DEAR READER,

Story ideas are somewhat inexplicable. This one came to me as a character: Kate Howard. A woman who was confident to the point of arrogance, with an intimidating reputation. The daughter of a duke. But I still didn't quite have her. She wouldn't let me be.

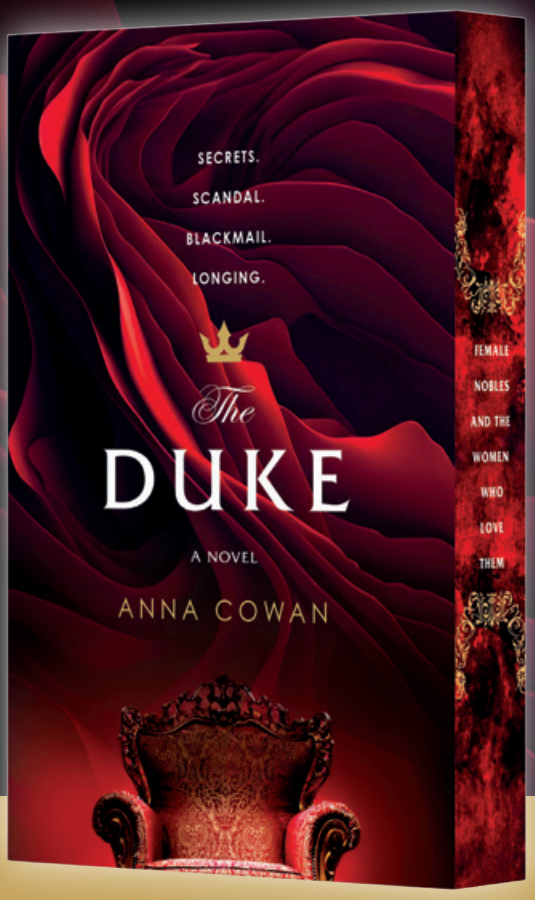
I wrestled with her until I tripped over an invisible barrier and at last saw her clearly: Kate Howard wasn't a duke's daughter—she was the duke. (I am metaphorically sprawled on my bum, staring up at Kate's huge figure that is blocking out the sun. *Huh*, she thinks, and turns away, expecting me to follow.)

Historical romance is the genre that brought me to romance—a first love I will never get over. As I struggled to let Kate be exactly who she wanted to be, I encountered many more internal barriers. It wasn't easy. But it never ceased to be a great pleasure to go another round with this genre I love so well.

I hope you will enjoy Kate's story just as much as I have.

Warmly,

ANNA COWAN



ST. MARTIN'S GRIFFIN