

Romance

MORGAN AND SHAWNA DISH: DELILAH MARVELLE'S FOREVER A LADY

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Delilah Marvelle's *Forever a Lady* takes readers on a realistic journey from the gritty slums of 1820s New York to tonnish London as she sets the scene for a “wrong side of the tracks” romance. Lady Bernadette Marie Burton is a wealthy widow and she’s looking to enjoy her well-earned freedom. Having no need of a husband, Bernadette’s on the lookout for a lover. When a darkly handsome Irish-American man saves her from an attacker, she believes she’s met her match. Matthew Joseph Milton wants to be everything that Lady Bernadette needs. But after falling into some hard times in New York, the journalist’s once pleasant life has taken a dark turn — forcing him into the slums that he would eventually come to protect as a gang leader. Can this couple ever bridge such wildly different backgrounds to find the love they both crave? Read on as RT’s Shawna does her first-ever Dish with Morgan for this week’s in-depth look at a read that has just hit shelves ...

Morgan: When the story begins, hero Matthew Joseph Milton and his father are having a pretty bad day.

Shawna: Bad day? I’d call it a bad year. A really, really bad year. They’ve lost all of their money to a swindling bookkeeper and have to shut down the newspaper they own.

Morgan: In his early twenties, Matthew had a comfortable life. So he is in for a rude awakening when he moves to Five Points, the worst neighborhood in New York City.

Shawna: And on his very first day there, Matthew gets a quick introduction to his new, violent home. While trying to save a young boy named Ronan from being beaten by a street thug, Matthew gets into a brawl, which he loses ... badly.

Morgan: Lucky for him, Coleman, a prizefighter, jumps in the fray and saves Matthew with a gun and some very serious threats.

Shawna: Too bad he didn’t get there in time to save Matthew’s sight in his left eye ...

Morgan: Okay, this is a bad situation, but the loss does teach Matthew a valuable lesson.

Shawna: Always carry a gun?

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Morgan: That and, in this bad part of town, might makes right. And when Matthew learns this lesson, he sure does run with it. He starts up his own gang and patrols the streets, dispensing vigilante justice wherever he sees fit.

Shawna: Can we call him Gotham's first Batman? Even though he sports an eye patch instead of the wings, this guy has the whole "savior of the city" thing going on. Check out the way he describes himself:

"Coleman and I lead a group of men known as the Forty Thieves. It commenced with a hail to integrity and protecting people in our community that eventually morphed into depending on weapons and thievery due to threats against our lives and how little we have. In the eyes of society, I'm a thief and I fully accept that. For I am. I do steal. But everything I do has not to do with maintaining a lifestyle as much as ensuring that I and others continue to *breathe*."

Morgan: I think this a good time to warn readers that this is *not* an easy read. Marvelle takes you right into the slums, and she doesn't shield you from the harsh realities of poverty, prostitution, drugs, violence against children ...

Shawna: Things that make it all the more important for Matthew to step into the role of protector of Five Points, even if he does go about it illegally. He is, in a word, heroic!

Morgan: I agree with that, but there's no denying that this man is pretty rough around the edges.

Shawna: Are you talking about his first meeting with the wealthy Astors? I'm sure they didn't expect to hear Matthew's response to the insult the Astors' grandson hurled: "Say that again, golden boy. Me and my fists didn't quite hear you."

Morgan: Really what can you expect from someone living in a place called "Satan's Circus" for almost a decade?

Shawna: Yeah, Matthew is not one for manners. But it is his roughness that first catches Lady Bernadette Marie Burton's attention.

Morgan: Ah, yes. English Lady Bernadette. Even though she lives in New York City, she doesn't run in the same circles as Matthew, so it takes a chance meeting in London for the two to connect.

Shawna: Widow Bernadette is across the pond to help launch a friend into high society when she's attacked in the park by a psycho ex-paramour brandishing a whip!

Morgan: And Matthew is in London with Coleman. They're on the run from enemies in NYC who want them dead. When he sees Bernadette being hassled by the "gentleman," Matthew jumps into the fray to save her.

Shawna: See! Told you he was a hero!

Morgan: Well, Bernadette certainly thinks so. She takes one look at the eye patch, and she imagines him to be the Pirate King of her dreams. Seriously, she used to fantasize about a pirate king whisking her away ...

Shawna: And she had lots of time for this dreaming. Married at a young age to a *much* older man, Bernadette wasn't living the adventurous, passionate life she wanted.

Morgan: But she made up for lost times. After becoming a widow —

Shawna: A very wealthy widow —

Morgan: Right, a rich-as-sin widow. Bernadette traveled to America to find adventure. She's found it everywhere from New Orleans to New York City, but the one thing she doesn't have is a partner to share her time with.

Shawna: Until she finds Matthew, her Pirate King, who makes all of her lustful dreams come true.

Morgan: They do become intimate rather quickly. Bernadette's friend, Georgia, just doesn't understand why Bernadette would move so fast. But Bernadette has her reasons as she explains ...

"I find him to be profoundly genuine, irresistible, incredibly attractive, and despite my inability to trust myself in this, I am desperately hoping I don't have to live the rest of my life thinking all men are bastards. That is why."

Shawna: Bernadette also loves how genuine Matthew is — he's a "real" man. He doesn't lie about who he is, and I guess that's pretty refreshing for someone who is used to the pretense of London society. Would a man from the ton ever admit something like this:

"[A]s it stands, I have nothing. 'Tis only me, my boys, Ronan and the boots we're all wearing. Which isn't much."

Morgan: Probably not. But reality soon sets in and Bernadette finds that this isn't exactly what she had in mind — a man who has no qualms about stealing horses and just about everything else. Matthew doesn't play by any rules — ever. At first this doesn't scare Bernadette off. After all, she is looking for adventure ..

Shawna: But she has to draw the line when Matthew steals from her ex, gets caught and then is imprisoned. A girl has to have some limits, I guess.

Morgan: Bernadette ends things abruptly, but Matthew doesn't want to let her go. He hopes to marry her.

Shawna: Which certainly comes as a great surprise to her. Bernadette sees marriage as a trap, and she never wanted to be a wife again. So, after she gets Matthew out of jail, she cuts all ties with her wannabe hubby.

Morgan: Leaving him heartbroken ... and worried about her welfare once news of their affair hits New York. His enemies will take any opportunity they have to hurt him.

Shawna: And these are the kind of guys who wouldn't let Bernadette's status as a lady hold them back

Morgan: Matthew is the only one who'll be able to save her once they're back in New York.

Shawna: But will she let the man she rejected —even though she still loves him — back into her life?

Morgan: And can she accept that he's trying to clean up his life (even by disbanding the Forty Thieves)? He's willing to make changes, but then again, she'll have to, too. This is one unlikely couple that I can't help but root for.

Curious as to how Lady Bernadette and Matthew overcome all their many obstacles on the way to finding true love? Pick up a copy of *Forever A Lady* today! And be sure to check back next week when Morgan and Whitney Dish about *Gunmetal Magic* by Ilona Andrews!

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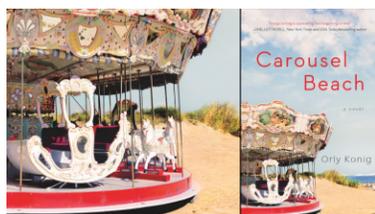
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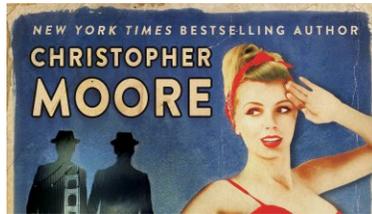
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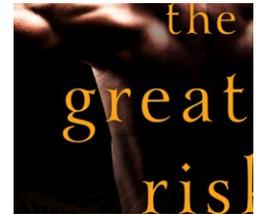
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