKED INTO THE HALL. All clear. Good. No servants, and no Riel Montclair. Dashing on light, quick toes, she gained the door to the sumptuous guest quarters. The door handle felt smooth and cold beneath her clammy hand. Trepidation pounded in her heart. What if he was inside?

He isn't. Stop being foolish.

Heart fluttering like a bird, Lucinda opened the door and slipped inside.

The letter. Where was it? She must find it, and quickly, for he could return at any moment.

Lucinda swiftly checked his sea bag. Nothing there. Feeling a little warm, she regained her feet and scanned the room. Where might he have put the letter? Provided it wasn't tucked in his jacket this very moment.

The bed. She knelt and peered under it. Nothing there, either. Lucinda gripped the mattress with two hands and shoved it up with all of her strength. Her fingers fluttered, searching…searching… They brushed paper.

Spirit soaring with elation, she snatched out the folded parchment. Sure enough, Father's flowing script read, "Mr. Chase."

She'd found it. Lucinda sat back on her heels in triumph.

A red wax seal secured it, as Riel had said. Now that she'd found it, should she read it? Or quickly destroy it?

A small click sounded at the door. Lucinda's pulse exploded in fright, and she whipped a glance over her shoulder. Riel! Sure enough, the door knob turned.

With horrified, shaking fingers she shoved the letter into her bodice, trying to work it down so he couldn't see…

"Lucy." Displeasure thundered in the deep voice.

She sprang to her feet, still turned away from him, struggling to fix her bodice.

A hard hand jerked her around to face him. "Why are you in my room?"

"I…I came to see that all is to your satisfaction…"

Alarmingly, his dark, pirate eyes fell to her bodice, still askew. Worse, a small corner of the parchment peeked out.

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