

The Danelle Harmon Newsletter... June 1996

Greetings from the United Kingdom!

It's late spring here and England's gardens are in full bloom. Pansies burst from pots, tubs and window boxes. Roses the size of soup bowls drape walls and fences, and thread their way up latticed trellises. Purple aubrietia spills from rock crevasses, wisteria hugs old cottages and manor houses alike. Wild red poppies, nodding in the breeze, are strewn by the thousands across pastures choked with thistle and clover. Wheat, barley, and rye grow tall in the sun, and the last fields of rape seed glow yellow as though coloured by a huge fluorescent highlighter pen. The woods are carpeted with bluebells; the fields, with millions of dandelions and tiny daisies. Nettle crowds the footpaths, ivy drips from the trees, and in the nearby River Thames, elegant swans are trailed by their fuzzy cygnets. A cuckoo still calls from the woods bordering the field where I take Roscoe for his morning run, and pheasants, blackbirds, and robins -- the English variety! -- are everywhere.

With the beauty of the season surrounding me, I can't think of a better time than now to let you know I've got a new book coming out. My sixth release for Avon, it's entitled [*Wicked At Heart*](#) (ISBN 0-380-78004-6) and will be in the stores in mid-July. I'm very excited about *Wicked At Heart*; so is my editor, Christine Zika who, I hear, has been raving about it all over New York! Early reviews are already praising it, [Romantic Times Magazine](#) has just given its hero, Damon, its prestigious K.I.S.S. Award, and those who've seen a [sneak peek](#) are clamoring for more!

So what's it about?

Wicked At Heart, set in England during the summer of 1813, is the quintessential beauty and the beast tale. The beauty is Lady Gwyneth Evans Simms, a widowed young social reformer who sets out to improve conditions upon the prison hulks anchored in England's harbours. The beast is Damon, the dark and dangerous Marquess of Morninghall, a man tortured by his past, pursued by inner demons, and driven by his need for revenge. When brave Gwyneth clashes with devil-Damon over the mistreatment of prisoners of war, the two are catapulted down a stormy path of conflict and courage, passion and peril, endangering both their lives before love and happiness can finally be theirs.

Okay, so the book is packed with drama and pathos, struggle and high emotion. But just how torrid is it?

Ahem!

It's blazing hot. It's stormy and intense. Without question, this fiery lord and lady are my most impassioned pair of lovers yet. In fact, these two will burn the pages right out from under your fingertips! They'll steam up your reading glasses and make you fan your face with the book! And that's not all. As a special treat, I've invited some of my favourite characters from the past to join the set of *Wicked At Heart*. Remember Admiral Sir Graham Falconer from [My Lady Pirate](#) (who also won a K.I.S.S. Award from Romantic Times) and his piratical wife Maeve? And Orla, the spritely Irishwoman who was second-in-command aboard Maeve's pirate ship Kestrel? They're all here... and just wait 'til you meet the man who sweeps lovelorn Orla off her feet! And finally, I have a new Merrick to introduce to you: Connor, Maeve's sexy, charming brother. I can already hear readers clamoring for his story!

Unlike my previous titles, *Wicked At Heart* is no light "love and laughter" story, but an intense roller-coaster ride through the emotions. As Romantic Times says, "Strong, emotional, dark and sensual, *Wicked At Heart* takes the reader by storm. Ms. Harmon has outdone herself!"

I hope you'll agree -- and that you'll take Damon and Gwyneth with you wherever you go on your holiday!

Wishing you all a safe and happy summer,

Danelle Harmon,
Oxfordshire, England.

Other early raves for *Wicked At Heart*:

"The sex is great!"... *GEnie Romance and Women's Fiction Reviews*.

"From tragedy to triumph you will remember [Ms. Harmon's] vivid characters for some time to come -- and you'll take them to your heart! Ms. Harmon remains a forerunner in historical romance!"... *Diane Potwin, The Literary Times*.

Don't judge that book by its cover!

When [Taken By Storm](#) came out last year, I received many letters from readers who demanded to know why my handsome fair-haired hero, Colin, showed up on the cover of the book with hair that was as black as a raven's wing. They weren't the only ones to question such a blatant error! Have you ever wondered what goes on behind the scenes of cover design? Or why covers often don't reflect the characters they're supposed to represent? For my tongue-in-cheek views on cover art, then have a look at my article in the summer issue of [The Literary Times](#) for the full rundown!

A taste of Britain

Since moving to England in 1994, I've had to learn how to do a lot of things differently. From the way I drive a car to the way I write a cheque, from the way I dress to the way I think and act, it's been a process of exploration, discovery and re-learning. Whoever said that America and Britain are two countries divided by a common language sure did know what they were talking about! However, one of the nice things about living in a faraway place is the chance to discover new and fun things to eat. I've had to replace Oreos with digestives, New England seafood with English lamb (no I don't eat the beef!), and Ben and Jerry's with Walls. Now, I am by no means of anyone's stretch of imagination a great cook (though our dog might dispute that), but I've found lots of new foods here that have fast joined my lists of favourites. Below is a recipe for one of them, given to me by a woman in my church whose mum is straight from Yorkshire. Never mind the rather off- putting title; there are no toads in this old English dish, and it is indeed a wonderful (albeit fattening) meal!

Toad In The Hole (serves 4)

1 cup plain flour (not the self-raising kind!)
Pinch each of salt and pepper
Approximately 3 tablespoons cooking oil
1 egg
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup milk mixed with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water
Approximately 8 small sausages, uncooked

Preheat oven to 375F. Put oil into the bottom of a shallow baking dish (about the size of a pie plate) and place into the oven to get the oil piping hot. Meanwhile, put the flour, salt and pepper into a bowl and stir together. Make a well in the centre of the flour, break egg into it and beat by hand, gradually adding the milk/water mixture until the lumps are gone and the batter is the consistency of thick pouring cream. When oil is piping hot in the oven, quickly remove the dish, put in the sausages, and immediately pour the batter over all, returning to the oven as quickly as possible. (The key is to get the oil really hot, and to put the sausages and batter in as fast as you can!) Bake for about 30 minutes, or until it's puffy, crispy, and golden brown.