



## The Bound Heart

*Elsa Holland*

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## **The Bound Heart** Elsa Holland

Intuitively a man knows when a woman could unravel him. Mr. James Edwards, the Bond Street Bookshops bookbinder and The Velvet Basement's source of shibari photo plates has avoided Miss Olive Thompson for a long time. Her Friday deliveries of string, threads and yarn were a exercise of constant vigilance. Of constant denial. And of constant longing... until today. Today he was having a taste. Those large brown eyes had pleaded with him from across the room for the last time.

But it would just be a taste.

Who he was and what he wanted were not for someone who exuded innocence as clean and pure as a summer daisy beaming at the sun. Even if she though she wanted to. No he played in the murky underbelly of desires that people never showed in the light of day. They were nothing for Olive Thompson.

The Bound Heart is a rich Victorian Romance with a moody, darkly sensual, gothic feel.

## **The Bound Heart Details**

Date :

ISBN :

Author : Elsa Holland

Format :

Genre : Romance, Historical Romance, Historical, Adult Fiction, Erotica, Dark

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## From Reader Review The Bound Heart for online ebook

### Dawn says

5 stars. This can be read as a stand alone.

First I want to say that the following review is honest and from the heart. Although I was one of many beta readers for the author, this in no way has swayed my thoughts about what I will write.

The official summary of this book does not do it justice, nor do I feel it captures the true essence of what this book is about, therefore I feel it imperative to do my best to clarify without giving away too much.

#### Summary:

We have heroine "Olive" a woman who has suffered much as a child growing up in the bad neighborhood of Whitechapel. She and her brother Billie both suffered as children with infantile paralysis which caused excruciating pain to them and their legs. They both survived, but Olive still suffers a limp due to an abnormality of one leg being shorter than the other. Billie, later dies in an unfortunate carriage accident. After his death, Olive found comfort in wearing his old leg brace and becomes quite panicked without it.

Olive's remaining family is terrible to her. They have been pressuring her to join them (her sister and mother) into a life of selling her body to help make ends meet. Olive refuses, and instead uses her embroidery talent to assist with earning her keep.

Hero Jamie (Mr. Edwards) grew up with a similarly difficult childhood. A child born in a Whitechapel brothel, who witnessed his father's fall to his death at his feet, swears an oath to himself at 9 years old to honor his father's dying wish to not allow a woman to control him through conventional sex (as his father did).

He then sets up some personal rules to which he strictly lives by. 1. He doesn't fall in love 2. he doesn't have sex with a woman vaginally (yes he only takes women from 'behind'.. so does this make him a virgin in a sense?) 3. No women stay overnight.

After his father's death, Jamie meets a Japanese man outside the brothel holding a piece of rope. The Japanese man teaches Jamie some knots and Jamie is intrigued. Not long after, the Japanese man takes Jamie under his wing and takes him home. He brings Jamie into the world of Japanese rope art. After years of training him, not only in this art, but also about Japanese culture, language and tradition, Jamie has grown into a serious rope artist. To help with finances he also works at a book binder shop located over the infamous Velvet Basement (sex shop). This (the bookbinding shop) is where he meets Olive who delivers twine to him every Friday to use for his book work.

Olive and Jamie have been making eyes at each other for two years, when Jamie decides to take a taste (a kiss) of Olive. His decision is due to the fact he plans on leaving the bookbinding shop to fully pursue his Rope art. A taste is all he wanted.. or so he thought.

Roping is a sensual and erotic art form which the artist ties a model in various types of soft knots and patterns creating a beautiful display for the viewer. This is done very delicately, and the artist as well as the model are intimately connected through the process. Although there are other styles of roping that are painful, Jamie chooses not to go down that path, preferring the sensual and intimate.

The story progresses as Jamie tries at first to shield Olive from himself and his strange world of erotic roping, but innocent Olive is finding herself drawn to him and finds herself wanting to become part of his world.

The rest you will have to read for yourself. I have only just touched on the basics. The story has a much deeper meaning about love, art, and fears we all have and how we shield ourselves either by rules or a leg brace.

The writing is excellent. There are a few typos here and there but nothing that is too distracting. What I love most is the beautiful sensual roping scenes. She doesn't rush them, and describes with intense detail all the light touches and caressing of both the hero and the rope as he works it ever so gently over the Heroines body. I also like how the author takes such great care to educate the reader about art, rope art, erotic vs porn. She does this in many ways, mainly by having Jamie taking Olive to an art museum, and through conversations throughout.

There is nice conflict as Jamie prepares to compete with other rope artists for a contract which will keep him financially able to maintain his house and living standards. I would have liked to have seen a bit more of the antagonist "Sato" but it was fine without it.

The characters are extremely well developed and complex making them seem real and solid. The pace is steady and I did not skim. The love builds slowly and naturally. And of course we all get the HEA and ILY in the end (Yeay!)

In short, this is a love story. It is sensual and erotic but not hardcore. No pain inflicting whips and chains here..just a beautiful, intense and erotic story.

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### **Cassia says**

After reading this book, I discovered I'm not for bondage erotica novels.

I can appreciate a scene, but not a whole book about bondage. I'm grateful for the historical background the author provides about this Japanese art, so interesting. Otherwise, the idea of the main characters practising bondage in order to win an international contest was more than I could bear, so it made me laugh in the end.

My fault. I'm sure the other books in the Velvet Basements series will be more tuned to my reading taste.

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## **DemetraP says**

My problem with this book is that the hero was always pushing the heroine away. For 2 years she's been delivering thread every Friday and hero looks forward to seeing her. Heroine throws herself at him and hero tells her no, she's too good for him.

That's the whole theme of the book. Hero is scarred by the relationship between his mother and father. So he constantly pushes heroine away.

She keeps fighting to make hero "see her" and "love her" and violate his rules for her. rules: no sleeping over, no sex in the vagina only anally, he'll never love her, etc.

It was exhausting to keep watching the hero push her away.

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## **Jennifer says**

In *The Bound Heart*, the second book in the Velvet Basement series, Elsa Holland reaches far beyond the standard formula of romance yet her work is accessible and touching. Ms. Holland writes of extreme subject matter with a grace and subtlety that cannot be learned as shown in her portrayal of the lead characters unconventional deep-seated and beautiful courtship. This author's propensity to relate subject matter that is not normally associated with the era she is writing about in abundant and accurate detail fuels the imagination and surpasses the mundane! The candor in how the emotionally lacerated yet compassionate hero and heroine's dispositions was expressed in their impassioned connection translated so well in the writer's words that you would almost think you were experiencing events first hand. To see the emergence of two people relegated to the shadows into a world of hope and promise by their love was humbling and profound. *The Bound Heart* takes Historical Erotic Romance to a whole new level with its meaningful story!

\*I received this ARC from the author in exchange for an honest review.\*

\*While part of a series this book can be read as a stand alone.\*

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## **Zena says**

Take two people who come from the wrong side of town who shouldn't have survived and watch them emerge and succeed and thrive.

This is a very unusual love story that with the Art of the Rope Knotting, Shibari, becomes mesmerizing, passionate, intoxicating and fascinating.

Ms Holland uses her ability to paint a picture in words so that the Rope scenes come alive on the pages and culminates in a love that endues all hardships.

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## **Tequila says**

I know there's still one more book in this series, but I feel I can honestly say that *The Bound Heart* is my favorite. I love Olive and Jamie. This book is just as beautiful as the first, if not more. The story, the way the characters grow and change throughout the book. The reader can feel the passion oozing from the pages and seeping into your skin. When I finished, I found myself in a serious book hangover when I finished. If you're

a lover of rope, whether binding or the one being bound, you will so love this book. And even if you're not into bondage yourself, you will still love the story.

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### **Delwyn Jenkins says**

Once again Elsa Holland has created a Victorian world unlike anything I've ever read. The lush, vividly imagined landscape adds a richness to the story, and exploring the Japanese influence on the London society of the time is fascinating.

But not as fascinating as the characters Ms Holland brings to life. Olive and Jamie walk between the worlds of poverty and wealth, not quite fitting in with either but still determined to find their own place.

The true struggle - for both of them - is trying to find a place with each other. Olive is strong and courageous, but she's also vulnerable and fragile. Her quiet determination and her willingness to take a risk make her one of my favourite heroines. Jamie, too, is strong and flawed - in different ways and for different reasons. His overly structured, rule-driven life hides a multitude of old hurts and he thinks himself impenetrable - until Olive turns his life upside down at the same time as he's turning hers inside out.

This story is explicit and it has some very dark edges, but it's also full of heart and worth turning every page. The Bound Heart is a genuine five-star read - I can't wait for book three in the series.

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### **Jeanne Johnston says**

As soon as I realized this was about bondage, I almost bailed. Got suckered into 50 Shades of Crap and I'm still ashamed (I've got reader's OCD and can't stop in the middle of a story--but I'm working on it!)

This was more than that, though--despite the occasional weird homonymn choice or skipped word. This was a mutual need and no derpy, easily controlled girl, but a strong woman from a crappy part of town, who knew what people did to survive.

The rope part was kind of fascinating, a carefully drawn-out study in why and how, control, surrender, care, and precision. The subculture was not a surprise but the emotional dance was well done and strangely riveting.

Still not my cup of tea but I can't say it was time I'm angry I'll never get back, as I did after reading that horrendous bit of fanfic that somehow exploded into a summer must-read.

Just once, though, I'd like to see a man say "I'm no good for you--run away..." And see her respond with "Yeah, who's got time for drama? I deserve better!"

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### **Gwen Sargeant says**

When I started this book, I really had no idea if it would hold my interest. As I read through chapter after chapter, I started to compare the content to various other writers. I found it very intriguing with erotic rope tying. The story takes place in the 1800s. I found Olive and Jamie fascinating, how they came together and their story from that moment on. How Olive was able to love Jamie and to allow herself to enjoy the erotic ropes. Personally the subject material piqued my interest and how it would draw you into this world. I would

highly recommend the book as it was very different compared to other erotic authors. I did find that there were some word errors that appeared to me that predicted text was used. There was some spelling errors as well but overall it did not take away from the storyline.

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### **Katie says**

While not as mind-blowing as the first book in the series (and honestly, WHAT IS), this is still a great book, a solid 5 stars.

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### **Jennifer Guffey says**

The Bound Heart (The Velvet Basement #2)

By: Elsa Holland

5/5 stars

First, I love this cover just as much as I loved the cover to the first book in the series, The Veiled Heart. The covers are unique and colorful, tasteful and alluring. Both covers just catch the eye and draw a person in. The covers also go with the storyline. I just love them!

This is NOT your grandmother's Victorian England era romance! THANK GOODNESS! Ms. Holland continues to amaze me in the boundaries she pushes in the historical romance genre. I was blown away with the first book and the second book is no different. She tackles a darker side of the Victorian romance, but not without delivering an HEA for which we long.

Jamie Edwards and Olive Thompson both come from the dark, slums of London. Yet they meet weekly because of their jobs, outside of the area. Olive knows that Jamie is the man she wants. She can tell that he is not like the other men, especially in the London slums of Whitechapel. Jamie has an air about him that is commanding and draws Olive.

Being a woman, there are few choices in life and very little chance of a woman born into the slums, to make it out of the slums and to have a better life. Many women of the lower class end up as prostitutes on street corners or working in brothels. The lifespan of people, particularly women living in the slums is not long. Usually they just work to survive life. But Olive has not let the life she was born into get her down. She has not let it take her will or her dreams.

Jamie, on the same token has spent 2 years, looking forward to their weekly meetings. He is drawn to Olive like the flowers are to the sun. But at the same time, Jamie knows that he has uncommon desires and he wants to protect Olive from him and his desires. Jamie governs his personal life with a set of rules and knows that Olive deserves so much more.

Jamie is a master at the elite, Japanese art of Shibari rope work. Sensually erotic, it puts him in total control while allowing the woman the freedom to just be herself and to feel safe and comforted in its binds. Jamie also uses rope as a way to hold women at arm's length. Jamie has been able to make his art into a side business, supplying the sex shop, The Velvet Basement and high money contracts for the wealthy, elite society of The Collector's.

I have long been interested in the art of Shibari, and though I have no personal knowledge of it, I do enjoy reading about it, seeing pictures or watching tutorials or videos of the artwork being made. It truly is beautiful and just from reading this, it is obvious that Ms. Holland definitely did her research on the art and describes it beautifully, along with the feelings of the characters while they are in the moment. I felt like I was in the room with them, perhaps I was Olive, but I was truly transported to another time and place.

Though this is part of The Velvet Basement series, both books are standalones and can be read in either order. I absolutely recommend reading both of them. There is a third book that may be released towards the end of this year, named, The Painted Heart. It is definitely going on my TBR list and will pre-ordered whenever the links go live!!

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### **Nicolette Hugo says**

Beautiful, sensual and compelling. Jamie and Olive are wonderful love story and the glimpses of Japanese culture in Victorian England take you off into another world. I adore Elsa's mind.

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### **Monique says**

Review written: January 23, 2017

Star Rating: ★★???

Heat Rating: ?????

First, I liked this book a lot. I like the worldbuilding. I like the characters. I like the different face this puts on the Victorian era. There is a lot to like about the world of the Velvet Basement. I think the storytelling is really good.

So, why the 2 stars then? No matter how good the story is or how much I might like the characters, if the editing is so bad that a secondary character's name is misspelled three words away from its correct spelling on the same line, no less, then something really needs to be done. This editing issue is why I gave the first book in this series 2 stars as well.

Seriously author, fire your editor. FIRE! Whoever it is is ripping you off big time. If you don't have an editor, GET ONE!

*This review is ©January 2017 by Monique N.*

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### **Tahyun says**

This was an eye opening read for me. I've never read anything about its subject matter before but I have a relatively open mind, so I gave it a chance. I'm happy I did. This was the most elevated erotic fiction I have ever read. It was sensual, the language was beautifully wrought, the author really took her time and chose her words and their presentation well; of course, there was a lot of sex but it was so well written and intermixed with the plot and themes, there was a good balance. There were times when explanation and exposition carried on a bit too long and that's why I gave it a four star instead of five, because I think it affected the

pacing especially. There is some Japanese influence in this book, which as someone who has lived there and speaks the language, at first I found jarring but I think actually the author handled it relatively well, especially considering the book in light of its historical nature. It was better and definitely more thoroughly researched than efforts I have read before, at the very least. And while I have to say this was still one of the most unusual books I've read, I would say that if you want to know the capabilities of erotic historical romance, then read this book. If you'd like a very tactile and sensual world to be painted with words before you, and your sensibilities can take it, then read this book.

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## **April says**

### **Strange for me**

This was a story about a man named Jamie that was obsessed with ropes and sex thru the back door. Olive was a poor woman who became obsessed with it also but only to get closer to Jamie. This story is different from what I normally read and was just weird for me.

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