

Novelist's new romance explores Regency London

OTTUMWA — Ottumwa romance novelist Leigh Michaels will sign copies of her newest book, "The Mistress' House," at O'Town Books, 211 E. Second St., from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday.

"The Mistress' House" is a single-title historical romance set in 1815 London. The book is a big departure for Michaels, who previously published 80 sweet traditional contemporary romance novels with Harlequin Books. "After 80 boy-meets-

girl, I got burned out," said Michaels, who said she took a new direction by turning to spicy historical novels.

The Regency period (1811-20) has long been an interest for Michaels, and London has been a favorite travel destination, so it was a natural choice to set her

new books in that era and location, featuring the upper-class English aristocracy.

"The Mistress' House" is a London townhouse purchased by a nobleman to use as a love nest for his mistresses. When the first woman he brings there ensnares his heart, the house is left empty until the new wife loans it to her child-

hood friend, who also falls in love while living there. Then the owner uses the house as a refuge for his ward, who's hiding from an arranged marriage, and she, too, meets the man of her dreams.

Creating three interwoven stories is a different approach for historical romance novels, Michaels said. She has written two more Regency-period historical romances which will be published in 2011. All three books feature multiple stories.

