



# The Captive (Captive Hearts)

By Grace Burrowes

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**A *USA Today* bestseller**

**He'll never be free...**

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**Until he surrenders his heart...**

Gilly endured her difficult marriage by avoiding confrontation and keeping peace at any cost. Christian's devotion to his daughter and his kindness toward Gilly give her hope that she could enjoy a future with him, for surely he of all men shares her loathing for violence in any form. Little does Gilly know, the battle for Christian's heart is only beginning.

**Captive Hearts series:**

The Captive (Book 1)

The Traitor (Book 2)

The Laird (Book 3)

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## **The Captive (Captive Hearts) By Grace Burrowes Bibliography**

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## Editorial Review

### Review

"An unusually dark and moving Regency-era love story between a tortured nobleman and a young widow." - *Shelf Awareness for Readers*

"Burrowes deftly builds the romantic tension amid lovely layers of domestic tranquility and honest conversations... [an] engrossing story." - *Publishers Weekly*

"This is a beautiful story of redemption and love's power over evil, but even more so it is a story that wrenches readers' emotions, yet leaves them utterly satisfied. Let Burrowes lift your heart." - *RT Book Reviews*

"The popular, prolific Burrowes begins a new series with her signature mix of emotional intensity, lush storytelling and intelligent writing... Smart, compelling and captivating." - *Kirkus*

"Unique and well-written... the characters and their love make for a memorable romance." - *Booklist*

"Overall I was really loving this book. I'm going to check out more of the *Captive Hearts* series when they start coming out. This is the first book I've read by Burrowes and I will be checking out more as soon as I can.

You might also like: " - *Awesomesauce Bookclub*

""The popular, prolific Burrowes begins a new series with her signature mix of emotional intensity, lush storytelling and intelligent writing... Smart, compelling and captivating."" - *Kirkus*

"I found that I could not put down THE CAPTIVE. The romance was poignant and touching, and the threads of the events happening were woven together by Grace Burrowes to form an emotional, well paced book, one of my very favorites by her." - *Fresh Fiction*

"This book was SO well written. The timing of events was perfect, the romance was perfect (and HOT) and the resolution was perfect." - *Buried Under Romance*

"Burrowes nimbly guides readers from darkness to healing and love in this promising beginning." - *Shelf Awareness for Readers*

"This was my first time reading a Grace Burrows book but it definitely not be my last! " - *Monlatable Book Reviews*

" The *Captive* is spellbinding and is a definitive exclamations of love and life, but Grace Burrowes does it in a quietly elegant way. The writing is amazing, the vision/purpose of the story startlingly clear, and the characters are just ... Wow. Truly, there are no words." - *Love Saves the World*

"I can always count on Grace Burrowes to deliver a beautifully written book with compelling characters. In *The Captive*, she adds a lovely, evocative story of lost souls finding their way." - *SOS Aloha*

"Overall, it's a touching and charming romance about two people who are getting a second chance at happiness. It's easy to fall in love Christian and Gilly which only makes their HEA all the better. Burrowes gives us a lovely introduction to new series, and I'll definitely be keeping my eyes out for the rest." - **Book Munchies**

"WOW! Another grand slam by Grace Burrowes. I really ... REALLY enjoyed this historical romance. I love that Grace writes mature, "lived life a little and now much wiser" kind of characters. I think this is the big reason why her stories seems to flow so naturally and always before I know it, I am finished the book. The believability is front and centre as is the ability to feel sympathy and compassion. I always FEEL FEEL FEEL reading a Grace Burrowes book and I absolutely love that. I also adore that she always seems to write the perfect match for her often conflicted characters and somehow they always seem to break the mold and become one of a kind!" 5 out of 5" - **The Reading Cafe**

"Grace Burrowes is back in very fine form with *The Captive*. There is a tortured hero, a damaged heroine, and a hidden enemy. Throw in a daughter who will not talk and romance to complete the mix. I loved Gilly. She endured a horrible marriage but emerges strong and full of empathy. Christian needs someone like Gilly for himself and for his daughter." - **Mixed Book Bag**

#### About the Author

*New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author Grace Burrowes' bestsellers include *The Heir*, *The Soldier*, *Lady Maggie's Secret Scandal*, *Lady Sophie's Christmas Wish* and *Lady Eve's Indiscretion*. Her Regency romances and Scotland-set Victorian romances have received extensive praise, including starred reviews from *Publishers Weekly* and *Booklist*. *The Heir* was a *Publishers Weekly* Best Book of 2010, *The Soldier* was a PW Best Spring Romance of 2011, *Lady Sophie's Christmas Wish* and *Once Upon a Tartan* have both won RT Reviewers' Choice Awards, *Lady Louisa's Christmas Knight* was a *Library Journal* Best Book of 2012, *The Bridegroom Wore Plaid* was a PW Best Book of 2012. Two of her MacGregor heroes have won KISS awards. Grace is a practicing family law attorney and lives in rural Maryland.

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#### One

In his personal hell, Christian Donatus Severn, eighth Duke of Mercia, considered the pedagogic days the worst of a horrific lot-also the most precious. The days when his captors used his suffering to teach the arcane art of interrogation might cost him his sanity, even his honor, but they also ensured he would some day, some night, some eternity if necessary, have that sweetest of satisfactions-revenge.

"You see before you the mortal form of a once great and powerful man, Corporal," Girard said, pacing slowly between the table his prisoner had been lashed to and the damp stone wall where the corporal stood at attention.

Girard was a stranger to hurry, a necessary trait in a torturer. A big, dark, lean acolyte of the Corsican, Girard lived in Christian's awareness the way consumption dwelled in the minds of those it afflicted.

"Our duke is still great, to my mind," Girard went on, "because His Grace has not, as the English say, broken."

Girard blathered on in his subtly accented French, and despite willing it to the contrary, Christian translated easily. As Girard's ironic praise and patriotic devotion blended in a curiously mesmerizing patter, Girard's superior, Henri Anduvoir-the actual intended student-lurked off in the shadows.

Bad luck in a man's superiors was not the exclusive province of Wellington's army. Girard made a science of extracting truth from those reluctant to part with it, and pain was only one tool at his disposal.

Anduvoir, a simpler and in some ways more-evil soul, was plainly addicted to hurting others for his own entertainment.

Christian filled his mind with the lovely truth that someday Anduvoir, too, would be made to suffer, and suffer, and suffer.

"Yet. Our duke has not broken yet," Girard went on. "I challenge you, Corporal, to devise the torment or the prize that will break him, but be mindful that our challenge grows the longer His Grace is silent. When the good God above put Mercia into our hands all those months ago, we sought to know through which pass Wellington would move his troops. We know now, so what, I ask you, is the point of the exercise? Why not simply toss this living carcass to the wolves?"

Yes, please God, why not?

And then another thought intruded on Christian's efforts to distance himself from the goings-on in that cell: Was Girard letting slip that Wellington had, in fact, moved troops into France itself? Girard played a diabolical game of cat and mouse, hope and despair, in a role that blended tormenter and protector with a subtlety a better-fed man might find fascinating.

"We yet enjoy His Grace's charming company because the duke serves another purpose," Girard prosed on. "He did not break, so we must conclude he is sent here to teach us the breaking of a strong man. One might say, an inhumanly strong man. Now..."

The scent of rich Turkish tobacco wafted to Christian's nose, cutting through the fragrance of lavender Girard favored and the perpetual damp of the Château's lower reaches. Christian's meager breakfast threatened a reappearance, a helpful development in truth. He focused not on Girard's lilting, philosophical French, but on holding the nausea at bay, for he had reason to know a man could choke on his own vomit.

A boot scraped, and by senses other than sight, Christian divined that Anduvoir had come out of his shadows, a reptile in search of his favorite variety of heat.

"Enough lecturing, Colonel Girard. Your pet has not told us of troop movements. In fact, the man no longer talks at all, do you, mon duc?" Anduvoir sucked a slow drag of his cigar, then gently placed the moist end of it against Christian's lips. "I long for the sound of even one hearty English scream. Long for it desperately."

Christian turned his head away in a response Girard, who was by no means a stupid man, would have predicted. Anduvoir was an infrequent visitor, though, and like any attentive host-or prudent subordinate-Girard trotted out the best entertainments for his guest.

Anduvoir moved into Christian's line of sight, which, given the careful lack of expression on Girard's face, was bad news all around. Anduvoir was short, dark, coarse featured, and behind his Gallic posturing, suffused with the glee of a bully whose victim could not elude torment.

"A quiet man, our duke." Anduvoir expelled smoke through his nose. "Or perhaps, not so quiet."

He laid the burning tip of the cigar against the soft skin inside Christian's elbow with the same care he'd put it to his prisoner's mouth, letting a small silence mark the moment when the scent of scorched flesh rose.

The blinding, searing pain howled from Christian's arm to his mind, where it joined the memory of a

thousand similar pains and coalesced into one roaring chant:

Revenge!

\*\*\*

"Lord Greendale was a man of great influence," Dr. Martin said, clearing his throat in a manner Gilly was coming to loathe, the way she'd loathed the sight of Greendale lighting one of his foul cheroots in her private parlor.

"His lordship enjoyed very great influence," Gilly concurred, eyes down, as befit a woman facing the widowed state.

The bad news came exactly as expected: "You should prepare for an inquest, my lady."

"An inquest?" Gilly gestured for her guest to take a seat, eight years of marriage to Greendale having taught her to produce an appearance of calm at will. "Theophilus, the man of great influence was universally disliked, approaching his threescore and ten, and the victim of an apoplexy in the midst of a formal dinner for twenty-eight of his most trusted toadies. What will an inquest serve?"

Since Greendale's apoplexy, Gilly had dared to order that the fires in her parlor be kept burning through the day, and yet, the physician's words chilled her more effectively than if a window had banged open.

"Lady Greendale..." Martin shifted a black satchel from right hand to left, making the contents rattle softly. Gilly was convinced the only items of interest in that bag were a selection of pocket flasks.

"Countess, you must not speak so freely, even to me. I will certainly be put under oath and questioned at length. I cannot imagine what the wrong words in the hands of the lawyers will do to your reputation."

His wrong words, over which he'd have no control, of course. A just God would afflict such a physician with a slow, painful death.

"Reputation matters little if one is to swing for murder."

"It won't come to that," Martin said, but he remained poised by the door, bag in hand, as if lingering in Gilly's presence might taint him not with her guilt-for she was innocent of wrongdoing toward her late spouse-but with her vulnerability to accusations. "I had Harrison consult on the case, and he confirmed my diagnosis by letter not two days after the apoplexy."

Dr. Theophilus Martin had observed this precaution not because he was intent on safeguarding Greendale's young widow, but because his late, unlamented lordship had created an air of mistrust thick enough to pollute every corner of the house.

"What am I to be charged with?" Stupidity, certainly, for having married Greendale, but Gilly's family had been adamant-"You'll be a countess!"-and she'd been so young...

Dr. Martin smoothed a soft hand over snow-white hair. "You are not accused of anything."

His lengthy, silent examination of the framed verses of Psalm 23 hanging over the sideboard confirmed that Gilly would, indeed, face suspicion. Her life had become a series of accusations grounded in nothing more than an old man's febrile imagination, and he'd made those accusations where any servant might have overheard them.

"They will say I put a pillow over his face, won't they?"

"They can't. You had a nurse in the room at all times, didn't you? Lovely stitch work, my lady."

Gilly had been accompanied by two nurses, as often as possible, and the stitch work would go to the poorhouse as soon as the inquest was over.

"If I was with his lordship, a nurse was always present-or you, yourself. Will the nurses be suspect?"

She did not ask if Martin would come under suspicion, because quite honestly, she was too afraid to care. He'd been summoned to Greendale Hall on many occasions, and had socialized with Lord Greendale as often as he'd treated him. His solicitude of Gilly now likely had to do with seeing his substantial bill paid.

"I hired the nurses based on my personal experience of them, so no, I shouldn't think they'll come under suspicion," Martin said.

Because the physician was eyeing the door, Gilly fired off the most important question, and to Hades with dignity.

"Who's behind this, Theophilus? My husband is not yet put in the ground, and already you're telling me of an inquest."

Though thank a merciful Deity, Martin's torpid humanitarian instincts had resulted in this warning, at least. Another smoothing of his leonine mane followed, while the fingers of his left hand tightened on the black leather handle tellingly.

"I thought it the better part of kindness not to burden you with this news prematurely, but Lord Greendale himself apparently told his heir to see to the formalities."

And to think Gilly had prayed for her husband's recovery. "Easterbrook ordered this? He's still in France or Spain or somewhere serving the Crown."

"As heir to Lord Greendale's title and fortune, Marcus Easterbrook would have left instructions with his solicitors, and they would in turn have been in communication with King's Counsel and the local magistrate."

Men. Always so organized when bent on aggravation and aspersion. "Greendale was the magistrate. To whom does that dubious honor fall now?"

"Likely to Squire Gordon."

Gordon was a hounds-and-horses fellow, and he'd never toadied to Greendale. A fraction of Gilly's panic eased.

"Shall you have some tea, Theophilus? It's good and hot." Also strong for a change, Gilly's second act of independence from the infernal economies Greendale had imposed on her.

"Thank you, my lady, but no." Martin turned toward the door, then hesitated, hand on the latch.

"You needn't tarry, Theophilus. You've served the family loyally, and that has been far from easy." He'd served the family discreetly, too. Very discreetly. "I suppose I'll see you at the inquest."

He nodded once and slipped away, confirming that he would not call in even a professional capacity before

the legalities were resolved, not if he wanted to maintain the appearance of impartiality. Not if he wanted to keep the Crown's men from turning their sights on him as well.

Gilly added coal to the fire-rest in peace, Lord Greendale-and stared into the flames for long moments, weighing her very few options as best one could weigh options when in a flat, terrified panic.

As her strong, hot tea grew tepid in the pot, she sat down with pen and ink, and begged an interview with Gervaise Stoneleigh, the coldest, most astute, most expensive barrister ever to turn down Greendale's coin.

And that decision very likely saved her life.

\*\*\*

"Girard gave me final orders concerning you."

Christian turned his head slowly. He was still recovering from the last teaching day, a sorry effort on the corporal's part, consisting of familiar tortures enthusiastically applied the better to impress Anduvoir, while Girard had stood bristling with silent censure.

Girard did not approve of brute maneuvers that produced no results, and one had to respect Girard's sense of efficiency.

"You don't care that Girard might have given me orders to kill you, do you?"

The jailer sounded Irish, or on rare occasions when nobody else was about, Scottish, and Christian admitted-in the endless privacy of his thoughts-to being grateful to hear English in any accent other than French.

And typical of Girard's cunning, the jailer was also a frequent source of small kindnesses intended to torment the prisoner with that most cruel weapon: hope.

"Girard said I'm not to allow you to suffer, on account of what's gone before. Said you'd earned your battle honors, so to speak, though it would be a mercy to allow you to join your duchess and your son. He said you're a man who can trust no one, and the life that awaits you won't be worth living for long, assuming your enemies don't ambush you from the hedges of Surrey."

Ah. The old lie, for Christian had no enemies in Surrey, and his wife and son yet thrived at home in England. Severn was a veritable fortress, staffed by retainers whose loyalty went back generations. Girard was simply a petty evil allowed to flourish in the bowels of the Grand Armée's outpost on the slopes of the Pyrenees, and this claim that Helene and Evan were dead was merely a blunt weapon in Girard's arsenal.

Which Girard would pay for using.

Christian focused on ignoring the man speaking to him, a big blond fellow with watchful green eyes and a wary devotion to Girard. Girard referred to him as "Michel"; the other guards quietly referred to him in less affectionate terms.

The jailer held a gleaming, bone-handled knife, its presence a matter of complete indifference to Christian-almost. The knife had become something of a friend to Christian-for a time-until Anduvoir had found a use for it no man could contemplate sanely.

"Orthez fell in February," the jailer said, still lingering near the open door of the cell-a taunt, that, leaving the cell door unlatched when Christian was powerless to escape. "That was weeks ago, not that you'd know, poor



sod. Bordeaux was last month. Toulouse has been taken, and we've heard rumors Napoleon has abdicated. Girard's gone."

None of it was true. These fairy tales were a variation on the stories the jailer told from time to time in an effort to raise hopes. Christian knew better: hopes that refused to rise couldn't be dashed.

The jailer came no closer.

"I've seen what went on here, and I'm sorry for it," he said, sounding Scottish indeed, and damnably sincere. "Girard is sorry for it, too. This was war, true enough, but when Anduvoir came around..."

But nothing. Christian was tied to the cot, a periodic nuisance he'd long since become inured to. Girard's greatest cruelty had been to show his prisoner only enough care to ensure Christian wouldn't die. The mattress was thin but clean, and Christian probably had more blankets than the infantry quartered elsewhere in the old château.

He was fed.

If he refused to eat, he was fed by force. If he refused to bathe, he was bathed by force as well. If he refused his occasional sortie into the château's courtyard, where fresh air and sunshine assaulted his senses every bit as brutally as the guards assaulted his body, he was escorted there by force.

Eventually, the force had been unnecessary, for a man strong enough to escape was a man who preserved the hope of revenge, and Christian wanted to remain that strong. He endured the fresh air and sunlight, he ate the food given him by his captors, nourishing not himself, but his dreams of revenge.

Girard had understood that too, and had understood how to manipulate even that last, best hope.

Christian was required to heal between sessions with Girard or the various corporals, and he was given medical care when the corporals-or more often Anduvoir-got out of hand. Now he'd earned a simple, relatively painless death.

He tried to muster gratitude, fear, relief, something.

Anything besides a towering regret that revenge would be denied him.

"I'm sorry," the jailer said again. "I'm so bloody sorry."

Girard had said the same things, always softly, always sincerely, as he'd lowered Christian carefully to the cot where the mandatory healing would commence.

Christian felt the knife slicing at the bindings around his wrists and ankles, felt the agony of blood surging into his hands, then his feet.

"I'm sorry," the jailer said again.

And then Christian felt...nothing.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

**Richard Reardon:**

Reading a guide tends to be new life style on this era globalization. With reading through you can get a lot of information that could give you benefit in your life. Along with book everyone in this world can share their idea. Publications can also inspire a lot of people. Lots of author can inspire all their reader with their story or their experience. Not only the storyline that share in the publications. But also they write about the information about something that you need instance. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach your sons or daughters, there are many kinds of book which exist now. The authors in this world always try to improve their skill in writing, they also doing some research before they write for their book. One of them is this The Captive (Captive Hearts).

**Stephen Hancock:**

The e-book with title The Captive (Captive Hearts) includes a lot of information that you can discover it. You can get a lot of advantage after read this book. This kind of book exist new information the information that exist in this guide represented the condition of the world now. That is important to yo7u to be aware of how the improvement of the world. This kind of book will bring you inside new era of the syndication. You can read the e-book with your smart phone, so you can read it anywhere you want.

**Tara Huber:**

Why? Because this The Captive (Captive Hearts) is an unordinary book that the inside of the reserve waiting for you to snap the item but latter it will distress you with the secret the idea inside. Reading this book alongside it was fantastic author who write the book in such awesome way makes the content on the inside easier to understand, entertaining means but still convey the meaning completely. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this any more or you going to regret it. This phenomenal book will give you a lot of rewards than the other book have such as help improving your ability and your critical thinking means. So , still want to postpone having that book? If I were being you I will go to the e-book store hurriedly.

**Jamie Harper:**

The Captive (Captive Hearts) can be one of your beginner books that are good idea. We recommend that straight away because this e-book has good vocabulary that could increase your knowledge in vocab, easy to understand, bit entertaining but still delivering the information. The article author giving his/her effort to get every word into satisfaction arrangement in writing The Captive (Captive Hearts) but doesn't forget the main stage, giving the reader the hottest and based confirm resource information that maybe you can be one of it. This great information can drawn you into brand-new stage of crucial thinking.

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