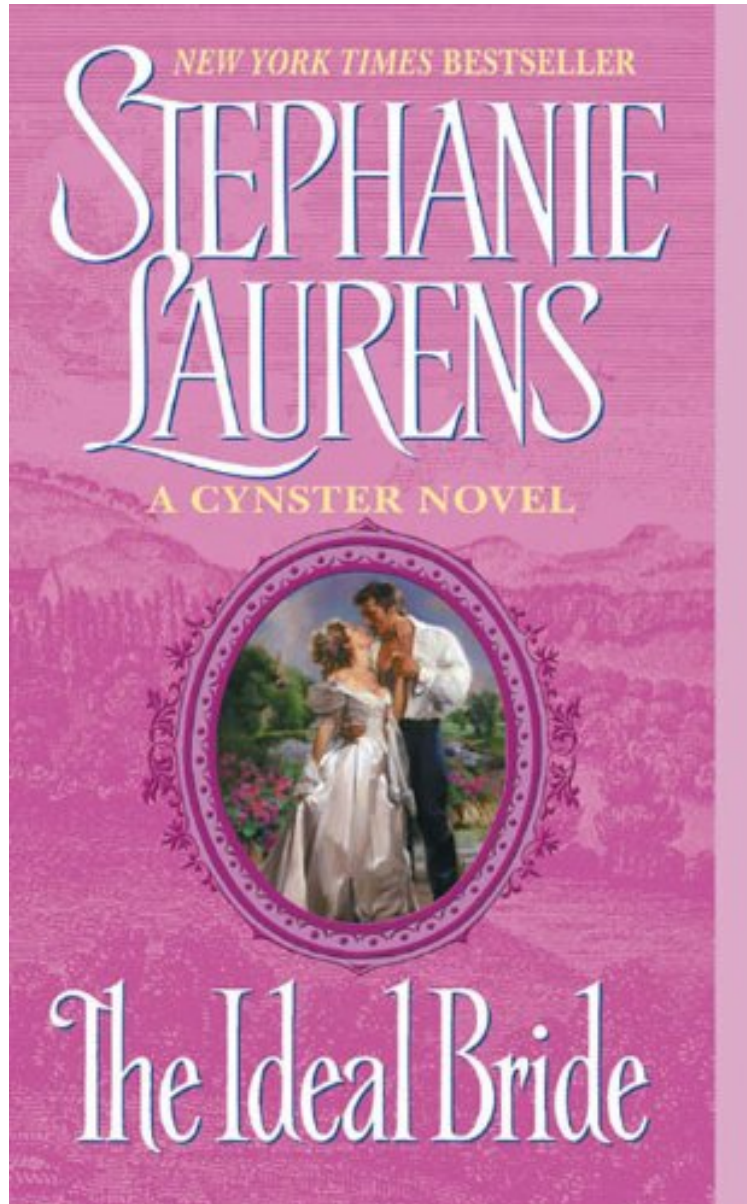


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The Ideal Bride (Cynster)

Von Stephanie Laurens

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Von Stephanie Laurens : The Ideal Bride (Cynster) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would

be worth my time, and all praised *The Ideal Bride* (Cynster):

Kurzbeschreibung New York Times bestselling author Stephanie Laurens has created some of romance's most unforgettable novels. Now she has created her most provocative love story and amazing hero to date. This is the book that dares to ask the question: Who is this man's ideal bride? Michael Anstruther-Wetherby is a rising member of Parliament, a man destined for power. Aristocratic, elegant, and effortlessly charming, he is just arrogant enough to capture the interest of the ladies of the ton. And with his connections to the wealthy and influential Cynster family, his sister is married to Devil Cynster, the Duke of St. Ives, his future appears assured. Except that Michael lacks the single most important element of success: a wife. Political pressure sends him searching for his ideal bride, a gently bred, malleable young lady, preferably one with a political background. Michael discovers such a paragon but finds a formidable obstacle in his path: the young lady's beautiful, strong-minded aunt, Caroline Sutcliffe. One of London's foremost diplomatic hostesses, Caro has style and status but, having lived through an unhappy political marriage, wants nothing of the sort for her niece, who has already lost her heart to another. So Caro and the younger woman hatch a plot to demonstrate why an inexperienced young lady is not the bride for Michael. She succeeds in convincing him that what he really needs is a lady of experience by his side. And the perfect candidate is right under his nose: Caro herself. Then it is Michael's turn to be persuasive, a task that requires every ounce of his seductive charm as he tempts and tantalizes Caro, seeking to convince her that becoming his bride will bring her all her heart desires . . . and more. But then a series of mysterious, and dangerous, accidents befall Caro, and an assailant has stepped in with their own idea for Caro's future, one that could involve murder. Before Caro can become Michael's ideal bride, they must race to uncover the unknown's identity before all hope of what they long for, and wish for, is destroyed. From Publishers Weekly: Laurens's newest romantic offering, set in early 19th-century London, possesses two of her trademarks: coolly confident characters and plentiful and graphic sex scenes, but it lacks the fire and feisty humor of her earlier works (*All About Passion*, etc.). Once readers encounter Laurens's protagonists, it's clear why. A self-possessed young widow, Caro Sutcliffe, whose late husband was an ambassador, and a calculating political player, Michael Anstruther-Wetherby, are adept at diplomacy; they know who to align themselves with, how to manage the people around them and what to say in every situation. Unlike the protagonists in Laurens's previous novels, Caro and Michael hardly ever lose control of their emotions, which makes them seem more like marionettes than people. When Michael sets his sights on marrying Caro's 19-year-old niece, Elizabeth, who's actually in love with somebody else, Caro intervenes not by confronting him but by attending a number of social gatherings and instructing Elizabeth to behave in ways unbecoming of a politician's wife. Caro's plan works, but she soon finds that she's become the object of Michael's pursuit. Laurens stuffs the story with sex scenes, but her second-by-second analyses of every kiss and caress brings new meaning to the word tedious. Her overblown metaphors also detract from the sensuality of these scenes ("she was dimly aware when he reached his own limit and release caught him, racked him, then the storm rolled on and he lay beside her on that golden shore"). A well-executed mystery subplot involving attempts on Caro's life lends some zest to this offering, but not enough to satisfy fans of Laurens's popular Cynster novels. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Pressestimmen "'marvellous...' Cathy Kelly"