



The Sword And The Passion

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A DARK AGES NOVEL

Northern Britain 495 AD

Civil War sweeps the country as the Earldormen of the Anglii tribe fight to replace their King.

When her family are massacred in an act of treachery, Averil, daughter of Earldorman Aethelstan, is enslaved and set on a path to fight for her freedom and restore their honour.

The keys to her destiny - the love of one man and a secret pact her father made long ago with an enemy King.

The Sword And The Passion Details

Date : Published July 1st 2013

ISBN :

Author : Yanina Stachura

Format : Kindle Edition 274 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Romance, European Literature, British Literature, Fantasy, Fiction

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From Reader Review The Sword And The Passion for online ebook

Becky says

The Sword and the Passion was selected in my Historical Fiction group for our Featured Author group read. So I bought it and read it. And unfortunately, I was really disappointed in it, especially considering the high ratings and positive reviews and comments, which just leave me scratching my head.

On the very first page, I encountered editing issues. And then on every page after that. To be fair, after receiving comments about the editing, the author stated that she uploaded a revised edition to Kindle. However, I really dislike this practice, so I did NOT read the updated version, therefore, YMMV. I read and am basing my comments on the edition I purchased.

I bought this book to read and enjoy. I did not sign up to be a beta reader or proofreader or editor. I'm a consumer, and this, in my opinion, is not even close to being a finished product. I highly doubt that the revised edition is much better. The sheer number of errors in this book is alarming. I had to stop highlighting and noting around 40% because after making hundreds of notes up to that point, I just couldn't keep doing it. Nearly every paragraph of every page had at least one error... but often several. Far too many for a book available for sale.

I recently stopped reading another book that, by all accounts, has a very good story, but I just could not get into it because the writing and editing was so bad. This, unfortunately, was worse. (Though I did finish this book because the story was easy enough to follow that deciphering what was meant around all the errors wasn't difficult.) I feel kinda bad saying that, because I moderate the group which selected this book, and it's a featured author group read. If this was cleaned up and professionally edited, it could be a good period romance. Certainly while I was reading it I could see the promise there.

But it's true, this book was not only poorly edited - if at all - but there were new kinds of errors I'd never even seen before. Long strings of 8 or 9 periods randomly placed amongst sentence fragments, comma splices, and mind-bogglingly long run-on sentences, and just generally poor punctuation and grammar throughout.

Here's an example:

Averil pressed against the thick bark of a mighty oak. They had been picking fruit when the horsemen came, Ebba had been unable to hide in time.....these men in the forest looking for her meant only one thing.....her father and brothers must be dead..... but her mother? Edric? Averil closed her eyes, the warrior's words pounding through her brain.....No. They were all dead. She gulped for breath, her heart hammering, not willing or able to accept the horrific truth..... Sweet Nerthus it cannot be so!...it cannot!..... sorrow washed over her....she felt her legs would give way beneath her and she would fall to the ground in a quivering heap.....tears streamed unchecked down her face as the ribald laughter of the men cut through her shocked mind.....knowing what they were thinking....if she stayed hidden, Ebba would be their victim, she would be safe while her poor slave was abused by these warriors....she would.....the voice within screamed disgust...was this snivelling coward shivering behind a tree the daughter of a mighty warrior Lord whose noble blood flowed in her veins? Yes! It was, and she didn't care! Her family were all dead! It were as though she could not function....the grief was too much to bear.....she would go mad with it! Averil grabbed the rock crystal at her throat and prayed to Nerthus to help her. She was the only one left to act for her father's noble house. The honour of the family was in her hands, and, despite what had happened, she was still Lady Averil, daughter of Aethelstan. She could hide away from this

now, but never from herself. To have abandoned honour, to disgrace her family, was to be worse than dead. Whatever her fate she would not, could not, disgrace her bloodline. She felt her dagger in a hidden pocket of her cloak as if for reassurance

"You will release that which is my property" the clear voice rang out through the woods, each word perfectly pronounced with cool authority.

In honor of that other book, a friend of mine coined the term Commageddon. For this one, I've invented Apocellipses.

There are so many errors in just that one paragraph that I almost don't even know where to start. The strings of period dots just baffle me. I've NEVER seen this in a book before. And then tack on that sentence fragments are sandwiched in between them, no spacing, or capitalization used at all, tenses shifting from past to present and back again, character names misspelled again and again throughout the book - often misspelled right after being correct just a few lines before... it's just a mess. The exclamation points (like those above) lend a juvenile feeling to the narrative, which undermines what the character is actually feeling throughout the book - an adult responsibility and sense of duty that she alone is left to uphold and honor. The lack of proper punctuation at the end of sentences, but especially in the dialogue throughout the entire book where commas should be placed, is the most problematic for me, though. There are so many examples of this I'm almost certain that I could pick a page at random and find one.

In regards to the story behind the writing... it was pretty standard romance fare as far as I can tell, not being a romance reader by nature. It felt fairly predictable, and at times reminded me of both *The Bride* by Julie Garwood and *Outlander* by Diana Gabaldon, with little bits of *Pillars of the Earth* by Ken Follet thrown in as well. None of which are bad comparisons, but I felt that things were a little too predictable because of them.

Now I'd like to talk about the characters. None of them were particularly well fleshed out. For example, for all the talk of Ranulph's mother and his father's love for her before her death, as well as the parallels of her past and Ranulph's present, she was never named, and never given any sort of respect. It was like she was just setting a precedent, rather than having been a strong, independent person that Ranulph's father claimed her to be.

Ranulph himself was just what I'd expect from the hero.

Girdar is the antagonist, willing to go to any length to destroy that which he can't have.

Averil... Well, she's our beautiful heroine. She's so pretty. Pretty, pretty, pretty. Perfectly gorgeous in every way, she inspires lust in every man who sees her, and jealousy in every woman who sees her... There's even a catfight! Usually I'm not bothered by this kind of thing (by which I mean books that aren't 'politically correct' in portraying women in Bechdel test approved roles), but I got quite tired of EVERY SINGLE MENTION of Averil pertaining to her beauty before anything else. If there was anything else even being mentioned. If you take away Averil's beauty and her desire for vengeance for her family, there's nothing left to her. Without her beauty, she'd crumble to dust and float away in the breeze. True, she's compassionate for those who are weaker than she is, or less able to defend themselves - but honestly I felt that this was just offered to contrast other women who weren't compassionate, or, in the case of the quoted section above, to uphold her family's sense of honor by sacrificing herself for someone else. I felt like she was too "perfect".

The rest of the characters were pretty much just pawns - set in place when it was convenient to the story, and absent when they weren't.

My final annoyance with this book is in regards to the end. So this will be spoilery. Click at your own risk. (view spoiler)

So. In short. I did not like this book. I had hoped to, I feel that with some major revisions it could be much better... but based on what I read, it didn't do it for me.

Nonie says

I read this book in a weekend. It flows so well that time whizzes by without you realising how much you have read. I knew very little about the period and the book has sparked a real interest to find out more about the tribes and their culture. I liked the balance of the themes such as honour, revenge and romance and the fact that the romantic element does not dominate.

I would definitely recommend this book - a genuine page turner.

Jackie says

1 1/2 stars- the 1/2 star is being generous.

Janet Hecht says

The Sword and the Passion is a historical romance set in 470 AD in Angeln, North Germany. A Civil War is being waged throughout the kingdom and Averil, a young woman, is the only surviving member of her royal family after a massacre. After the massacre she is enslaved. We share Averil's story with her as she follows a long fight for her freedom, the restoration of her family's honor, and the development of a love for one man.

I love historical fiction and I found this to be well-researched. I do wish that the author had elaborated more on the setting and the principal figures of the time as I did not know a lot about this location and time period. The characters were well-developed and the brutality and the role of women in the time period were well depicted. The story flowed well and I appreciated that the protagonist was a strong, independent woman. There was one section that alternated between between two people which I found confusing.

To me, the story read more as a romance set in an historical setting than as historical fiction. This wasn't what I was expecting based upon the description. I wish the story had spent more time discussing the time period and less time on the romance. It lacked the depth that I personally desire from historical fiction. By a third of the way through the book, I was tired of hearing about the breathtaking beauty of Averil. However, this continued throughout the rest of the book.

There were a plethora of grammatical errors and typos throughout the book. Normally, I can overlook a few of these (although they're annoying), but there were so many in his book it really distracted from the story. I felt like I was back in graduate school and teaching undergrads. I found myself highlighting all these errors as I went through the book, which is not how I want to spend my time when reading for pleasure. if I spend over \$5.00 for an ebook, I should not encounter these problems.

Izzy says

I couldn't put this book down, when you stay up until 4 in the morning you know you have a good book! I

fell in love with Averil, what an amazing character. I hope this turns in to a series I would definitely love to know what happens next.

Sophie Sweatman says

Read in two sittings, only because had to go to sleep. So well researched that the settings, dialogue, characters and their names and customs all seemed just right. Evoked the thrill of life in Dark Ages with its delights and dangers. Covered some much loved themes of connection, romance, struggle and jeopardy with surprising plot twists.

To paraphrase Samuel Johnson in Blackadder, it is a rollicking page-turning rollercoaster of a read.

Would make fantastic film. Chapter and section headings start with such succinct scene and atmosphere settings. At no point did I think, as a journalist, 'that should have been said like that'. It all hit the spot.

Emma says

Thanks so much for this wonderful story! I really enjoyed it and just couldn't put it down! It transported me to another time and place where habits and customs are so different but the feelings of people remain the same. All the way through there is a dramatic mixture of love, suspense and adventure intertwining, you just don't know what is going to happen next. I completely fell in love with the main characters, the heroine Averil is amazing, and I also really enjoyed hating some of the other characters. I didn't want this story to end. I really hope Yanina Stachura is going to publish a novel soon

Florence Duchateau says

I loved it, could not put it down! It is written with such passion, I felt transported in the story from the first page.

Yanina Stachura has a way of 'painting' those dark ages with a fantastic rawness coupled with sensibility. It is intense, dark, sexy and romantic, and written beautifully.

The characters will stay with me forever.

I will look out for Yanina Stachura's next novels!

Jackballoon says

This book had too many errors; in spelling, in whole words, and especially punctuation. It contained abundant romance, which I'd rather do without. Also some of today's phrases that I don't think they used then. The story could have been good if cleaned up, edited, and classified as romance, rather than H F.

Karen Osborne says

I was just going to take a peek at the book as I was reading another at the time, and I was hooked immediately and finished it before going back to my original book. The story was wonderful, filled with well written characters. The author did a great job making these characters real and her detail of the time period made me able escape into a time I was unfamiliar with. I can't wait to read more from this author.

Sandy from Alaska Colón says

Enjoyable and light read. I would classify the book as historical fiction with a huge dose of romance and adventure thrown in! I would read another book written by this author.

Lisasue says

It's unfortunate that I am reading this book immediately after finishing Hild, because it suffers hugely from comparison. Both books have a similar setting, both in time and place. However, Hild is incredible, while this book is not.

Apples and oranges....certainly not fair to compare. "The Sword And The Passion" is really a straight-up romance novel for the most part. I'm not a literary snob. I love a good romance novel (Amanda Quick, anyone? Or how about Julia London?) Romance novels can definitely be well-written, but this one isn't, I'm sorry to say. For a romance novel, this one certainly does not have much heart-thumping passion, entertaining flirting, or tortuous lust between the couple.

My anger about the poor editing and total lack of proof-reading only increased as I struggled manfully to the end. The constant mention of the incredible beauty of the main character added salt to the wound.

I would not recommend this book to anyone.
