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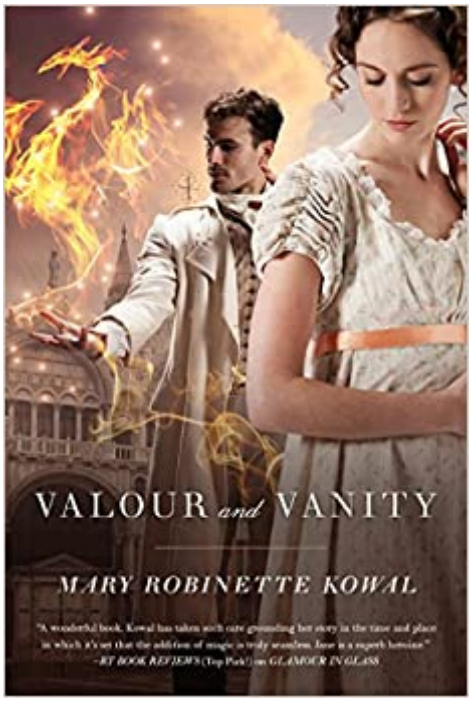
Valour And Vanity (Glamourist Histories)



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Synopsis

Acclaimed fantasist Mary Robinette Kowal has enchanted many fans with her beloved novels featuring a Regency setting in which magicÃ¢â ¬â ¢known here as glamourÃ¢â ¬â ¢is real. In Valour and Vanity, master glamourists Jane and Vincent find themselves in the sort of a magical adventure that might result if Jane Austen wrote Ocean's Eleven. After Melody's wedding, the Ellsworths and Vincents accompany the young couple on their tour of the continent. Jane and Vincent plan to separate from the party and travel to Murano to study with glassblowers there, but their ship is set upon by Barbary corsairs while en route. It is their good fortune that they are not enslaved, but they lose everything to the pirates and arrive in Murano destitute.Jane and Vincent are helped by a kind local they meet en route, but Vincent is determined to become self-reliant and get their money back, and hatches a plan to do so. But when so many things are not what they seem, even the best laid plans conceal a few pitfalls. The ensuing adventure is a combination of the best parts of magical fantasy and heist novels, set against a glorious Regency backdrop.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If Jane Austen were to write about a magical heist, her novel would not be all that different from the fourth installment in KowalÃ¢â ¬â„¢s (Without a Summer, 2013) Glamour History series. Jane and Vincent travel to Murano, an island off of Venice, to study glassblowing in hopes of amalgamating it with glamour (magic). Though clever, they fall victim to an elaborate hoax that consumes their funds

and leaves them stranded in Italy. Living in poverty, they team up with Catholic nuns and a street puppeteer to enact retribution. Adventures, obstacles, and high jinks propel the story while upholding its romantic core. Jane and VincentÃ¢â ¬â„¢s healthy, steadfast marriage makes sense in the Regency era yet satisfies modern standards, even when their quips and stubbornness create problems instead of solutions. The act of weaving glamour into art or apparatuses makes for entrancing imagery, complementing KowalÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Victorian writing style and enhancing the action-packed scenes. Lively, well written, and with sprinkles of history, Valour and Vanity will charm both adventurers and romantics. Add Lord Byron as cohort for extra fun. --Biz Hyzy --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Combining history, magic and adventure, the book balances emotional depth with buoyant storytelling."Ã¢â ¬â ¢Kirkus Reviews

If you are not reading this series by Kowal, this book- the fourth- is a fine place to start. Its tone is a lot different than that of the previous novels, though- they were more "Jane Austen with magic", and this one is "if Austen wrote a heist/intrigue novel..."We get to see much more of Jane's and Vincent's relationship, and how they are learning to work together and rely on each other, albeit through struggles both within the relationship and caused by outside forces. Fot this reason, it seemed more intimate to me than the previous novels in the series, much as I loved them.Also, the plot is more obviously exciting! Pirates! Swindles! Reversals of fortune! Revenge! Secret motivations and spying! and even Lord Byron! Kowal did a brilliant job of winding the very personal and intimate into the more carefully convoluted and eventful plot, with each reflecting on the other in many ways. Wonderfully wrought!The other characters come alive, too, both the Good Guys and the not. I especially loved the portrayals of the nuns. Having attended a Catholic women's college, I learned great respect and admiration for nuns, and these are GREAT nuns, each very distinct.I also appreciated that the glamour- the magic- was described more precisely, giving me a better idea of what it can and cannot do.This was an excellent novel that kept me up a few times reading when I ought to have been asleep- and that's rare for me these days.Highly recommended, for a perspective on the Regency era and for those who would love a very unique magical system in fantasy, or who have been reading the series. I think this one is my favorite in it thus far.

As this book opens Jane and Vincent are in Trieste as part of her sister MelodyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s honeymoon trip with her new husband. TheyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ve been traveling together with the

newlyweds as well as Jane and MelodyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s parents and her new husbandÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s parents, but in Trieste the others are planning to travel overland to Prague, while Jane and Vincent take ship for Venice. Only along the way their ship is boarded by pirates and they only escape slavery by the charity of a Venetian banker, Signor Sanuto, who pays their ransom and later takes them in when an officious clerk tries to refuse them entry into Venice because the pirates have taken their papers. But not all is what it seems, and for some months theyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢re living in poverty on Murano Island, eking out a precarious living by JaneÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s teaching music and glamour to girls at a convent school and Vincent working as a street magician. Lord Byron pops in and out of the story as well. An-other very entertaining installment of this series.

Having just finished Valour and Vanity, I find myself wishing that the rest of the books in the Glamourist Histories had been heist novels! This book is head and shoulders above the other three in the series, both in terms of character development (and likability), and of plot, not to mention the evocation of time and place.What most impressed me in this book was how Kowal managed to balance the intrigue and suspense of a heist story with the unsettlingly intimate and personal portrayal of a marriage in an all-too-common crisis. I suspect I am not the only wife to feel that I've had the exact same argument as the Vincents, almost word for word. Had that struggle made up the majority of the novel, it would have been too heavy-handed, but when interwoven with the mystery and action of a pirate attack, spy activities, and a quest for revenge, it makes for an exciting and compelling novel.In short, each Glamourist book has been markedly better than the last, so I can't wait for the final installment!

Another fantasy fashioned on Jane Austen novels, with all of the smooth prose, specific language and charm they posses. Then Kowall steps out and tells her own story and the characters and situations come to life, having adventures Austen would never have dreamed of speaking of. In this turn, robbery and poverty take center stage, and no amount of magic will save the day - but tenacity, right relations and intelligence does. Great book, looking forward to the next one.

Favorite part on this book was VincentÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s and JaneÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s relationship. With all the trials and tribulations thrown at them this volume, their strong love and support for each other stand out in stark relief. I love how it didnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t take the entire book to reach the point where both parties are confiding in each other and coming to workable solutions to their

problems. Both are honest for most of the book, a refreshing change from other romantic relationships out there.It was interesting to see a Venice and Murano, post-Napoleon. Seeing how hard hit the glass-making business was was fascinating, given the amount of taxes France levied on materials for the industry and how that effected the artisans involved. I also liked the sympathetic light the author gave to the Catholic Church, especially given some of the attitudes Jane portrayed in the previous book. I liked seeing her eyes open to the good in that organization.The overall plot of betrayal and shifting friendship alliances was interesting. I loved how nobody was really as they seemed and seeing different allies that Vincent and Jane gathered around themselves. Yet, for all the good in the engrossing plot, there were times where it seemed almost a bit hackneyed. The whole rouse part seemed overdone a bit, unbelievable overall. I rolled my eyes more than once as Jane and Vincent blundered through their struggle to regain their life savings. And the ending almost seemed to pat as well.Not a bad addition to the series. I loved Jane and Vincent again, like always. I think theyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ve never been stronger than in this volume. I liked the historical tidbits and seeing a bit more of glamour. The plot was good but it stretched the bounds of believability and so being enjoyable at times. IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢m definitely look forward to the final volume that comes out this week. I already have it on pre-order.

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