

Quicksand: A Family Foundation: Book One

Victoria Thomas

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The detailed setting of this historical romance creates the atmosphere of a Victorian novel.

Quicksand: A Family Foundation, by Victoria Thomas, is a story of love, marriage, and family in mid-to-late 1800s France. With close similarities to *Jane Eyre*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Wuthering Heights*, this novel touches on true love, shameful mistakes, tragic loss, and picking up the pieces of a life thought to be broken.

Although her beauty is legendary, Emma Bouron is a young woman with extremely low self-esteem. When she meets Joseph Head, she has a broken spirit, having been abandoned by what she thinks is her first love only two years prior. Joseph and Emma experience love at first sight: they both feel as if they are born anew within one another from the very start. The courtship takes off at lightning speed as they love each other with complete abandon. Not very long after their courtship begins, Joseph asks for Emma's hand in marriage, and soon, they have a child. Life is beautiful for their loving and growing family, but when tragedy strikes, Emma makes a mistake that will haunt her until the end of her days.

The strikingly sound resemblance to Victorian literature is one of the most moving aspects of this book. Elaborate, detailed descriptions of life in this era—including French etiquette, balls, and evening gowns during courtship, and the tragic realities of war, loss, and death during childbirth—form vibrant pictures. Equally as impressive is the strategic placement of characters throughout the story. From the servants to the driver to close family friends, each character is beautifully created, with a distinct personality and the backstory to match.

The change in Emma's character throughout is very beautifully done. Emma is presented as a shy, coy woman who thinks very little of herself, resulting in her complete disconnection with the world of courtship. Yet she blossoms into a classy and confident woman who learns to use her charm, beauty, and intelligence to get through tough spells in her life. Watching this transformation, as well as the change in her sister, Claudine, is not only entertaining but also rewarding, as Emma and Claudine grow into successful women.

The pacing of this novel, however, is extremely slow until the last third of the story. With many of the words and phrases repeated continually, the feeling of reading and rereading the same passage occurs throughout, which can become quite distracting as the story progresses. Other than this, with smooth transitioning chapters and a moderate tone, the book is clean and well written, having the feel of being created in the 1800s. The cover of the novel also serves the content well.

Quicksand: A Family Foundation will be a good choice for those who enjoy curling up with historical dramas of nineteenth-century Europe.

JESSICA S. COUNCIL (November 19, 2014)

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