

A Heart Worth Stealing: Proper Romance Regency Series

Joanna Barker

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In Joanna Barker's beguiling romance novel *A Heart Worth Stealing*, more goes missing than romantic affection.

When Ginny's father's watch is stolen from the family estate that he left under her care, she is eager to find it. But the local magistrate is dismissive of her concerns, so Ginny hires Jack, a thief-taker and a former Bow Street Runner, to track it down.

Ginny has to hide Jack in plain sight so that he can protect the estate; she introduces him to others as her cousin. But the more time that they spend together, the more questions they face. Traded looks lead to sparks between them too.

Fast-paced and fun, this romantic novel features a heroine of uncommon pluck who defies conventions. At her opposite is dark-haired Jack, the unacknowledged son of an earl; he is charming and handsome, and his investigative savvy recommends him further. He soothes and comforts Ginny, whose fixation on the watch does not conceal the fact that she's in mourning. They establish a zippy rapport, and their mutual attraction mounts.

A best friend who's been somewhat disgraced, a presumptuous magistrate who was trained by Ginny's own father, a family-like staff, and a cheeky helpmate of Jack's from London round out the cast. Class issues are covered, and the appearance of Ginny's jealous older sister (from her father's first marriage) leads to confrontations of emotional heft. A final plot twist deepens the story even more.

The historical romance novel *A Heart Worth Stealing* pairs an unusual, independent young woman with a compelling investigator to captivating effect.

CAMILLE-YVETTE WELSCH (May / June 2023)

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