



Behind the Scenes

Jen Turano

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Miss Permia Griswold may have been given the opportunity of a debut into New York high society, but no one warned her she wasn't guaranteed to "take." After spending the last six years banished to the wallflower section of the ballroom, she's finally putting her status on the fringes of society to good use by penning anonymous society gossip columns under the pseudonym "Miss Quill."

Mr. Asher Rutherford has managed to maintain his status as a reputable gentleman of society despite opening his own department store. While pretending it's simply a lark to fill his time, he has quite legitimate reasons for needing to make his store the most successful in the country.

When Permia overhears a threat against the estimable Mr. Rutherford, she's determined to find and warn the man. Disgruntled at a first meeting that goes quite poorly and results in Asher not believing her, she decides to take matters into her own hands, never realizing she'll end up at risk as well.

As Asher and Permia are forced to work together and spend time away from the spotlight of society, perhaps there's more going on behind the scenes than they ever could have anticipated. . . .

Behind the Scenes Details

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Author : Jen Turano

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From Reader Review Behind the Scenes for online ebook

Cara Putman says

This book is a fun frolic in Gilded Age New York City. I have thoroughly enjoyed each of Jen's books that I've read, and this one continued in the same vein. Crazy heroines who don't fit into the Gilded Age aristocracy and heroes who aren't quite sure what to make of the heroines. Miss Permilia Griswold has been cast as a wallflower, only she's one with a twist: she's a society reporter for a large newspaper on the sly. While at the event of the season she overhears a murder plot and decides it's her duty to stop the attack. The only problem is Asher Rutherford doesn't believe her claims of a plot or that his life's in danger. The book is filled with colorful characters, smart dialogue, and a couple twists. The romance is fairly direct, but very enjoyable. I'm already wondering who will serve as heroine in the next book. A very enjoyable, light romance for those who love the Gilded Age time-period.

Amy says

I've generally enjoyed Jen's books, they are unique and she has a writing style like non other. I feel disappointed though with this book. Tedious and one of the slowest moving plots I've read recently, I had no desire to pick it up. Hence taking me over a week to finish. Several times I considered letting it go. It doesn't vaguely get interesting until 65% of the way through.

First, I know that Jen generally goes with eccentric characters and one of a kind names, but this book just bordered on the ridiculous. The names of almost the entire cast of characters were obscure, odd and sometimes trying to get your mind to read it every time you came across it gives you a headache.

The Huxley sisters added some light entertainment, and there's plenty empathy for the lot they've been handed by their Father. I will add it felt very strange considering the nasty revelations of Ida towards Permilia and her husband it just plain annoyed me he didn't cast her off.

All the over explaining of every little thing got tedious too, readers are able to see between the lines and have something to contemplate. I found the addition of obvious plug for the modern day plight of women thrown in there through the hostility towards men, a little over the top.

It seemed odd that Permilia and Asher had only met a couple times, while transacting business and yet at the Ball they seem way more familiar than they should be. The general plot of this book is an interesting one, I think I would have preferred it as a novella length. 2.5 stars due to the tedious conversing & slow pace. I really loved Jen's contemporary novel, I'd love to see more of that.

Thank you to Netgalley & Bethany House for the complimentary copy. This is my honest review.

Staci says

In typical Jen Turano fashion, romance develops among the hi-jinx of the main female character. In Behind the Scenes, main character Permilia Griswold has grown up with her widowed father in the mines and has

only recently learned the ways of refined society from her step-mother. Permilla is pleased to be a "wallflower" and to do things her way. Cute story.

Lindsey (Books for Christian Girls) says

About this book:

"After spending the last six years banished to the wallflower section of the ballroom, Miss Permilia Griswold has finally figured out a way to pass the time at all the New York high-society events she attends. Under the pseudonym "Miss Quill," she is the author of society gossip columns filled with tidbits only an insider in society--albeit one on the fringes--would know.

When she overhears a threat against Mr. Asher Rutherford, the owner of one of the most up-and-coming department stores in the city, she's determined to warn him. But the irritatingly handsome man doesn't believe her, leaving her no choice but to take matters into her own hands. What she doesn't anticipate is that she'll end up putting herself at risk in the process--or that she and Mr. Rutherford, a man with secrets of his own, just might end up joining forces after all."

Series: Book #1 in the "Apart From the Crowd" series. Review of #.5 here!

Spiritual Content- A Scripture is remembered & mentioned; Prayers; Church going; Talks about God, paths, divine intervention, & prayers; 'H' are capital when referring to God; Mentions of God, paths, & divine intervention; Mentions of prayers & praying; Mentions of talks about God with a reverend; Mentions of churches, church going, sermons, buying pews, & reverends; Mentions of being blessed & blessings; A couple mentions of thanking the Lord; A couple mentions of Heaven; A couple mentions of religion.

Negative Content- Minor cussing including: a 'blasted', a 'dumb', six 'idiot's; Eye rolling; Being shot at, being held hostage, fighting, pain, & blood (up to semi-detailed); A bit of social drinking; Many mentions of hiring someone to cause a murder, threats, an assassin, the thought of being murdered, & criminal activity; Many mentions of gossip & rumors; Mentions of almost dying, pain, blood/bleeding & injuries (barely-above-not-detailed); Mentions of being shot at, bleeding, & injuries (barely-above-not-detailed); Mentions of murders & having someone killed; Mentions of poisons & poisoning someone; Mentions of a woman wearing dead cat tails on her gown along with what looks like a cat head; Mentions of breakable things being thrown at people in temper tantrums; Mentions of champagne, wine, brandy, social drinking, & drinking; Mentions of blackmail; Mentions of debts; A few mentions of an attempted murder; A few mentions of lies & lying; A few mentions of hunting & shooting foxes; A few mentions of a dead mouse & dead bird; A couple mentions of a fever & death; A couple mentions of slaves; A couple mentions of wondering if someone is abused; A couple mentions of jail; A couple mentions of divorces; A couple mentions of a bear rug with the head still attached; A mention of a tobacco shop; A mention of stuffed birds.

Sexual Content- three hand kisses, three border-line barely-above-not-detailed // semi-detailed kisses; Wanting to be kissed; Touches, Warmth, Nearness, Smelling, & Blushes (up to semi-detailed); Noticing; Mentions of a philanderer who kept a few wives (polygamy, no true details); Mentions of kisses & kissing; Mentions of reputations, compromising situations, scandals, & chaperones; Mentions of flirting, blushes, &

winks; Mentions of (greeting) hand kisses; A few mentions of noticing; A couple mentions of jealousy; Love, falling in love & the emotions;

*Note: Mentions of miscarriages & stillborns; Mentions of feminine wiles; A few mentions of large bustles on women's behinds; A couple mentions of lady's a low-cut gown & showing off her charms.

-Permitia Griswold, age 25

-Asher Rutherford

P.O.V. switches between them (Epilogue in someone else's)

Set in 1883

343 pages

Pre Teens- One Star

New Teens- Two Stars

Early High School Teens- Three Stars

Older High School Teens- Four Stars

My personal Rating- Four Stars

Just like the novella in this series...this is was cute! I did, of course, enjoy this novel more than the novella, but both were such fun reads. Oh, my goodness. I absolutely enjoyed the writing style and the normal wit for a Jen Turano book, I was giggling/giggly quite often when reading.

I got a slight Cinderella vibe from this historical novel, but what I also really enjoyed was the mysteries. It didn't feel heavy or completely focused on the budding romance, but it really was centered around a few mysteries. It was a truly nice change of pace.

I've been so excited to "meet" these new characters and am so looking forward to getting to know Gertrude & Mrs. Davenport next! :)

{Also side note: Permilia? That's a *really* fun name!}

Link to review:

<https://booksforchristiangirls.blogspot.com>

*BFCG may (Read the review to see) recommend this book by this author. It does not mean I recommend all the books by this author.

*I received this book for free from the Publisher (Bethany House) for this honest review.

Lisa (Bookworm Lisa) says

For Permia Griswold, being a wallflower is not a bad thing. She stays on the fringes of society. She shows efforts to be a lady to her stepmother and she gets the information she needs to write her society column for the newspaper. It is usually a safe position to be in, until she overhears the plotting of a murder.

I love the books of Jen Turano that I have read. I know that I will have a strong heroin who gets herself into precarious situations. The book will be well paced and fun to read. This book fit all of the descriptions above. I loved Permilia and her unconventional friends. There are aspects that remind me of the Cinderella story. I guess any story that has a mean step-mother, spoiled step-sister, and a missing slipper.... You can't forget the handsome gentleman in the equation.

The book is set in wealthy New York City. Permilia is a champion for the underprivileged woman who knows how to shoot a gun. She is not afraid to charge to the rescue when needed or find unique ways to get out of a room. There are many moments that make you laugh.

This book is clean, with mild violence and mild kissing.

Source: I received a review ebook via Netgalley. All thoughts and opinions expressed are my own.

Chautona Havig says

Since this book was my first by Jen Turano, I didn't quite know what to expect. I'll be honest. I still don't. Let me explain why.

First, I'll start with the plots. Turano began with a discreet gossip columnist at society functions and built upon that. At the event that opens this book, you see Permilia in her element, which is to say OUT of her element, and one by one, the plot layers overlap and create a rather beautiful rose. At the center—Permilia Griswold.

As a character, the girl is delightfully flawed. She's both highly intelligent and rather obtuse—much as an absent-minded professor but in the social realm. I suspect readers will either love or hate the poor girl. Because, despite her winsomeness, she's also rather annoying. I loved that about her.

But I am not naive about the kinds of characters people like from Victorian fiction. Many people really like strong female characters who are rather “perfect” with just a mistake or two in their makeup. This isn't that character. Just have to put that out there. As for me, I liked that she annoyed me at times. I think it is part of why Permilia is such an engaging and endearing character.

Look, who wouldn't just love a girl who shows up at the Vanderbilt's house, loses a shoe, nearly destroys a dance, and then arrives at the dinner table and says,

“I'm do apologize, Stepmother, but I fear I have no choice but to abandon my manners because this is matter of life and death.” (note the absence of exclamation point!)

Silence settled over the table until Asher cleared his throat. “Whose death?”

“Yours.”

C'mon. That's genius right there. It may not seem like it out of context, but trust me it is.

Permilia is not the only memorable character. Ms. Turano has created quite a cast of realistic and unique characters that you don't feel like you've ever met on the pages of a book but you do feel like you might have met in real life. I keep trying to compare Ida Griswold, Permilia's step-mother, to Hyacinth Gibson from *Wives and Daughters*. But that's so unjust—not only to Jen Turano but also to Ida and Hyacinth!

The Huxley sisters. Oh, how loved them—and Mrs. Davenport.

The aforementioned Asher is quite a man as well. The way he is drawn to someone who is the antithesis of whom he thinks he admires is rather beautiful. Asher Rutherford also experiences a bit of a “life crisis.” He sees himself, or so he assumes, through others' eyes and finds himself wanting as a man.

Look, we expect to see this of a middle-aged man in the 21st century. We do not expect to see it in a young man of 1883! And that kind of realistic but unexpected characterization is what I'm talking about.

Add to all of these a mini-mystery, orange skin, and a rather over-dramatic stepsister and no one can say that Ms. Turano does not create well-rounded and interesting characters. I defy that notion!

One other wonderful thing was that although Permilia is not your typical Victorian miss, there's a solid reason for it. She grew up outside of society—in mining camps far from the dictates of New York's Knickerbocker set. Historically speaking, while I personally found the women's movement stuff wearying after a while (I get rather tired of it in modern times, too—it's just me), only once did something jerk me out of the time period.

It was a reference to something being “rather vanilla” (i.e. boring). I have no idea if that phrase was used that way back then, but even if it was, it's so very current now that it felt too modern for the period. Sometimes perfectly acceptable terminology FEELS anachronistic even if it isn't. That was it, and like I said, it probably was just me. LOVED that I didn't get jerked out of the story every other minute. Too many authors do that to me

So, if I love the characters and the plot ideas so much, why am I only giving it 3 stars?

First, I didn't LOVE the book itself. The Goodreads rating system there. Amazing, really liked it, liked it-- it, It's okay, etc. I liked it. A lot, actually, but I only liked it. There are reasons I didn't love Behind the Scenes.

Reason one:

It took me eight and a half chapters to get into it. That's a long time. I suspect, however, that if I had time to reread, it wouldn't this time. I really think that the problem there was mine. That said, I could be wrong about that, and I only say that because there were things about those chapters that I found... frustrating.

Reason two:

The excessive info-dumping. For those who dislike disguised info-dumping, and I'll admit that I'm one of them, there is quite a bit of that. She does have a rather unique style to hers. Instead of writing, “As you know, Johnny, we're expected to escort some young lady to the supper table...” She tried to make it sound as if the character mused aloud.

One particular instance was when Asher discusses why he has a membership at an exclusive club and why he now eats there so often. He tells his friend,

“That right there explains why I became uncomfortable being neglectful of our attendance, especially since I've never been a gentleman to embrace a wasteful nature.”

I'll admit it. It's annoying.

I mean, why would he inform his best friend whom, we've already discovered, knows him better than he knows himself, this little tidbit of information? Not only that, but as a reader, we already know about his fastidiousness, his punctuality, and similar bits of information. We know, without being told, that if he has this membership, there's a reason. Furthermore, we know that if he's eating there, he has a reason. We don't need for him to inform himself of it for our benefit.

This happens a bit more than I'd like—okay, a LOT more. I'll admit, I found it tedious. At one point, we're informed at length of the stepsister's father's overindulgence of her. We didn't need much if any of that

information. It just bogged down the story, particularly as it was done.

But you know, by this point, Behind the Scenes was engaging enough that most people aren't going to notice it. I only mention it because I know that I do have readers who will notice and who might be bothered by it. Usually, I would be more than I was. I honestly think the engaging plot and fabulous characters are what helped me move past it rather quickly.

But...

There are other reasons that made it harder for me to enjoy the book at times, but they are rather personal quirks and not likely to affect anyone else's reading experience.

All in all, if it weren't for those aforementioned fabulous characters and a fun, engaging plot, and that I received this copy as a review copy, I wouldn't have finished the book or bothered to review it. But this book IS worth a read. It's interesting and clever. And I'm glad I had to keep going, because once it GOT going, it was fun.

I've never read anything by Jen Turano before, but I will be reading more. I think I may discover that Behind the Scenes was an exception rather than the rule on the info-dumping. And that would be MARVELOUS if it was!

Kara says

After getting a small introduction to Permilia and Asher in Ms Turano's novella *At Your Request*, I knew I wanted more of those two! So how happy was I that I could download it immediately and begin reading.

They are hilariously perfect for each other! And now I'm a new fan of Ms Turano's. Happy day! :) Permilia is quite the extraordinary young woman and her chemistry with Asher is, shall we say...electric! Watching these two cause consternation and confusion and all manner of emotions in the other was hilarious at times and awfully swoony at others. They are entirely perfect for each other. Add the adorable romance, a mystery or two, and a lot of laughs, and you end up with a load of happy in story form! Now where's book two?

Christy says

I was pleasantly surprised at how much I liked this book. While romance is present in the story I think it comes across sporadic enough in the read to not bog it down. I did snicker quite a few times with the ludicrousness of the book but still found myself eagerly reading on. I plan on reading the second one in this series also. My favorite part about the book was how completely different and quirky everyone seemed to be from other Christian Fiction I've read. It was kind of like my walk on the wild side.

Carrie Pagels says

As usual, a lovely, lively, and entertaining confection of a read from Jen Turano. I would compare this novel to "Divinity" which is a fantastic delightful candy. Like Divinity, this read is a frothy, light, slightly nutty, and an altogether enjoyable treat! I love forward to Jen Turano's next historical romance and highly recommend Behind the Scenes! I read an advance copy as a download from NetGalley. Glad I didn't have to

wait until April!

Carrie Schmidt (Reading is My SuperPower) says

When Jen Turano is at the helm, you can always count on much laughter. She spotlights the already-extreme quirks of Gilded Age high society and turns them into the most outlandish tongue-in-cheek version of themselves. Her writing is a mix of Georgette Heyer and P.G. Wodehouse but set a bit on its end. From the dialogue (which can slide into a hilarious info-dumping) to the madcap mayhem, the ensuing result is copious amounts of giggles and amusingly endearing characters.

Behind the Scenes is no exception. I mean, when the first few females you meet are named Permilia Griswold, Gertrude Cadwalader, and Temperance Flowerfew, you know you're in for a good time. The fact that you meet them at a Vanderbilt costume ball with 1200 guests and themed quadrilles – including one that Permilia so delightfully misunderstands (which does not, however, stop her from "dancing" in it) – is just icing on the cake.

And then there's Asher Rutherford, a self-made businessman who is, of course, rather dashing and perplexedly (to himself, at least) captivated by Permilia. When she overhears a plot to murder Asher, he doesn't take her seriously... until he's forced to do so. Which is about the time she's rescuing him – in costume, of course – from an attempt on his life.

Add in nods to Cinderella, a colorful cast of supporting characters, and some sound kissing? You've got yourself a wildly entertaining read!

Bottom Line: Behind the Scenes by Jen Turano is a light, fun romance with a dash of suspense and a bucketful of hilarity! The characters – and the setting – leap off the page, and you'll find yourself more than once wanting to grab Permilia into a spontaneous hug. Particularly during the Go-As-You-Please quadrille. Although... that hug might be for self-preservation purposes more than anything else. Gilded Age society has never been more entertaining, and I'm already eagerly anticipating the next wildflower in the spotlight!

(I voluntarily reviewed a complimentary copy of this book)

see my review at [Reading Is My SuperPower](#)

Rachel says

I really enjoyed this newest book by Jen Turano. With her consistent style of almost slapstick humor and the ever present mystery, you'll laugh your way through this book and sigh with contentment when you are done.

Miss Permilia Griswold is a delightful character with a healthy dose of common sense. Although her normal response is to get tongue-tied around society gentleman, she has no problem communicating with Mr. Asher Rutherford and I really enjoyed their interactions. Mr. Asher is a dear and I really liked how he changed a few of his society influenced notions after meeting Permilia.

I loved the secondary characters in this book. You have Permilia's wallflower friends, who I'm sure will be

one of the heroines of the next book :). I love the way they support her. Then you have Asher's friend, Harrison. He sounds delightful and is fun to read about. Then there is the supposedly randomness and mystery of a few other characters like the spinster sisters and the employer of one of her wallflower friends. Quite an interesting cast of characters.

All in all, this is a well written story with a gentle romance and a mystery with a few twists and turns that will keep you turning pages and anticipating the next book. Loved it!

Thanks to CelebrateLit and the publisher for a complimentary copy of this book. I was not paid or required to write a positive review and all opinions stated are my own.

Alice says

In the midst of a crazy schedule I have going on that's kept me from reading/blogging so much as I'd like, Turano provided me with many good laughs through this story!

I did not feel quite so close to the heroine as I have to several of those in the authors previous books, but I loved her hero and her wallflower friends (whose stories I am excitedly looking forward to reading).

One of the things I love about each of Turanos novels is the rapid fire, witty dialogue that passes between all of the characters!

I found the premise to this new series to feel fresh and fun, with surprising developments around every corner, and all historical romance readers will enjoy this romp through the outskirts of New York society!

Elodie (Readable Mélange) says

I had high hopes for this book but it really let me down. I always hate to give less than three stars, but the writing was poor, the dialogue was stilted, and the characters were flat. Permilia's awkwardness was really exaggerated. Asher irritated me - considering that he was only meeting her for the third time at the party, he was annoyingly possessive of her. Even if he was starting to like her, it's none of his business what other guys she chooses to hang out with. And even if it seemed like she was shy of them, he should've let her make her own decisions. Now of course Permilia was characterised as completely (like, *completely*) tongue-tied whenever a strange man spoke to her, and I found this rather silly - she's in her twenties and she is literally unable to speak to strange men? How does she function in life? More pressingly, how is she going to function as VP of Asher's company????

The most frustrating part of all was that the author explained every subtlety as though the readers wouldn't be able to understand them if she didn't.

I did love Mrs Davenport and the Huxley sisters; they were far and away the best part of the book. I would've loved to have more of Mrs Davenport.

While Behind the Scenes was a disappointing read, I'm still going to try reading other books by Jen Turano. The synopses that I've read are interesting, and I hope the poor quality of Behind the Scenes was simply a fluke. (Also, I find when an author becomes popular, their publisher accepts everything they write without question, which may have happened here.) Hopefully I will enjoy her other books more.

I received a free copy of this book from NetGalley in exchange for my honest review.

Amanda Tero says

Another laugh-out-loud read!! I don't always find authors to be humorous, but Jen Turano has it down. I got many strange looks from my family when I just couldn't hold back a giggle (or ten).

I would say that Behind the Scenes is definitely a character-driven novel. I fell in love with Permilia, Gertrude, and yes, Asher and Harrison (here's hoping the next in the series is about Gertrude!). All of the characters were very well developed and interesting. I loved how Turano leaked out what they were doing and consistently made changes in their character growth and trust (or distrust) of others.

The plot seemed a little scattered at times because there was SO much going on between the main threat presented, family relationships, etc. It was all very interesting, it just seemed that occasionally the main threat was forgotten for a while (and, seeing as it was dangerous, how could one forget it?).

This was a very clean book. I would say it is Christian, because it definitely speaks of God, but it didn't strike me as having a solid message woven throughout the entire story—more in the latter half. Also, I'm not 100% sure that I fully endorse some of the thoughts presented (such as, "Follow God, hope for the best"—this is probably me being slightly nit-picky).

There was romance, of course, but it was comical. I didn't find it to be extremely emotional-driven. There were a few times of flutters and such, but honestly, I don't remember any extreme detail of emotions and kisses (which is a personal plus here).

Due to the era, there was a bit about the suffrage/progressive movement. I personally don't fully agree with the movement, but I did find it to add historical accuracy.

All in all, this was a super enjoyable read and I'm looking forward to book two in the series.

I received this book complimentary of the author and Celebrate Lit, and happily provided my review.

Diane Estrella says

First off, Jen Turano is an all-time favorite author of mine. Is there a "bad" Jen Turano book ... no. Was this her best book ... unfortunately, no.

Anyone that reads a Jen Turano story HAS to know what they are getting into. It is a light-hearted, witty, LOL book that can not be taken all-too seriously. Does she get deeper on some issues and flawlessly integrate them into the story, of course, yes, but she always stays true to herself and her one of a kind writing style. Her characters are quirky, and peculiar, and unusual, and put into these kinds of unfathomable situations spouting off the most delightful and humorous banter. Her casts are a wonderful ensemble of young and old coming together with ease, to make a well balanced story that anyone can enjoy. There is just something about proper ladies and gentlemen of society being thrown in to less than "comfortable"

situations. Was I sad no four-legged creatures were involved in this plot... probably yes. ;)

While I admit this was not my favorite storyline of hers (the climax came WAY at the end of the book), it still did not disappoint in being a wonderful distraction from ho-hum life and providing many hours of snorts and smiles. I think her next book will be a lot of fun with our new hero and heroine being introduced in this book, and I can not wait to see their antics and adventures.

I received this book from the publisher/author but was not required to leave a review. All opinions expressed here are my own.
