

# The Firemaster's Mistress



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England in the early reign of James I: an unsteady nation adapts to its new king; Shakespeare labors over the tragedies of Othello and Macbeth ; bearbaiting is a popular diversion . . . and Guy Fawkes, with a small group of desperate men, hatches a terrifying plot to assassinate the king and all of Parliament by explosion. Francis Quoyn is a firemaster who would rather make fireworks than war. Kate Peach is a poor glovemaker and a mistress to the powerful Hugh Taylor, who is forced to hide her Catholicism as she spends her days looking out on noisy, teeming London streets crowded with prostitutes and drunks. Once Francis and Kate were lovers before the firemaster abandoned her and the plague destroyed her family. Now they will meet again—as enemies—caught up in the maelstrom of treachery and violence surrounding Fawkes's malevolent plot. In the midst of chaos and madness, the flame of their romance will be dangerously rekindled, as their lives and the London they know are changed forever.

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