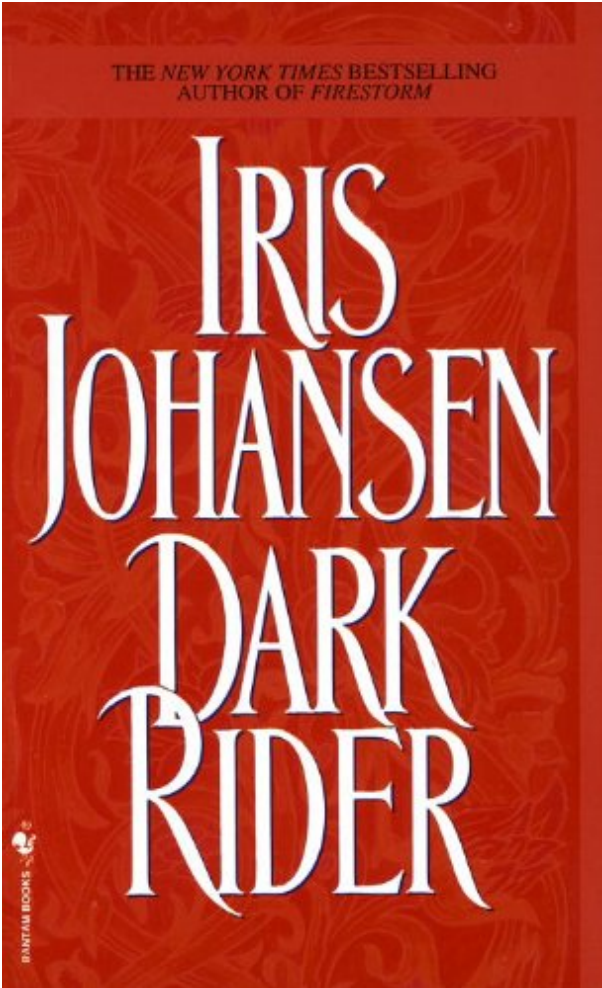


# DARK RIDER BY IRIS JOHANSEN



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THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING  
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From Publishers Weekly

Cassie Deville rips off her own bodice at the start of this new romance by the author of *Midnight Warrior*. When Jared Danemount, Duke of Morland, meets the bare-breasted, sarong-swathed heroine on the beach in Regency-era Hawaii, he thinks she's just another Polynesian maiden. He doesn't know, as he tries to ride her wild stallion, Kapu, and gazes hungrily at her pectorals, that she is the daughter of his sworn enemy, Charles Deville, an artist who betrayed Jared's father during the Terror. Cassie offers herself as Jared's sexual hostage if he will take her, Kapu and Lani, Charles's Polynesian mistress, back to Europe with him so that she can try to save her father's life. Although, in a bit of role reversal, Cassie goes nightly to Jared's cabin aboard ship, she will not spend the night or give her heart. Johansen, who specializes in hot talk and steamy sexual politics, is less skilled once her lovers disembark. In unimposing Regency set pieces, Cassie makes friends with Jared's French ward, Josette; she shocks British high society with a low-cut red dress; she tries to save Jared's life as he stalks the cruel French villain. In a disjointed way, Johansen has provided sex talk for grown-ups and other scenes for adolescents.

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Review

Taken from France as a young child, Cassandra Deville has grown up wild and free in the South Seas. She spent her childhood following her artist father from island to island as her father crossed the seas, in constant fear that his mortal enemy would find and kill him. One day, when Cassie is on the brink of womanhood, the unthinkable happens. Jared Danemount, her father's sworn enemy, sails into the harbor with a retinue of sailors, ready to drag her father back to face his execution in France. Jared is enchanted with the bare breasted beauty he meets on the deserted beach. He's stunned to find that she is the daughter of the man he has sailed from England to capture. His desire for the beauty turns to rage when she drugs and binds him, allowing her father to escape back to France. Cassie knows that her father is on his way to France in a desperate attempt to clear his name. She strikes a bargain with Jared. She will sail to France as his hostage with the understanding that he will have his way with her. A battle of wills ensues that carries them across the seas to Jared's castle, where both find the true meaning of love and honor. Ms. Johansen draws her characters with passion and tenderness! A passionate, headstrong heroine you can cheer for! An entertaining voyage to the lush South Seas! This story sizzles with passion! Annette Carney -- Copyright © 1994-97 Literary Times, Inc. All rights reserved -- From Literary Times

From the Publisher

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Most helpful customer reviews

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful.

As tantalising as the bared breasts

By Kelly

I really enjoyed it. The setting at Hawaii gave an exotic and erotic backdrop. Jared first saw Cassie on a moonlit beach and thought she was a native since she dressed like them, just a sarong around her waist, leaving her tantalising breasts bared. That was a sure innocent way to arouse a man. But Cassie was not out to seduce, she was brought up at the island and thus not self-conscious about her body. Like most Iris Johansen heroines, Cassie unknowingly needed to be needed. She was very protective over Kapu, her beloved horse. Thank goodness it was not another child or dependent person. I liked reading about her resistance to stay in Jared's bed. Cassie wanted their lovemaking to be just mating, so as not to be vulnerable to betray her father. The sexual tension between Jared and Cassie was very strong, which added to the joy of reading the story. I enjoyed reading about how Cassie taunted Jared's command, in her small way but was extremely frustrating for Jared. The secondary characters did not have a cunning sense of humour as in her other books. Brandford was supposed to be but he was a tad bland. Josephine injected some energy into the story but had a relatively minor role in the story development.

7 of 8 people found the following review helpful.

good romance

By audrey frances

The book begins with a short prologue set in 1795 revolutionary France and then picks up in Hawaii in 1806. The happenings in France are at the heart of a mystery which motivates all the subsequent action, as a stranger appears one day who wants to exact revenge against Cassandra's father. She does not know what happened all those years ago, but she trusts her father, helping him to escape back to France while she stays behind to delay the young Duke of Morland. The characters are well-written, though Cassandra doubts her feelings long after a reasonable person would; also, a secondary romance develops between two likeable characters, which I enjoyed.

Conflict arises first from Cassie wanting the stranger to stay away from her father and later from wanting to reconcile her growing tenderness toward him while staying loyal to her father. The settings -- France, Hawaii and England -- are interesting and used to good effect. Horses figure largely here, and that's a good thing too. And ultimately what you want in a romance, a real desire to see the protagonists united, is here. Johansen writes in several genres and is talented in all of them. This romance was enjoyable and I would read others by this author.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Desperate Hero, Unlikable Heroine.....where's the love?

By Gee Bee

Why on earth would Jared marry Cassie? She never shows him any respect, friendship, caring, much less love. She wouldn't even admit that she enjoyed their sexual encounters. There was no romance in this

relationship and poor Jared is rebuffed every time he tries to give this girl some 'softness'. He compares her treatment of her horse and himself and realizes that he would never be the priority in her life. She knew that her father was guilty of some crime hence his need to run away from France and he even alludes to his guilt when Jared shows up on the island, so why was she so sure that Jared was wrong about her father's guilt, when he was an eyewitness? Given that she was loyal to her father, how does that preclude showing Jared some appreciation for the honorable way he treated her and Lani even when he saw them as the enemy? Especially since she enjoyed his lovemaking and realized that he 'would never give her up'. To me, Jared was a sucker for bad treatment and hoped to win Cassie's love rather than have her earn his.

As a sister to brothers, I felt so much sympathy for his character and felt sorry that he had no friend or champion in this story. The only person in his corner was the 'gargoyle' Lady Carrington and even there he played the masochist to Cassie's 'tigress', much to my chagrin. Does this writer expect readers to accept that men of the Regency era were so bored by women who were bred to complement their beliefs and lifestyles that they would love and marry cold, cantankerous, selfish, crude, rude women whose only existence was to be a perpetual thorn in their sides, while bringing absolutely nothing except an unwilling body to the marriage? This was also borne out in the relationship between Jared's uncle (an even greater masochist) and Lani. Are we really supposed to accept that allure or sexual attraction was enough for Jared and his uncle to give up on the hope for a satisfying, loving relationship? Or that Jared would thumb his nose at the ton, marry a battle-axe of a wife who would not be conducive to his status as a duke and completely ruin Josette's prospects?

I could not stand Cassie and kept hoping that her horse would give her a couple of swift kicks in the rump. I hated all the female characters except those in Chapter one. They were the only true women in the entire book showing a healthy appreciation for themselves, their independence and men. I suppose they were there to provide a comparison between the coldness of European women and the warmth of the island women but it fell flat for me having been told that Jared could get any woman he wanted as he was as much loved by women as horses. The only other heroine to whom I've felt such antipathy is Lord Braybrook's Penniless Bride.

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