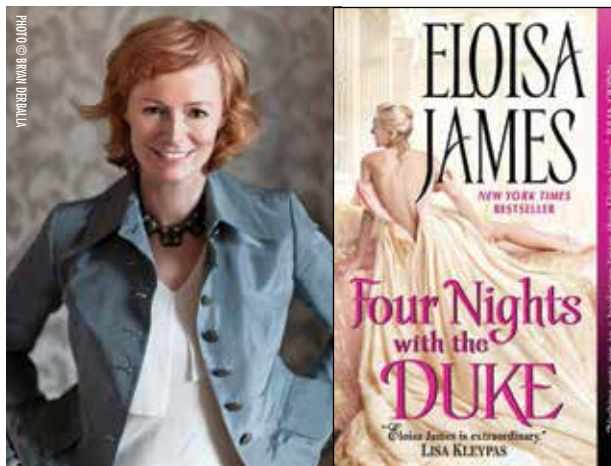


# London Calling

**ELOISA JAMES** PROVES THAT LIFE IMITATES ART  
— EVEN IN ROMANCE NOVELS

By Jennifer Peters

ELOISA JAMES is the queen of historical romance, with more than two dozen novels featuring some of the most heroic dukes and charming duchesses the Regency has to offer. In her latest, ***Four Nights With the Duke*** (Avon, Apr.), she meshes real life with fiction, offering readers a delightful heroine who happens to be a romance writer! We talked to her about great authors, love and London.



**In *Four Nights With the Duke*, Mia is a romance writer. How does her experience as a writer compare to yours?** Genre fiction is such an interesting beast: You need to write within severe restrictions (HEA, for one), and at the same time, if you don't make each novel true to life, the novel dies on the page. Each one of my books has wellsprings in my own life. Mia pours her belief in romance into her books, and I do the same thing. I really had fun depicting the publishing world.

**In the book, you talk about some of the female novelists of the Regency era. Would we be featuring authors like Sarah Scudgell Wilkinson and Anna Maria Bennett if they were writing today? How would they relate to today's romances?** I think there's no question that Wilkinson and Bennett would be at the top of the New York Times bestseller list! They understood the heart of their market, and they wrote to it. As for what they'd think of today's novels, I think they'd recognize a lot in the genre — the heroine's anguish, for example — and be surprised by other aspects, such as our emphasis on alpha men, not to mention our depictions of sexual intimacy.

**Even though Mia once vowed to never marry Vander, do you think they were destined for each other?** Absolutely! Remember, Vander had no idea Mia was listening to his dismissal of her as a "charity case." He was trying to steer a truly horrible kid away from ruining her reputation. Thrown together under almost any circumstances, Mia and Vander would have fallen in love — but a "Revenge of the Wallflower" plot was much more fun than a simple ballroom reacquaintance.

**You married your own romance novel hero — an Italian knight! As a romance reader, did you ever**

**imagine that would happen?** I did not imagine marrying a knight; in fact, I think one of the reasons our relationship was so successful was because I had every intention of marrying a nice American boy some day. It took away all the pressure. I think that having a joyful marriage is a great gift for a romance writer: I genuinely believe in happy endings.

**You're spending the year in England — a world quite familiar to your novels' heroines. What has it been like living in their world?** Fabulous! I've written so many scenes that mention Berkeley Square, for example, or the Whitefriars, St. Paul's Cathedral, Hyde Park. It's an enormous thrill to be living in and around the city in which I've placed over 20 novels.

**If one of your heroines were to step into a time machine and land in 2015, how would they react to our world?** I think the hardest adjustment would likely be in terms of gender roles. For example, my heroine in *Once Upon a Tower* is a cellist reconciled to the fact that she can never play in public (a cello, held between a woman's legs, was viewed as wildly immodest). She would be first in line for auditions at the New York Symphony!

**What's next for the Desperate Duchesses?** Next up in the series is *Seven Minutes in Heaven* ... and all I will say about that is that Edward's story is really quite ... heavenly!

**What else are you working on at the moment?** I'm writing a delightfully funny book called *My American Duchess* that began as a novella and then just kept going — it was too much fun to stop at 100 pages! My heroine is from Boston, and she's a plucky, beautiful girl who just can't seem to stop messing up in strict Regency England. The worst thing she does? Eat the rented pineapple at a dinner party ... The horror! ✧

For more information, visit Eloisa James' website at [EloisaJames.com](http://EloisaJames.com).

**Meet Eloisa at the RT Booklovers Convention in Dallas, May 12-17.** You can join her and Lisa Kleypas for the Flaunt Your Fascinator! event on Saturday, May 16 as part of the FAN-tastic Day program (see page 95). Tickets are sold on [RTConvention.com](http://RTConvention.com).