



Sinful Surrender

Beverley Kendall

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Lord James Rutherford fights the inexorable demise of his bachelorhood with every sane bone in his body. But the single-minded pursuit of the delectable Missy Armstrong entering her *fourth* London Season proves his undoing. Just as he's decided to risk the wrath of her brother--his friend--and right the wrong of their indiscretion, James discovers the consequences of a forgotten night of drunken passion has left yet another lady of ton compromised....

For Millicent 'Missy' Armstrong, being ruined by the man of her dreams is nothing to wring her hands and bury her face in her hands about. But when an offer of marriage isn't immediately forthcoming, and whispers of James's betrothal to another reaches her ears, there isn't an acre of land on the Continent far enough on which to escape. Then, in an abrupt reversal, James is back on her doorstep with the offer she'd yearned to receive...two weeks and one fiancée too late.

In the face of her unwavering refusal, James launches a war to win back her passion, her trust, and her love. A war as ruthless as it is seductive. With the wounds of her heartbreak still fresh and raw, can he convince her that far from the second choice, she has always been the only choice for him?

"A delightful debut! **Beverley Kendall** writes with wit and passion!" --Sophie Jordan, *USA Today* bestselling author

"A fresh new voice in historical romance." --Anna Campbell, author of *Captive of Sin*

"*I loved Sinful Surrender!* All I could think was, I want James. I want two of him." --Alissa Johnson, author of *Tempting Fate*

Book 1 in *The Elusive Lords* series

Other books in the series

Book 2: **A Taste of Desire**

Book 2.5 (Novella): **All's Fair in Love & Seduction (Download it Free)**

Book 3: **An Heir of Deception**

Sinful Surrender Details

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Sandra says

This was such a wonderful book by new author Beverley Kendall. I found the characters so appealing and I was completely drawn into their story. I had a hard time putting this book down.

I loved the heroine Missy who was madly in love with her brother's best friend James for years. And what a wonderful and sexy hero James is! I also really liked Missy's brother Thomas and I am really looking forward to reading his own story in Beverley Kendall's upcoming new book, A TASTE OF DESIRE.

I found this a very romantic, emotional, and sexy book and I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Tintenhain says

Erst habe ich nur drin rumgeblättert und dann konnte ich nicht aufhören zu lesen. Erfüllt jedes, aber auch jedes Klischee, sprachlich nicht immer stringent in der Zeit, nicht ganz so vorhersehbar in den Wendungen wie erwartet und romantisch-erotische Szenen gibt es auch. War echt nett.

Lorka says

I really loved this book! It was a perfect version of the heroine being in love with her big brothers BFF and the hero trying to resist her out of respect for his friend. The hero did come across as a jerk at times, but it fit so well as he was actually supposed to be a rake of the worst kind. So often, books I try to read describe the hero as a devil-may-care rake hell, but then the hero in the story ends up reading as just a big softy. Not here, this hero is the real deal bad boy. He was full of angry kisses, angry words (to try to dissuade the heroine), angry sex.... The heroine was fun, although she did kind of go into borderline stalking mode a time or two :) I think the only thing preventing this book from being a Keeper for me, was maybe a bit too much arguing back and forth right at the end. My first book by this author, and I look forward to tracking down the next book :)

Danielle says

Don't get me wrong, I love historical romance but the plot of this novel has been done before. I found it hard to enjoy this novel because I have read several books with the same storyline. In summary, this book is about a naive young woman who falls in love with one of her brother's friends when she was younger at some obscenely young age decides that she is going to marry him one day. Unfortunately, this female protagonists never grows out of her obsession with her brother's best friend and throws herself at him continually. She only comes to her senses after she has been ruined or deflowered. It is only then does she really get to know the true man behind the mask, and she realizes that she does not even "LIKE" him or what he stands for. But as fate should have it, it is at that same time that the object of her obsession realizes that he, really, really

with cherries on top, loves her. She in turn refuses to marry him and he has to woo her, which he does and then they live happily ever after.

Alexandra Benedict's Too Scandalous to Wed and Julia Quinn's The Secret Diaries of Miss Miranda Cheever are just two of the books with a similar plot. If you liked this story then you will love the two books listed above, but I myself knew exactly what was going to happen next and therefore I could not really enjoy it.

Samantha says

A debut novel with the promise of a good series. I love how I got a feel for the author's knowledge of the time frame without boring me with useless details. The plot was one that we have seen before. Millicent "Missy" Armstrong has been infatuated with her brother's close friend James Rutherford. Through the years the yearning has turned into love and Missy plans to get James to notice her. James does start to see Missy as a desirable woman but she is off limits to him but one night when she pushes herself on him and kisses him changes everything. After three years of hiding from Missy, James has returned and Missy is even more determined to get her man.

Now I like the woman chasing a man then but for some reason Missy didn't click for me. After reflecting on my reaction to her, I realized that my reason was that I couldn't see James through her eyes. I really wanted to know why Missy was so in love with James. What was their relationship like when he first started to hang with her brother? I wanted her to spend time getting to know the man because loving from a far is not good enough for me. She also was very immature. Her public outcries and her forceful tactics made her unlikeable to me. I wanted her to plan a little better.

On the other hand, I know that some might not like James but IMO he was more realistic to me. Sure, he was cold but he had to be in order to push Missy away. He liked her and it was clear but he valued his friendship with Thomas and he had issues with his father's infidelities throughout the years. He had no positive role models for a loving relationship. At the end when he found out about his sisters, I completely thought he was going to revert back into his cold ways. I was rather surprised when he still wanted Missy.

The secondary characters actually lured me into the book more than the main characters. I became enthralled with Lady Victoria and her secrets. I liked Thomas and Alex. I see a potential story for them both and I highly anticipate it especially Thomas :) I also want to know more about Claire. Though her role is minor, I want to know what secrets she holds back. There are so many ways this series can go. I will definitely look out for further books. A good read from a debut author.

Katie(babs) says

Millicent "Missy" Armstrong yearns for the love of her brother's good friend, James Rutherford. Missy will do whatever she can to claim him as her own. James has always treated Missy like a younger sister, but as she finally makes her debut into Society, he can no longer deny that she has grown into a very beautiful woman. Lately, he's been having a very strange reaction to her, one that involves the hardening of a certain area of his anatomy. (think constant cock stand). He can't give into his lust for Missy because he's not marriage material. The fact that he's a well known rake doesn't sit well with Missy's brother Thomas. Why would Thomas marry his innocent sister, especially when he has a great deal of sexual experience? James will keep his distance from Missy even if he has to go as far as being cold and rude to her so she will get over her infatuation.

Things are not going as well as they should for Missy. She has engaged in some wonderful kissing with

James expects him to have his wicked way with her. But rather than going too far, he lashes out, saying there is no way he would marry her. Another woman would walk away and find a more suitable man elsewhere, but not Missy. She has wanted James forever, and not even the man himself will ruin her dreams of happiness. Missy expects James to be her husband because she has already rejected twenty marriage proposals. She does have another suitor waiting on the side, a very rich and handsome Lord Granville, but he doesn't consume her every thought like James does.

James tries his best to stay away from the minx, but she is there at every turn, trying to seduce him. Missy is so confused because James continually sends off mixed signals from acting jealous around Granville, to sharing secret kisses and caresses between them. Even if he went as far as to marry Missy, their marriage would probably end up like the sham of a marriage his parents had. Also, his intense sexual appetite would scare Missy to the point where she wouldn't enjoy their marriage bed.

As Missy and James's passion and need for each other grows to the breaking point, James is soon accused of fathering a child with the well known ice queen, Lady Victoria Spencer. Now he has no choice but to marry, but not to the woman he wants with every fiber of his being. Missy is crushed but she still can't stay away from James. Missy confronts James and the end result of that interaction may ruin her reputation forever.

The fountain of feelings James and Missy have for one another is so unbelievably strong, lush and tense, where you can taste it as you turn each page. *Sinful Surrender* is one romance where the two main characters are in such pain, physically and emotionally, because they want each other so badly. But because James continues to deny his love for Missy, they're both strung so tight that they can't control themselves.

The word, "ache" is a perfect one when describing *Sinful Surrender*. James aches for Missy but feels he can't give into his feelings because of what he witnessed between his parents as a boy. I found his reasons to be very weak. We read in passing why James is so dead set against claiming Missy as his wife, but it just didn't work for me. I understand his concerns with his so-called scandalous reputation and a possible marriage with Missy that could turn out to be horrendous, but all these issues could have been fixed through communication. Too bad there wasn't a therapist during this time who James could talk to, because his constant internal turmoil took away from the overall enjoyment in reading. I just wasn't convinced that his family life as a child was so horrible that it would damage his psyche that deeply. I also couldn't help but laugh and roll my eyes at the same time because he couldn't live with the guilt if Missy had to put up with his insatiable twenty-four hour appetite for her pure young flesh. Not that Missy would have minded because she her main goal is for James to ravish her.

Missy does a few things that makes this situation change from bad to worse because of her somewhat selfish actions. There were a few times I couldn't understand why Missy didn't just walk away from James for good. But then again, Missy has this deep, yearning and undying love for him and knows no matter the odds that he'll be hers. I couldn't decide if this was incredibly romantic or more of an unhealthy crush that has blown into a near obsession.

I have to hand it to Beverly Kendall for writing an angst filled romance between two lovers who are so overcome with such incredible need for one another. Her love scenes simmer and crackle and her writing is pretty solid. My one main problem with *Sinful Surrender* is James's reasons on why a match between him and Missy shouldn't be. My frustration continues to grow in regards to the main conflict between these two and James's thoughts on the institution of marriage.

Even though I found James and Missy's internal conflicts somewhat lacking, I found *Sinful Surrender* to be a likable debut. I look forward to seeing what else Beverly Kendall has to offer the historical romance world.

Char says

I love stories where the heroine chases the hero and Missy did chase James--relentlessly. Was she "obsessed" with him? Nah, just madly in love. Though the H/h both did some irritating things I still loved them both. Beautiful epilogue which shows there are potential stories coming--just hate the waiting!

Danette Steward says

Premise should have been intriguing....Sister falls in love with brother's best friend. Brother doesn't think friend is good enough for sister. Instead got a torturous boring plot. Plot is slow and not all that exciting. Even thought the hero was somewhat spineless for not fighting for our heroine. This story could have been told in 10 pages easily. Disappointed and probably won't pick up another by this author.

Rose May says

Note: This review, and all my reviews, comes from my blog - Romantic Rose's Bookshelf (<http://romantic-rosesblog.blogspot.com>)

Book 1 in the Elusive Lords Series

Wow. Lord James Rutherford was a sexy, hot mess. He knows, at least, that he's sexy. It was hard to determine if he knew he was a mess until the very end and then, trust me, he knew. Lady Missy (Milicent) Armstrong is our gracious heroine, who loves James with all her heart despite his nastiness when he tries to drive her away. It was sad to see that love cool a little bit towards the end – Kendall did a great job showing James's growing love but did a bad job showing Missy had retained her love for James despite his antics.

Throughout the second half of the book I was worried Missy didn't truly love him anymore, what with her frequent denials to his proposals. Normally such scenes are accompanied by deep introspection or crying scenes – which only happened once (the other times she didn't seem affected at all). Thus, when they do finally get together, I was much less satisfied than I should have been. Missy's behavior was mostly consistent but on occasion I wondered where she was coming from because she no longer sounded like herself.

As usual with Kendall's books, the characters are very well developed. The main characters are fleshed out nearly to perfection, the secondary characters don't overwhelm or intrude in any of the scenes and act quite human. Thomas Armstrong and Alex Cartwright (James's best friends who each get their own story) are wonderful, humorous, and I can't wait to read their stories. The secondary characters don't show up only for scenes where the main characters need prodding in their relationship and then disappear. They consistently amuse us and entertain us as we watch the protagonists struggle with their feelings and relationship. The plot was also well-developed, again nothing too overwhelming to distract us from the romance. It could have used a little more excitement, but overall it was a pretty decent story.

"Sexy"ness rating: *faints* It can't get much hotter than this, folks

Overall Rating: B

Bottom Line: Excellent read - this book has a sexy hero, a sweet, strong heroine and an explosion of passion when their worlds collide.

Ellen says

I wanted to make this review as fair as I could so for the first time ever I took notes while I read. I was irritated to the point where taking notes didn't distract me and that *never* happens, I couldn't do it for assigned reading at school.

I like to think of myself as a very forgiving reader, whether by design or accident I rarely dislike a book I read.

Missy is the reason I disliked this book, in fact if it weren't in a series and I hadn't wanted to read the next one, it'd be a dnf because of her. Missy's loved James since she was a child. This trope can be forgiven if the characters are compelling or the conflict is interesting. Missy bored me, James runs from her, insults her and flaunts gorgeous women in her face and still she doesn't even consider any other men.

"You just couldn't leave well enough alone. You were determined to have what you wanted and damn everyone else."

And her feelings for James? To her shame, they weathered the storm of his disparagement and scorn.

For a week, she'd been lost in a fog of disillusionment, heartache, and shame, barely managing to get through the days.

That the news of James's courtship had so distressed her she'd taken to her bed and cried herself to sleep.

And after arguing tooth and nail for most of the book she says this:

"I would hardly call a schoolgirl crush the kind required for anything as long-lasting as a marriage. It didn't even endure an evening of sex," she scoffed ...

And begins resisting James' proposal for some indefinable reason, despite the fact she's always thought herself in love and she's possibly knocked up. And then when she's not preggers:

No baby meant no life with James. It was only then she'd admitted to herself how she'd yearned for a living, breathing link to the man she loved. Would undoubtedly always love.

And even though she's beautiful that's not why James loves her, no she's intelligent and well-read despite her actions indicating otherwise, and her first time with James is "the best sexual experience of his life".

James on the other hand was torn, his friend or his lust for Missy. He was a character I could like if only he weren't all over Missy.

Thomas, Missy's sister is a jerk. He continues to degrade James - to his face! about how he's not good enough for his sister, demands he leave town and expects him to comply (which he did for three years!) and then beats him up for giving into Missy. Thomas knew about Missy's infatuation and is a rake himself and yet had no empathy for one of his longstanding friends.

“What the hell did I miss? I hope this has nothing to do with Missy. Because if this is you trying to discourage her, while I’m grateful you’re applying yourself so diligently to the task, I think you’re taking it too far.”

There wasn't any reason for James and Missy to be apart other than James' reluctance to marry. Seriously that's the *only* thing even close to conflict between them.

Except for my complaint about characters as plot devices.

Lady Victoria Spencer. Known as ice-cold, infinitely more interesting, with a sister locked in an asylum and an overbearing snobbish mother. I wish she'd been the heroine, she would've had so much conflict fodder. But alas she is used midway through the story by the author as an excuse for James not to propose to Missy after ruining her. She knocked out James with Laudanum one night, almost killing him on account of his sensitivity to opium and lies about him getting her pregnant and I still liked her more than Missy. But lucky for James (and not us) he discovers who the baby's real father is and arranges for them to elope, leaving him free to propose endlessly to Missy so she can say no for no real reason.

Lady Windmere, James' mother appears near the end when his father dies for no real plot reason, except to make James earl. Turns out when James saw his father begging his mother for the sex times as a kid, his mother wasn't frigid, his dad was a philanderer and he left behind twin daughters. Lady Windmere appears only to reveal that James was wrong his dad was an a**hole. And to stop Missy from accepting James (yet again) by making her think that the twins are James' daughters not sisters as she bitterly says that James will be just like his father at the late Earl's funeral.

The second half of the book is better. But it doesn't redeem the story enough.

Mandi Schreiner says

Millicent Armstrong has gone about her seduction of James Rutherford all wrong. Three years ago, fresh on the marriage market, she literally threw herself on top of him, showing him quite well what she intended for him. James, a good friend of Missy's brother, Thomas Armstrong, definitely noticed Missy's newly formed figure, but as any good gentlemen, pushed her away (and made sure his coat hid the front of his pants) before things could go further.

Now, three years later, Missy is getting ready to enter her fourth season, and she has been learning the ways of subtle seduction, in hopes of garnering James' attention once again. James has been noticeably absent these past years, and Missy is ready to put her plans in motion. However, as they meet at her parent's estate, James is still putting Missy off even though a strong attraction for Missy exists. James has many reasons – Missy's brother would never find the rake, James, a suitable husband for her. Moreover, James does not know men who practice fidelity, and looking at his parent's marriage and the love lost between them, he has no visions of a happy marriage for himself in the future, no matter his bride. But his plan of staying far away from Missy goes crumbling down when Armstrong comes in with a new idea. He needs his sister married by the season end, and knows Missy has romanticized and idealized James in her head, due to him not being around. Armstrong's new plan is to have Missy observe James in society. Missy has never witnessed James as the rake, only the charming polite gentlemen. Let her get a good taste of his true personality, and she will accept another man's hand in marriage.

Society seems to want to pair James, with the icy, cold Lady Victoria Spencer and Missy with the very wealthy Lord Granville. Victoria has her own plans for James, which soon wreak havoc in James' life. He is also fighting the intense attraction from Missy, and can't help but feel lust as he tries to keep his feelings under control. Missy refuses to accept another man as her suitor, and her one track mind is making her desperate to land James as a husband.

Sinful Surrender is a strong debut novel by Beverley Kendall full of a very brooding hero and a young, over-eager heroine. For the promise Missy makes to herself at the beginning of the book to be a sly seductress, that doesn't last long. This pair has the most lust and romantic intensity I have read about in a while. Every glance, every touch, is so emotionally draining for them. They throw themselves at each other many times, only for James to push Missy away, knowing much is at stake should their relations get out of control.

At the beginning I didn't necessarily buy the argument that Armstrong didn't find James a suitable suitor for his sister. James and Armstrong are such good friends – why would he not? However, as the story progresses, you learn more of James' past and his ways with women – Armstrong is convinced James would never be satisfied with his virginal sister and his brother-sister protectiveness goes far. James is offended when Armstrong tells him he is not good enough for his sister, and being best friends, I would think James would be able to tell Armstrong his true feelings for Missy. However, with James skewed outlook on marriage, he believes he is not good enough for her as well.

Missy is a little immature in her feelings for James and I don't mean that as a criticism. She definitely has womanly advances, and knows what her body wants. But she is very jealous and almost pouts every time James pushes her away or shows up to an event with a beautiful woman on his arm. I think this behavior fits, for her being so young and so entranced by James. She also acts out, in public, and that reinforces her immaturity, and in a way brings her character around full circle.

James is very brooding and cranky throughout the book, which is a trait I always find appealing in a historical romance. He is really cranky though – to the extent at some points I question why Missy doesn't anger with him more? He never cracks a joke, nor has any lighthearted moments. Where is his charm? Where is his good natured side? He treats Missy so poorly at some points, I didn't always buy her lust or love would not falter. I do have to say though, his character stays true to form. From beginning to end, he is James – and you can take him or leave him (I for one, would take him...many times).

Sinful Surrender is very sexy and there are many twists and turns that keep this story quite entertaining to the very end. It is an exceptional debut and one I highly recommend.

Ange says

I really liked this book. It was so funny and heartbreaking at the same time. I rarely find books that can make me laugh my ass off and cry at the same time. It's hard stuff...hard, hard stuff.

This is the story of Missy and James. James has known Missy since she was a small child, who having recently lost her beloved father, needed the comfort of someone who had the time and patience for her. James was there for Missy, becoming her playmate (even though he was several years older) and caring for her in a way that made her put him on a pedestal. James became the center of Missy's world since she was like 10 years old, and as she grew her adoration turned into love.

James, being best friend's with Missy's older brother, was careful not to encourage Missy's affections. However, the older she grew, the more beautiful and enchanting she became, and the idea of resisting her became almost an impossibility for James.

One thing I loved in this book was how determined Missy was. She wanted James and she was going to get him no matter what. usually in this type of book, it's the male lead who does the seducing, however in this book it was Missy who was the temptress, the hunter, and James who was the prey.

The first part of the book was hilarious and lovely to read as James tried his hardest to stay away from Missy and discourage her romantic illusions, while she did her best to attack him and catch him unawares so that he would finally succumb to her charms.

Yeah....

Then came the angst though. As it happens in this type of book, angst is inevitable. One does not play with fire long and doesn't end up getting burnt at some point.

She took a brief inventory of him, from his boots right up to his neckcloth. At last she looked at his face. "You're right about one thing, I never knew you. I loved a figment created by my quite vivid and romantic imagination."

James stiffened at her words. While he had given little credence to her professions of love, hearing her affirm his sentiments caused the oddest ache in his gut.

So if you're looking for an entertaining romance, full with funny banter, great chemistry, longing and a bit of heartache... This is the book for you :)

Mitzi says

I started/stopped this book so many times but DNF...I just couldn't get past the Unemotional Virginal Love Scene...The word 'Dry' comes to mind...Also I just can't relate to a women wanting to marry a man without the cajones to stand up to her family and let them know he wanted/loved her!!! Maybe he did in the end?...That being said, I enjoyed many aspects of this book,the descriptions of place/times,the dialogue between the H/h.,etc...I'll try another book from this author and hope the love scenes are 'wet' and the Hero has balls (if not made of steel, at least aluminum).

J. Leigh Hunter says

Story and Writing Style

Missy has had a rather unhealthy—or healthy, depending on how you look at it—obsession with her brother's best friend, James. Some rather fancy footwork by her own doing had them both tumbled on the ground, arms entwined, and her mouth pressed against his. Ever since then, she hasn't been able to forget about him...nor has he of her.

Now Missy has flown through a few Seasons making more than a few men unhappy by turning down their proposals, all because of her admiration of James. Thomas Armstrong, Missy's brother who is well aware of her crush, convinces James to be over-amorous with his own ladies, hoping to dissuade Missy. Of course, James isn't overly keen on this plan.

Because James is keen on Missy. (Bet you never saw that coming.)

Love, love, *love* the cat-and-mouse plot of this story. Love the pace of the story and I love the ending.

This was my first book by Beverley Kendall, and it's coincidentally the first in a series. I was hooked from the beginning. Ms. Kendall is a fantastic writer, and her intro to this book was so beautifully done. I'm a fan, and I will continue to read her books.

Characters

Missy's a delightful blend of innocent and independent. The girl knows what she wants, and you have to give her props for taking matters into her own hands, so to speak. James' reservations, his patience, his earnest attempts at being honorable were such a turn-on. I got a little frustrated about everyone's muddled notions about who exactly is too good or not-so-good for someone else. James, I feel, is plenty good for Missy. But, of course, *no one* is good enough for Thomas' sister.

Sex

Delicious. A bit more steamy for a Regency romance, which is beyond fine by me. The next book shows a heroine who is on the opposite side of the spectrum from Missy, a self-acknowledged Ice Princess, another plot point that never ceases to add some delicious tension.

♥ Vonda M. Reid ♥ says

Overall Rating: 3.00 // Action: 0 / Emotion: 4.25 / Romance: 4.5 / Sensuous: 3.5 / Intrigue: 1 / Regency Flavor: 3 / Humor: 8 / Tears: 4.5

Have to admire Beverley Kendall's efforts for her debut book, *Sinful Surrender* (book one in **The Elusive Lords Series**). *Sinful Surrender* tells the story about Thomas Armstrong's sister, Millicent, chasing his best friend, the future Earl of Windmere, James Rutherford. Missy has had a crush on James since he befriended her upon the death of her father when she was ten years old. Naturally, by the time Missy is seventeen, she is in love with James. The most memorable line of the book depicts Missy's determination to have James.

" . . . he fell into the vast category of all men other than James -- the group who had a better chance of ridding London of its fog than gaining her affections."

James has two reasons to run from Missy's pursuit. First, Thomas has warned his friend and fellow rake to stay away from his sister because he has plans for Missy to marry the Earl of Granville. Second, James is determined to never end up like his father -- a man who loves (and has to beg for favors) from his cold, bitter wife.

The book was an enjoyable read, but there were two factors that detracted from making the book a must read. One, the rich regency flavor was missing from the book. Too often the characters actions and conversations exhibited a more relaxed modern feel, rather than the Victorian-era, proprietary-driven deeds and dialogue usually associated with a "regency romance." Two, (even though Kendall did draw the occasional laugh and tight throat from the reader), the hero and heroine spent more time telling the readers how they felt instead of drawing those 'feelings' from the reader during the interactions between the characters.

A more detailed, spoiler-ridden synopsis/review of *Sinful Surrender* appears at [Wolf Bear Does Books](#).
