



The Smuggler Wore Silk

Alyssa Alexander

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A thrilling, seductive adventure from award-winning author Alyssa Alexander...

After he is betrayed by one of his own, British spy Julian Travers, Earl of Langford, refuses to retire without a fight, vowing to find the traitor. But when the trail leads to his childhood home, Julian is forced to return to a place he swore he'd never see again, and meet a woman who may be his quarry—in more ways than one.

Though she may appear a poor young woman dependant on charity, Grace Hannah's private life is far more interesting. By night, she finds friendship and freedom as a member of a smuggling ring. But when the handsome Julian arrives, she finds her façade slipping, and she is soon compromised, as well as intrigued.

As she and Julian continue the hunt, Grace finds herself falling in love with the man behind the spy. Yet Julian's past holds a dark secret. And when he must make a choice between love and espionage, that secret may tear them apart.

The Smuggler Wore Silk Details

Date : Published January 7th 2014 by Berkley

ISBN : 9780425269527

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Format : Mass Market Paperback 304 pages

Genre : Romance, Historical Romance, Historical, Historical Fiction, Regency, Adult, Mystery

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From Reader Review The Smuggler Wore Silk for online ebook

Sandi Layne says

First, let's start with the cover. The image of Grace (Our Heroine) in her clearly-silken gown, holding the pistol behind her, is perfect for the story. And the tag line:

He went looking for a traitor. He found a wife.

is just right. Because there is no indication about what went on between the first sentence and the second.

And believe me, it is a bit more complicated than one might imagine!

The tagline mentioned above concerns Our Hero, so I'll start with him. Because I like him a great deal. Nicknamed The Wandering Earl by London Society, Julian Travers has developed a devil-may-care attitude over the years to mask his deadly dedication to the business of espionage. He carries two monkeys on his back: his occupation as a spy as well as his bloodline. Travers men, it appears, are not to be trusted. His past is darkened by tragedy for which he still carries deep-seated guilt. Undeservedly.

The reader gets some information about this guilt long before Our Heroine does. Grace Hannah is the daughter of a local landowner. She is housed and treated like a poor relation, even as she acts as something of a local apothecary to the neighborhood. Her uncle is a horrible fellow, but Grace bears up admirably under the pressure of her depressed status as well as a very public jilting by a local man.

And, of course, she's involved in a smuggling ring. No, really. It's quite charming how it all comes about and I admire her tenacity, here. And her loyalty to her friends.

To a point.

Clapping my hands over my mouth so I do not get spoilery!

Okay, so, let's just say that Grace and Julian find definite chemistry with one another that they explore to increasing degrees as they play a little game between themselves. It's cute. A bit cheesy, but it works for me and for them.

But he's a spy and he suspects her of being involved with a traitor, if she isn't a traitor herself, and she is thinking only that he is quite the handsome fellow...

One thing leads to another and...they have to get married.

Is there UST? Steam? You bet.

Lost in the moment and uncaring that her unbound hair would be streaming into the earl's face, she leaned forward over the pommel. The earl did the same until his face was over her shoulder. His breath was ragged in her ear, but she could feel the pleasure in her body echoing in his. He seemed to vibrate with energy behind her.

This is quite racy for a Regency, but still kept it clean and easy for an unmarried couple, which I appreciated.

But it got warmer...!

He groaned and pushed his hands into her loose hair, taking control of the kiss. The demand was there now, the need clear in his foraging tongue and agile lips. His hands worked through her hair, then cupped her cheeks as he drew her against him. She obeyed, hungry for the forbidden. As their bodies met and breath mingled, Grace knew what she had been missing for so long. The something she could never define but that left a hole within her. It was this heat, the fire in the blood and the lust that pooled in her belly.

So you can imagine, perhaps, why they had to get married?

And when they do? Things definitely heat up.

Overall...

As a story, with a traitor plot happening and a man with secrets and a woman whose loyalty to her friends is stronger than her loyalty to her husband (a man she loves even if she won't admit to it), and some colorful secondary characters, it's entertaining and fulfilling. We find out a bit early things that the protagonists don't know for a while, which I don't think needed to happen, but overall, it was a good read.

I recommend this to all fans of Regency Romances who don't mind it when the characters get more heated than kisses in the shrubbery. The passion is well written and heartfelt, though beyond the usual limits in the classic versions of this genre.

4.8 Stars.

Disclaimer: I received an ARC for this title in exchange for an honest review.

Amanda says

3.5 stars (oh how I wish it could've been higher *pout*)

With its quick paced story (almost *too* quick, but more on that later) and the unique combination of a spy hero and a smuggler heroine, *The Smuggler Wore Silk* was a hidden gem I was happy to discover. I think what stood out the most was how many negative tropes the book contained that would've ordinarily had me bashing my head into a wall and/or rolling my eyes all the way back into my head. These include an emotionally constipated hero with a tragic past and a couple who cannot keep their hands off each other from their very first meeting onward. Okay, maybe that last one doesn't sound so bad but you know, insta-lust can be a detriment when not backed up with emotional depth. Thankfully, it all came together beautifully and I actually enjoyed how handsy Julian and Grace were throughout because I knew that their connection went beyond just the physical attraction. Alyssa Alexander kept surprising me with more and more quality as I read on and that RARELY happens. But her engaging prose and most especially the riotous, witty banter between the leads proved to be an undeniable combination. Also the intimate sensuality she infused into

every scene the hero and heroine shared often reminded me of Christy Carlyle. Well done.

What kept this from being a 4-star book was the ending. The one looming issue over the course of the story was Julian's inability to open up and be honest about his past with Grace, even after they were married. I understood his resistance because what happened to him was AWFUL and not something easily talked about. Plus for the most part, his lack of communication didn't grate on my nerves as it usually would have; until it did. The fact is that he didn't trust Grace enough to tell her the truth, UNTIL THE VERY LAST CHAPTER. Seriously? You're gonna save something that important for literally the final few pages and then that's it? I was so proud of Julian for finally choosing to be vulnerable and admit the whole truth which in turn leads Grace to tell Julian she loves him. It was a really special moment, a start of something great except then it just...stopped. That was the end. I actually thought, hoped, PRAYED that my ebook might be missing a few extra chapters and an epilogue but no, that was it. JULIAN DIDN'T EVEN SAY HE LOVED GRACE IN RETURN. WTF????????? And you were doing so well, book! Okay so the traitor plot went stale by the end as well but still, the ending for the OTP should have at least been wrapped up nicely, not just stopped at the three quarter mark. Julian and Grace (and me!!!) deserved better than some half-assed not-ending.

Sophia says

A nice Regency era romance with a bit of espionage and smuggling thrown in for good measure just sounded all sorts of fun to me so I grabbed this one up and settled in for a bit of entertainment. The book easily met my expectations. I had some issues, but my overall feeling was pleasure with the story.

The story is about a nobleman who is more than he seems. The 'Wandering' Earl of Langford is none other than one of England's most accomplished spies, The Shadow. Due to a traitor within the walls of government, his identity has been compromised and his superior informs him that he needs to retire. Julian feels cold dread at the idea of retiring. His work is his life. He will not- cannot return to the home he hasn't seen since he was a child or to the frivolous life that he pretends to lead. Horrible things happened in his past and he is determined to make amends through his work. He would rather die for his country out in the field than languish as just another shallow nobleman.

With that goal in mind, he presents his superior with the knowledge that he has information that will lead to the capture of their traitor. An overheard conversation in France indicates that a Miss Grace Hannah is involved in smuggling out information through her regular smuggling activities. Julian is given the mission as he hoped and returns home to Devon to act his part and investigate Miss Grace Hannah.

Grace lives as a poor relation and little better than a servant in her uncle's home. Along with tending to his household, she also makes use of her stillroom knowledge to care for many of common folk and neighbors in her community. She doesn't go into local society if for no other reason than to avoid the man who jilted her for another woman who is now his wife since they live in the neighborhood. It is on one of her errands that she encounters the frivolous and flirtatious Earl of Langford. At first she is amused by his empty-headed playfulness, but then she suspects that there is an observant, working mind behind those laughing blue eyes. She is put on her guard even as she feels a strong attraction to him. He cannot find out about her dealings with the local smugglers.

Julian is surprised and impressed with the woman he suspects is the traitor. He watches her closely even as he gets up a light flirtation with her. Things don't quite add up, but he knows she is concealing something. Her secrets come out right about the time they are caught in a compromising situation. Not long after, they

are married and he finds himself with a wife who will not be left behind as he continues his investigation into the traitor who has stepped up his efforts and grows dangerous with the knowledge that someone is onto his trail. Julian and Grace both discover that they each hide feelings for their new spouse except they have differing ideas of how this will affect their future. Julian's plans to complete his mission and get back into active spywork remain unchanged and Grace can't get him to share the secret from his past or change his mind about staying.

I enjoyed the story and the characters. There was a need to suspend belief over the normal behavior of people in that time for my enjoyment to take place, but I was good with that. I loved the dashing idea of a lady smuggler and an aristocratic spy teaming up. Their activities both working on the mission and forming a relationship kept my interest. The story swapped back and forth between them as narrators and I liked knowing their thoughts and motivations. Their passionate side came on quick considering she was a virgin, but again, I shrugged it off.

A few of the minor characters like Jack were really engaging, but some of the others were rather heavy-handed in their portrayals. The cruel uncle, the jilting suitor and his shrew of a wife, and the uncle's cronies came on a bit strong. Even Julian's attitude about his tainted blood and the part he played in that past event when he was a child was somewhat melodramatic for one with his experience and worldliness. This wasn't enough to make me not enjoy the story, but it kept distracting me.

The spy plot was twisty enough that I was suspecting nearly everyone. I loved that part of the story, but I did feel that a few things were left unexplained in the end like the French guy, the shooting and what had the people involved so upset. This incident was never really explained in light of what happened afterward.

I felt like the stuff hindering their relationship got dusted under the rug rather quick considering how much importance they placed on it and let it throw up barriers to their relationship. Things ended before Julian and Grace's future was settled satisfactorily. They kissed and made up and he told her his secret, but that was it. No hint as to where they would go from there. A few more pages would have done the trick and left me pretty satisfied with the results.

All in all, it's a fun and engaging story that leaves me looking forward to more from this author. Historical Romances fans who like daring heroes and heroines and a bit of heat to their romance should try this one.

My thanks to Penguin group for sending me a copy of the story in exchange for my honest review thoughts.

Gawelleb says

En toute honnêteté ce serait plus 3,5, mais vous connaissez mon désamour pour la romance historique en ce moment et le fait que je n'hésite pas à abandonner les livres qui ne me plaisent pas. Ici je suis allée au bout donc je laisse le 0.5!!

Sinon, c'est classique et mignon! On sent que c'est une première histoire! Elle ajoute plus de noirceur et de piment à l'histoire et cela donnera une très bonne recette.

Je lirai la suite avec plaisir d'autant que le héros du prochain tome semble prometteur!

Daneesha says

It is kind of refreshing when you encounter a broken, cold hero who can still charm the hell out of you. Julian does that to his woman, Grace and me, the reader. I really liked him.

He easily flits from charming, warm, and considerate to cold, dark spy. And he isn't even the darkest hero I've ever met. When we meet him, he's a spy who is being told to retire. This doesn't sit well with him, especially since he's at the top of his game.

Grace the heroine is a bit of spice of life too. She is of course, stubborn, somewhat opinionated, and witty. She engages Julian in witty, flirty games despite not knowing his true intentions. She's that "poor baseborn" relative who gets stuck with family who hate her.

I really liked how at ease she was with Julian and she didn't deny her feelings. She knew she wanted him, oh yeah!

Together, they uncover each others' identities in hopes of capturing a traitor to England.

This was the first book I have encountered that didn't have an epilogue. SPOILER Neither did the hero say the L word. I found that surprising. I realized how routine it is for the characters to confess their love at the end of the novel. I was a little surprised but after thinking about it, I realized it didn't need to be said. His every action, well most of them, showed that he really cared deeply about Grace.

I really enjoyed this book. I thought about it when I wasn't reading it and couldn't wait to finish it.

Kusanagi says

j'ai hésité avec 3,5 mais c'est un premier livre donc je note large et il m'a plus. J'ai aimé Grace et Julian et aussi tous les personnages secondaires qui rendaient ce récit bien vivant...

Il y a quelques petits défauts des 1er livres mais l'ensemble donne envie de lire la suite et de suivre l'auteur. Bon le fait de l'avoir croisée au Festival du Roman féminin et de l'avoir trouvée sympa aide aussi xD

Mandi Schreiner says

The premise of this book sounds exciting – Julian, being forced to retire from the spy business goes on one last mission to prove he can still be useful. He falls for a female smuggler who has a bad reputation with the ton and likes dangerous activities. Except, it really wasn't all that exciting.

For one, there is a lot of time spent away from being a spy and a smuggler. We see the every day life of Grace – how she keeps her uncle's home and how she is a healer of sorts for her village and we see her meeting with smugglers. But I wanted a little more from the smuggling business. As for Julian, he sneaks into rooms and places and do what spies do – but we aren't privy to those scenes. We are just told about them after they happen. I wanted to see how he got into these rooms and left without being found out.

But what really didn't sit well with me is how Julian and Grace's relationship unfolds. Julian thinks Grace is

a traitor, which obviously carries great punishment. He decides to seduce her to see if she will open up and start talking. But for most of the first half of the book, it feels like he forgets she could be a traitor, as he falls for her. Then he so nonchalantly tells her he is a spy and he thinks she is a traitor. It kind of comes out of nowhere. And then nothing really comes of this big reveal. They continue to be in love and it just didn't leave an impact. I felt as though Julian should have been a little more wary of Grace and that he was careless. And as for Grace – I often found myself asking, why is she falling in love with Julian? I found their eventual friendship to be believable but I needed to see or read her thoughts more on falling in love.

The merging of the 'spy falls for possible traitor' just wasn't executed well for me. I enjoyed both characters of Julian and Grace individually. I think had they fallen in love with a different setting, I would have enjoyed them much more.

I can't help but compare every spy romance I read to Joanna Bourne, who I think masters this trope. This one didn't hold up for me.

Rating: C

Susan Gorman says

Alyssa Alexander's debut novel The Smuggler Wore Silk is fabulous!

Loved the hero, heroine, the well developed secondary characters and the plot line. I stayed up late to finish the last 100+ pages.

Julian Travers is the type of character who appeals to me; a strong, brooding hero with secrets. Julian is the Earl of Langford is well known in London society. His nickname is the Wandering Earl. But, Julian is really a spy known as the Shadow. Julian's identity has been compromised and he is given one last assignment. He is to return to his country estate and uncover a traitor who is smuggling secret documents.

Grace Hannah is the niece of Lord Cannon. She is treated as a servant by her relatives and many of their peers. In truth, Grace is an intelligent woman who runs her uncle's home during the day and a smuggling operation at night. Grace is smart, resourceful and brave. She is loved and valued by the local townspeople.

Julian suspects that Grace is the traitor and is determined to prove it. Julian and Grace are attracted to each other. Their attraction develops into romance as they join forces to flush out the traitor. Great dialog--Julian is quite the charmer --very witty and sexy! This book is well written and contains lots of romance, action, red herrings and intrigue.

Alexander keeps the reader guessing the identity of the traitor end the very end of the story.

I found the book hard to put down. I wanted Grace and Julian to solve the mystery and I enjoyed the resolution immensely.

Congratulations to Alyssa Alexander for an excellent debut novel!

I am looking forward to the next book in the series!

Sandi *~The Pirate Wench~* says

Setting: Regency England

Steam Factor: Med-Hot

4 1/2 Stars

When his cover has been revealed, Julian Travers Earl of Langford is then forced to retire from his life of being a spy. But there is a traitor amongst them that he must expose before he has to go and give it all up. And the trail leads him to a smuggler's cove and to Grace Hannah. Grace is the poor relation of the local gentry, and she appears to be quiet and biddable by day but as night rolls in she becomes part of the smuggler's band. When Grace receives a folio hidden in a shipment of goods, she then realizes someone in the area is sending secrets to the French. Somehow she must get the information to London but how? She certainly cannot believe the handsome Earl of Langford is someone trust worthy of her confidence, but she has no choice as there is no one else. But as their friendship progresses Grace's defences just slip away as her desire for him grows. Julian is attracted to the spirited little smuggler, and when he compromises her he knows that they must marry. Now bound by their passions and their desire to complete this mission Julian and Grace plunge right into danger. But will finding this traitor unlock dark secrets that will threaten their new found love? What a thrilling wild ride of a spy thriller that also sizzles with passion. Lots of plot twists and turns like a intricate puzzle to figure out. And a female smuggler romance? Almost....as good as a Pirate Romance I'd say :D

I really enjoyed this authors writing style and her story kept me glued to the pages! Look forward to her next book in the series In Bed With A Spy. An author to watch!

Jennifer says

3.5/5

Julian Travers', Earl of Langford mission in life is to be the best spy for his country. He has forsaken his ancestral home and all the duties that come with it because he wants to prove his dead father wrong. So when he's almost forced into retirement he fights against it. He tells his boss that he thinks someone in the Home Office is leaking highly sensitive military information and is feeding it to a smuggling ring in Devon, his home seat. His last mission (or so he does not hope) is to find the traitor. His contact said that a Miss Hannah seems to be the smuggler who holds the damning information. So he goes to Devon to meet Miss Hannah and get to the bottom of it.

Miss Gracie Hannah is a poor relation to Lord Cannon. She's been living on his estate and since the woman of the manor has died and taken charge of the staff and the books. She's mistreated by her Uncle, not physically abusive, but emotionally. He's embarrassed by her and rather she remains at home to work on her duties. Several years ago she was compromised, jilted and therefore ruined. Her "fiance" left her to marry another woman. Many of the women in the town are sympathetic to her especially the ones she has given herbal remedies to. But society dictates, she be ostracized or at least spoken about behind her back.

Miss Hannah rides astride, cooks, cleans, does some apothecary work and oh yeah is a smuggler. She once saved famed smuggled Jack Blackbourn and since his "retirement" has welcomed Gracie into the fold. She does the accounting for all the smuggled goods and is friendly with all of the other smugglers. The men aren't hardened criminals, no they are local fisherman and laborers who need the extra coin for their families.

The men all rely on Gracie and give her a folio of traitorous military information they have found in hope she can do something about it.

When Julian meets Gracie he shamefully flirts with her as part of his act to get information from Gracie. He knows she has a secret, but needs evidence that she is traitor. He kisses her, makes lewd (but not crude) innuendos, all for information. Of course, the lines are blurred when feelings get involved. When he finds the folio he swaps it with fakes and truly believes Gracie is guilty. And he's willing to do anything to find out who's getting her that information. Yet he doesn't anticipate compromising Grace in front of house guests at a party. Because of a lack of choice, Grace declines his marriage offer, but is forced into it by her Uncle. While Julian isn't exactly ecstatic about being married and presumably issuing heirs because of his father issues, he isn't exactly opposed to it either. But he has more pressing matters at hand to solve.

I'm glad things sort of opened up around the 40% mark and the two revealed some secrets and decided to work together. Julian is constantly flirting with Grace, reveling in his smuggler/consort role play with her. Grace is a tough cookie and holds her own against the boys. She wields a gun, rides astride, and oh yeah deliver babies who are in the wrong position!

There are so many suspects in this book, from Blackbourn to Grace's uncle and associates to her ex-fiance and even the over eager underling of Sir Charles, Miles Butler. The treason/folio lot isn't too complicated, but I found it to be evenly balanced with the love plot. Though I found there not to be a lot of substance in Grace and Julian's relationship at first. There's a lot of flirting, early kisses, but before he helps with the birth they really don't know a lot about each other. Granted given the espionage work and the lack of trust among one another there isn't a lot of opportunity to get to know each other. But when they do consummate their relationship, the dynamic changes and they're more into one another and the idea of love comes into play with hesitation.

When they realize they've been forced into marriage trust isn't a huge factor in the relationship. Julian doesn't want to share his horrible youth experiences nor does he allow Grace to enter his mother's previous suite. And that causes a lot of tension and issues between the two. I think the events of the story take place in a matter of weeks, maybe less than a month or two, so it's incredibly fast moving and it's understandable why they are so hesitant to share their fears and disillusionments.

It's a good story, with very quick and tame love scenes for those who don't like heavy intense love scenes. I didn't get quite hooked in as I didn't find it to be a complete page turner (to me a page turner is when I sneak reading at work). I liked the story, but since it took me so long to read I fell out of the moment easily.

The characters are admirable. There were times I thought Grace was going to pull a TSTL moment, but she's more than capable of standing her ground and defending herself. There are a lot of red herrings in the book and not all of them resolved. We're introduced to Angel, another spy who I presume will have his story in the subsequent book in the series.

Natalie says

3.5 stars

This was delightful, I loved how Julian kept calling Grace 'fair lady' throughout the book. I thought the growing feelings from attraction between Julian and Grace felt natural and kept developing into more and

more after their marriage (of convenience). I liked that both Julian and Grace's individual arcs involved learning that they were lovable, that they were worth more. This self worth thing is something that also keeps them apart, especially with Julian, who keeps his secrets and his past walled up that puts a distance between him and Grace.

I like that Grace fought Julian every step of the way to break down those walls, and the angst was also delicious. I also loved their sextimes, where they would fantasize of being a smuggling captain and a consort in far off lands. It was really cute.

The one thing I did not like was that the ending was too abrupt and there was no epilogue!! hello! The end scene was fantastic, because it was the end of angst and their reconciliation but it felt way too abrupt to end the book that way! At least there was a sneak peek of Angel's book (with a widow heroine!!!) that let us know that Grace and Julian had twin daughters.

My Book Addiction and More MBA says

The perfect combination of espionage, secrets, chemistry and action! If you're looking for a new author, then look no further because Alyssa Alexander's debut novel has it all! As soon as I finished reading this one, I searched her page to find out when the next in the series is set to come out!

When Julian Travers sets off to his estate in Beer, it certainly wasn't with the intention of finding a wife. All Julian wanted to do was find the traitor who was forcing him into retirement so he could continue with the job he loved. But his only connection with this traitor is the beautiful, alluring, Miss Grace Hannah, and the more he gets to know her, the harder it is to focus on his assignment and finish this mission. Julian knows he's not husband material. After all, he's a Travers, but when he and Grace get caught in a compromising situation, he does the only thing he knows to do and offers for her hand. But Grace has secrets. She's a smuggler. And she's the ruined poor relation of a heartless uncle. Thrust into a marriage, Julian and Grace must learn to trust each other in order to catch the traitor and save their marriage. But how exactly does a smuggler and a spy for the British Army bridge the gap between two? And is Julian willing to let old secrets destroy the love his new wife has for him?

If you're looking for an amazing female character who has wit, courage, compassion and a strong backbone, then you've definitely found her in Grace Hannah! Even though life has handed her a large basket of lemons, she's making lemonade. Grace helps out around her uncle's house, tends to the locals medical needs, and is the leader of the local smuggling ring. This girl is awesome! Julian's character is exceptionally written as well. He's your typical spy- driven, protecting, loyal, and completely untrusting. These two make for a great love story. Toss in the smuggling and unknown traitor and you're turning page after page trying to figure out who it is! The story line is awesome, the characters are well developed (even the supporting ones), and the setting is so well described you can picture yourself there! Well Done Alyssa Alexander! I can't wait to read more!

Rating: 4.5

Heat Rating: Mild

Reviewed by AprilP

Debbie Lester says

Alyssa Alexander's debut novel, *The Smuggler Wore Silk* is the first book in the *Spy in the Ton* series. Readers are given a tale of action, adventure, mystery and intrigue, with a dose of romance to cap it off. Alexander has a way with dialogue that is exceptional. The witty banter she gives her hero was both entertaining and sexy. With a resourceful heroine, a few spies, a traitor and a smuggling ring led by a woman, what more could readers ask for in a historical romance?

What I liked:

First of all, one of the intriguing things about *The Smuggler Wore Silk* was the fact that it was a debut novel. It certainly didn't read like one. Often times the debut novel of most authors is not always their best work. If that's the case with this book, readers are in for one very good series. This book was well written, had engaging characters with colorful back stories and had enough mystery to keep readers on the edge of their seats. Alexander surprised me with her writing. She writes like a seasoned pro.

Julian, the hero of the story is a wayward earl who doesn't take the responsibilities of his title very seriously. He has spent an inordinate amount of time working as a spy for the British court. Known as Shadow, Julian's work has successfully kept him from home for a very long time, keeping his secrets and pain at bay. I thought Julian was an excellent brooding hero. He has issues and flaws, but that was part of what made him so interesting. I loved the way Alexander wrote the way he talked and interacted with Grace, the heroine.

For me one of the best parts of this novel was the banter between Grace and Julian. He has a way with words that is very enjoyable. Not only does Alexander allow him to use a lot of humor, but she always gives Julian a sexiness that is unmistakable. It was a joy to read. Grace also has quite a bit of dialogue that is fun and keeps the reader guessing as to what she's really up to. Alexander's dialogue skills were excellent.

I loved Grace, she was so fun to read about. She is basically a servant by day, smuggler by night and now she's being accused of being a traitor. Julian believes she is the person who has jeopardized his work as a spy and who is trading in secrets. I loved the fact that Alexander shows Grace as a very good hearted person who would help anyone she could. The fact that she resorts to smuggling for that reason did not seem like a stretch at all. She was resourceful character and her relationship with Julian was very complicated and very hot.

The chemistry between these two main characters was simply sizzling. It is obvious though they are leery of each other, something else is at work, their own longings for someone to care about them. I loved how they worked together to draw out the real traitor and how Alexander kept readers guessing with some well placed clues.

There were plenty of people who could have done it and when the reader finds out the real culprit, they will probably kick themselves for not figuring it out sooner. The mystery aspect of the book was very well done.

What I didn't like:

The only thing I could mention here is that Grace allowed her Uncle to treat her in such a terrible manner.

She is a strong woman, but even she takes a beating from the other women in her circle. I just thought she should have stood up for herself a little more. I mean she's a smuggler by night, why take the crap from the ton by daylight? Not a deal breaker, just a pet peeve.

Bottom Line:

This was an excellent debut novel. I look forward to seeing where Alexander will take this series next. She introduced several characters including, Angel, another spy who will probably be featured in the next book in the series. An a very choice for readers who like some extra pizazz to their historical romances.

Veda says

Another new author for me, and I loved the story. I have loved regency settings since I read my first Barbara Cartland book when I was 13 years old. And they are just getting better and better.

What can be better then a spy, and a smuggler? The spy is the Earl of Langford, trying to out run his memories of his childhood. The smuggler, is Grace Hannah, whose parents died leaving her to live with an uncle that treats her worse then the servants he has. What brings them together? Will the past they both have ruin their future? Who, what, and where they find the traitor that brings them together? This story had a couple of twists that I didn't even see coming, and that made the story that much better. Looking forward to reading more from this author.

Annette says

I really liked this book. Ms Alexander is a talented first timer and I look forward to the next book in this series.

Julian is an earl who has been a spy. The French now know who he is and his future is no longer going to be spying on the Continent. He has avoided his family home and his family responsibilities because of a childhood filled with trauma and pain. Now he will have to go back home and find the traitor in his own back yard.

Grace is a lovely young woman who lives with an uncle who took her in out of the "goodness of his heart." He is an evil man who belittles and abuses her on a daily basis. His sister married beneath her station and Grace is the result of that marriage. He will never forget it nor will he allow her to forget it. She became friends with some people in the neighborhood who happen to be smugglers. The neighbors have taken her to their hearts and made her a part of their lives. She has learned to be a herbalist and healer and created a place for herself.

Julian believes that Grace is not only a smuggler but also the traitor. He intends to catch her in the act and bring her to justice. If it takes him seducing her - he is willing to do that. And immediately when he meets her the idea of seducing her becomes a pleasurable side of his hunt for treason.

Julian is a very heroic hero. He has been adept at what he has done for his country but he also has a side that is kind and loving. His attraction to Grace creates ambivalent feelings. He wants to treasure her but at the same time he is unable to completely trust her.

Grace is absolutely bowled over by Julian's sensuality, his humor and his obviously good heart. She is attracted to him, but because she has been ill treated she is not willing to be completely open with him.

The two of them have witty conversations that carry the plot forward and allow the reader to see more and more who they really are.

Good plotting and charming characters. The secondary characters are very important to the atmosphere and the plot.

My only wish for a small change - Grace stands up to Julian immediately but allows her uncle and others to verbally abuse and belittle her. I would have expected her to be more assertive because of everything she does in her life.
