



The Third Son

Elise Marion

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Rake. Rogue. Scoundrel.

Each of these words has been used to describe Damien Largess, youngest prince of Cardenas. But when he steps into a glittering ballroom on the night of his twenty-fifth birthday, the roguish young prince's life will be forever changed.

Beautiful. Graceful. Sensual.

When Esmeralda steps into king's ballroom to perform for the prince's twenty-fifth birthday, every eye in the room is upon her. One pair of eyes intrigues her most of all ... those of Prince Damien, seeming to stare straight through to her soul.

The two know nothing can ever come of their love; he is a prince, and she a Gypsy dancer. Yet, neither can seem to resist the passion that sparks when they are together, or the unmistakable call of destiny forcing their lives onto the same path.

However, love is not the only thing destiny has in store ...

With a deadly plot against the royal family surrounding him in danger and intrigue, Damien will face a decision he never thought he would have to make. Will he step up to claim a responsibility that should never have fallen to the third son? Or will he abandon it to risk all for love?

Kings of Cardenas Series Reading Order

The Third Son

The Second Son

The Lady Knights of Barony

Gypsy Rose

The Gypsy

The Mistress (Bonus Novella)

Interview with the Author

Q: So, what makes the Kings of Cardenas series special?

A: I've always been a romance reader, but the historical sub-genre has always been my first love. There's something about the decadence and beauty of it that just enraptures me. So when I got the idea for *The Third Son*, I kept that opulence foremost in my mind. I knew that this kind of story couldn't take place in an actual country and end the way I wanted it to, so I created my own fantasy kingdom. I love that element of it because it gave me freedom to make my own rules about the society that these characters live in. The cool part, I think, is that even though it has that fantasy aspect of being set in a made-up kingdom, it still has the familiarity of historical romance and the elements we all love: balls and masquerades, secret intrigues, and of course the fashion! I also think it's special because of how unpredictable it is. The twists and turns incorporate elements of suspense and mystery along with the romance, and I loved crafting a multi-dimensional story using those elements.

Q: Why should readers give these books a try?

A: I think anyone who appreciates a good, meaty plot along with their romance will truly enjoy the series. While these stories are about love and romance, there are also elements of loss, intrigue, betrayal, and the dynamic of family weaving them all together. If you love mystery, suspense, and action woven through your romance, you'll love the Kings of Cardenas series.

Q: How many books will be in the complete series?

A: The complete series is comprised of 6 books: 5 novels and 1 novella. While the series has been concluded, I do have plans for a spin-off series entitled Sons of Cardenas. The first book of that series might release in 2016.

The Third Son Details

Date : Published December 14th 2013 by Marion Press (first published September 23rd 2011)

ISBN :

Author : Elise Marion

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From Reader Review The Third Son for online ebook

Zoe says

This is such a fantastic story, it has such a mix of things going on. I could not put this book down. I just loved it. You know when you have read something special when a book can make you smile or cry, this story did both in bucket loads. Off to start the second son.

Lady Raven RAVE! says

<http://www.romancenoveljunkies.com> for readers

Brief Summary

Prince Damien was the youngest son of the King of Cardenas. Damien spends his evenings drinking, gambling and seducing women, as his older brother points out often. He then meets Esmeralda, the dancing gypsy girl and things will never be the same. Esmeralda can't resist Damien and they begin a fantasy courtship neither has ever felt before. But a killer is out to destroy the royal family and Damien will have to make life changing decisions.

Thoughts

I really enjoyed this story. Damien is a privileged, carefree soul that does what he wants, despite what his family thinks of him. Damien sees Esmeralda and is instantly swept away with the young gypsy dancer and goes on a mission to find her. Despite her reservations because of her fear of men and difference in backgrounds, Esmeralda can't resist him. Suddenly the King is murdered and all goes wrong! Damien and Esmeralda's happiness comes to a screeching halt!!

I loved the characters and the story line was great! It never slowed down for me. It's a real page turner until the end..... Looking forward to the next book in the Kings of Cardenas series!

Story: Great

Intimacy: Spicy

Enjoyment: Great

Reviewed by Davia V. of Romance Novel Junkies

Romance Novel Junkies

Romance readers chat: <http://rnjforumchat.romancenoveljunki...>

Kat says

I love finding authors that are not widely known... but I am also really picky in that a book has to be engaging and pull me into the story. I have way too many "to reads" on my list to waste any time.

This is one of those great book/author finds!

Even though this was a rare time when I was able to figure out who the culprit was (i am usually clueless)...the book was written so well that it didn't matter. I was so drawn into the story as I was reading the last 30% of book- I was constantly saying "no!!!" I am salivating to read the next book in the series.

Carly Fall says

First, let me say I have never read any historical romance or period romance, so this book was a new genre for me. It also took me a while to read. Not because it wasn't good, but because it seems the only time I have time to read is while I'm cooking dinner. I burnt dinner two nights while reading this because I was so enthralled with the story and forgot about the food. When I got to the end of this book, I had a huge smile on my face, but I was also disappointed the story had ended.

I was surprised at how much I was rooting for Damien and Esmeralda, and just when it seems that their relationship is totally hopeless, a plot twist that pretty much came out of nowhere for me brings them back together.

The characters are strong; the story is fabulous. It seemed to touch on every emotion and had a little of everything: happiness, deep sadness, anger, betrayal, despair, and of course, love.

I'm looking forward to reading more work by Elise!

MsRomanticReads says

This review can also be found on my blog.

First, let me begin by saying that this author has balls! Big, brass balls. The Third Son was Elise Marion's debut novel, and it took a lot of guts to write a tale with so many twists and turns and angst ad absurdum. It's a wonder she isn't tacked to the wall with pitchforks. That being said, this book was pretty amazing, in my opinion. I was expecting a fluffy, historical read set in a made up country with a made up Kingdom and made up gorgeous princes and the women whose skirts they chase. I got all of that except for the fluffy. A villain hell bent on getting his revenge on the royal family, a prince on the verge of becoming King, another prince who pines for the one woman forbidden to him and another who falls in love for the first time, but learns that his past actions have serious consequences that could jeopardize his future, a vindictive and cunning mistress and a love triangle. That may seem like a whole lot of drama, but the author managed to expertly pack it all into around 300 pages and weave around it a tale so gripping and heartbreaking that you won't be able to put this book down.

Damien Largess, Prince of Cardenas and third in line to the throne is a rake, a gambler, and just a little bitter that his oldest brother has always received the attention and devotion of their mother. As the third son, he can pretty much do whatever he wants and get away with it. That includes carrying on with the vulgar Davina, his mistress. But all that changes the day he sees the beautiful gypsy dancer, Esmeralda. Yes, his intentions at first are far from noble, but something about her puts a halt to that. The beauty of their blossoming relationship is overshadowed by the attacks on the Largess family, and the underhanded attempts of a jealous

ex mistress trying to tear them apart. And then the shockers begin to follow one after another. I won't divulge what those were, but I was seriously tempted to just stop reading. However, my curiosity got the better of me and I was assured of a HEA, so I continued on.

I loved Damien and Esmeralda as a couple. They had fantastic chemistry together despite their different backgrounds. He was so tender and loving towards her; a complete contrast to the way he treated Davina. That right there also helped to differentiate the two sides of him and his feelings towards each woman. The sex scenes were scorching hot, and I won't soon forget them either. It also became apparent rather quickly that Damien was not all as bad as he had been made out to be. His character goes through a complete arc from beginning to end. His bad behavior was simply a mask, or his coping mechanism for his [rather boring] life. Esmeralda was a breath of fresh air. She was genuinely good and kind. She put others before herself and never thought ill of anyone. I also liked the fact that she didn't wait a long time to tell Damien her dark secret. That she could allow herself to open up to Damien body and soul proves that she didn't let her past control her future. For a woman of that time, she was actually quite remarkable. The story never lost steam so I had a hard time putting the book down for even a second. It was a well thought out plot, and the trials of each character were well planned and told.

When it comes to angst, I will say this much, Damien learns the hard way that sometimes things aren't always as they seem. He will also learn that his past actions and decisions will have some far reaching consequences. Actually, every character will learn some type of lesson as this story goes along. These were not necessarily easy to read about, but they have a strong foothold in reality, as in "this stuff really happens". If you love angst and drama then this is for you. I'm warning you that certain things will happen for a reason, and chances are you will hate it, but just read through until the end, and you'll get the bigger picture. I'm glad I stuck it out.

I also wanted to touch on something that I read in someone else's review – historical accuracy. I don't pretend to know my Regency history or anything that took place prior to WWII. I am not familiar with speech patterns or typical clothing of the mid 19th century, and I don't it a point to do research to see if any author gets it right. As long as a cellphone or radio doesn't pop up where it shouldn't, then I rely on the author to have done their part to make sure they're up to par. I'll leave the digging to the subject matter experts. The Kingdom of Cardenas was made up, and therefore Damien could pursue a union with Esmeralda if he wanted to. I like the idea of the prince choosing a commoner, even if it would have been technically unthinkable for that time. Last time I checked, creative license was allowed.

Thank you, Elise for writing something out of my comfort zone, giving me no warning ahead of time, and for putting up with my tears and rants on Twitter, lol. And sorry about the peaches and other produce. You know what I mean.

Disclaimer: I received a review copy from the author. A review in exchange for the ARC was not promised.

Reviewers for R.N.J says

<http://www.romancenoveljunkies.com> for readers

Davia's Review

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gypsy girl and things will never be the same. Esmeralda can't resist Damien and they begin a fantasy courtship neither has ever felt before. But a killer is out to destroy the royal family and Damien will have to make life changing decisions.

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Kimberli Trenholm says

I REALLY enjoyed this book. From the beginning to the end I never to what to expect. I actually had to shut off my Nook for a minute and cry over some parts before getting back to it and finding out what happened next. I was so relieved when it all worked out in the end... and yet it left me with a teaser to NEED the next book.

Erica says

its a wonderful story of "what's meant to be, will be" no matter the obstacles in the way, love will still prevail. the story is written vividly and beautifully that it really does seem like a movie being played in your head

Franjessca says

Full Review posted at Book Lovin' Mamas

(Originally Reviewed on Mrs. Papillion aka "The Book Worm")

I had the privilege of reading "The Third Son" by Elise Marion when she contacted me via email.

It was a different book that I wasn't used to reading. It took me away from Paranormal for a while, and I have to say...I ENJOYED this book. I would've finished this book in a couple of days, but other obligations stepped in...one of them being, me not getting enough sleep at night due to a rocking and rolling baby inside of me. Naps and going to bed early took me away from reading for a while. =(This book had me in tears at the end. It's even worst being 35 weeks pregnant and reading this book. I don't suggest someone being pregnant reading this book. Wait until after the baby and then you can read it because you will be bawling at certain points in the book like I did.

CK says

"Prince Damien knows his eldest brother Lionus will be king, and next in line is Serge who will be general of Cardenas' military, and Damien is...the third son. He is royalty and lives a pampered life; enjoying his life with no major responsibilities. He's labeled a playboy. He doesn't think marriage can make anybody happy and uses his parents marriage as an example. His world changes when he meets a beautiful gypsy girl at his birthday party. And let me tell you, they share some hot kisses! *fans myself* (And Davina his mistress, thought she had him hook, line, and sinker. Even with her big surprise!)

I love how Damien showed her what a telescope was as he pointed out various constellations. So sexy! We see a softer side to this prince that makes you want to fall in love with him too. Underneath all his foolish play lies a man who just has a desire for a more fulfilling life. I don't want to give away the plot, but twists and turns will surprise you and Damien is faced with the hardest decision of his life.

This is more than a Cinderella story about a rich prince and a gypsy girl. Are they destined for love or simply two star crossed lovers? The passion and chemistry between them is amazing and I was gripped by the plot from the very beginning. The writing moves along at a great pace too.

A beautiful love story that stole my heart. *sighs in awe* This is definitely worth 5 stars without a doubt!"

Sally Hannoush says

I experienced many emotional ups and downs in this book. I became aware on how truly mad people can become with only one word uttered on a deathbed. Lies and betrayal take up every corner leaving things beyond desperate. The promise of true happiness urged me on with all the heartache endured.

Erin says

Can't believe this book is rated so highly here on goodreads. I got it free on Amazon and thought I would give it a try. The plot was...ridiculous. Spoilers ahead. Okay, I know that generally you have to suspend some belief for romance novels but really...a prince and a poor gypsy girl getting married and the only one who doesn't accept the marriage is the evil mom? And how about we talk about the conniving ex-mistress who successfully fakes a pregnancy for months so that she can take the throne...really? No one walked in on her changing in that time? She's continually trying to "seduce" her new husband and when she's walking in to his room in scanty clothes and pressing up against him he can't tell the difference between a cotton belly and a real one? She gets the doctor to lie for her in exchange for sex favors? Really? And the third son even becoming heir because the other two were killed off or incapacitated because their heavily guarded entourage

that was expecting an attack was attacked by their bastard ex-brother? It was just too much for me, I couldn't buy the 2D characters and the terrible plot.

Deborah (LoveToReadRomance) says

This was an awesome read for me, the more I got to know Damien (the hero) the more I fell in love with him, I was so jealous of Esmeralda but she deserved some happiness, without giving anything away just let me say her life had not been a bowl of cherries. This book has some very strong secondary characters that I can't wait to read more about them in the rest of the series. I fell asleep reading on my kindle at 2 am and woke up two hours later and my first thought upon waking was trying to figure out how the author was going to get to a HEA from where the plot was, it seemed impossible. Any book that engages me that much has to be good! The characters were well developed and the plot was very engaging, I can't wait to read more about the Kings of Cardenas! I am starting the second book and hope there will be more coming after that. It is just one of those reads that allows you to escape for a few hours and that's exactly why I read in the first place. (Review copy supplied by author)

Review also posted at <http://www.lovetoreadromance.com>

Alesha Escobar says

Romance and intrigue always spice up a story--and this one has definitely captured my interest.

Prince Damien is a drinker, a scoundrel, and doesn't care that it embarrasses his eldest brother (heir to the throne of Cardenas). There's not much he takes seriously, especially when it comes to love, because he never met a woman that would inspire it in him--that is, until he meets Esmeralda.

Their romance takes off, but is interrupted with scheming, outward restrictions, and a violent plot against the royal family fueled by hurt and vengeance. Damien finds that his carefree life has been pulled from under his feet and he's going to have to make a stand.

I enjoyed the relationship between Damien and his brothers, the romance, and of course the game of intrigue. Sometimes I found myself shaking my fist at Damien because he really is a scoundrel--but then you know when he falls in love, he falls hard--heh :)

Lisa Goodwin says

I found this book through a kindle forum, and I purchased it, not really knowing what I was going to be reading. But from the moment I started, I couldn't put it down. I haven't really read very many historical romance novels, but if this is what they are like, I will be reading many many more, especially from Elise Marion!

There is romance, drama, sex, suspense, intrigue, a little more sex, mystery, and a little more sex.

From the beginning of this story, I was hooked and could not put it down. And I guess I am kind of a picky reader, from the perspective of the story has got to hook my attention within the first several paragraphs, or I

won't continue. This novel had my full attention from the opening paragraph.

I enjoyed the characters, and the story line. It flowed well, and the entire story had an emotional impact for me.

The story moves well, giving just enough information for the reader to want to know more, thus you will not be able to put it down.

This is not for the teenagers, there is some explicit sex scenes portrayed, but they are done REALLY well :)

I will read this book again, and probably again, after that!
