



What Happens in London

Julia Quinn

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Rumors and Gossip . . . The lifeblood of London

When Olivia Bevelstoke is told that her new neighbor may have killed his fiancée, she doesn't believe it for a second, but, still, how can she help spying on him, just to be sure? So she stakes out a spot near her bedroom window, cleverly concealed by curtains, watches, and waits . . . and discovers a most intriguing man, who is definitely up to something.

Sir Harry Valentine works for the boring branch of the War Office, translating documents vital to national security. He's not a spy, but he's had all the training, and when a gorgeous blonde begins to watch him from her window, he is instantly suspicious. But just when he decides that she's nothing more than an annoyingly nosy debutante, he discovers that she might be engaged to a foreign prince, who might be plotting against England. And when Harry is roped into spying on Olivia, he discovers that he might be falling for her himself . . .

What Happens in London Details

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From Reader Review What Happens in London for online ebook

Kelly says

I found this book intermittently annoying and patience-testing throughout the exposition and apparently necessary status-and-plot-contrivance section. But I found this charming starting around page 145. I was in love around page 240. And the final scene should be in a opening-doors style farce of a rom-com if someone hasn't stolen it already. I finished this smiling.

Why do authors feel they absolutely must use genre formulas that just get in the way, especially if they're not going to do them well? Do yourself a favor and skim for the basics 'til you get to 145 and you'll love this as much as I did.

(Oh also, hi! to the people who followed me for my Proust and Fantasy It Is Ok For Boys To Admit They Like reviews. Occasionally I also read romance novels, so you can either learn to deal with that or unfollow me for my insufficient seriousness, but don't say you weren't warned!)

Sharon says

Love-hate relationship. Spies. Cute-funny bantering. Window-staring.

This is a delight. The romance is absolutely adorable with the nonstop cute bantering.

I find both Olivia and Harry to be sensible, sweet, and entertaining. Their romance is gradual and rather smooth-sailing, even with the dislike they had for each other in the beginning. I adore that they share a mutual distaste yet fondness for a silly Gothic novel that they both read together. I also love that they are neighbors who talk to each other through their own windows.

Just lots of cuteness here.

The ending is a bit rushed but still cute.

I would have liked to see more interactions with their family/best friends, but overall, it's a fun, sweet romance. **4 stars** (maybe 3.5)

Things that you might want to know (WARNING: Spoilers below)

Is there a happy/satisfying ending? (view spoiler)

Love triangle? Cheating? Angst level? (view spoiler)

Tears-worthy? (view spoiler)

Humor? (view spoiler)

Favorite scene? (view spoiler)

What age level would be appropriate? (view spoiler)

I literally never skip to a second book for a series, even for companion-books type series like this, but #no time for questionable books.

I'm hoping this will be filled with cuteness though.

seton says

Do you like Cute?

If you do and find JQ funny, then you will love this fluffy, light, sweet romance which is nothing but one vignette after another of the H/H flirting and rolling their eyes and just being a-dor-a-ble.

If you don't find JQ funny (sacrilege!), then you might begin to notice that beyond the set-up to get the H/H to meet, this book doesn't have a plot and that the H/H act like they are 16 instead of 28/22. The H/H are next door neighbors and talk outside their windows constantly. The AAR Review likened this to a *Romeo & Juliet* vibe. Actually, it wasn't so much *Romeo & Juliet* as it was *Drive Me Crazy*, the teen romantic comedy in which a high school girl romanced her best friend neighbor, also through her window. This JQ novel only needed a Britney Spears soundtrack.

This is the spinoff of *The Secret Diaries of Miss Miranda Cheever* and instead of diary entries scattered throughout at climatic moments as in the previous book, JQ has the heroine make up cutesy lists in her heads at inopportune moments. So in keeping with the spirit of the book, I will end with . . .

List of things I'll much rather do than read another Julia Quinn book ever again since she is not my cuppa:

1. Vacuum
 2. Pull weeds out my garden
 3. Pull lint out of my belly button
 4. Go to the dentist
 5. All of the above, all on the same day
-

Cynthia says

SUPER fluffy. Even for a Quinn. But in a cotton candy delicious kind of way. Very much a comedy first, and romance second. The end has some ridiculous contrived issues to overcome (ransom, I don't even know who you are!) that were completely unnecessary.

Neither the title, nor the cover fits the book very well, which is frustrating, as I could imagine some fantastic replacements:

- The Benefits of Conversing Through Windows
By Lady Olivia Bevelstoke, Avid Window Fan

- How to Throw in Possibly Deep/Meaningful Story (such as a drunk dad, bro) with No Real Point at All

- To Provoke, then Befriend a Russian Prince

- Everyone Can Be a Spy!
- Funny Hats Can Be Chick Magnets
- Don't Bother to Read the First Book in the Series-I'm Much Better and Can Stand Alone!
- Spying on Neighbors is Intriguing and Sexy
(only if it's done by a gorgeous blond, otherwise, call the constable!)
- Lurid Gothic Novels: Do Men Secretly Love Them? Do They? Do They?

As for the cover it should involve windows and the book Miss Butterworth. Also, THE HAT SHOULD BE PICTURED.

I cannot believe I got this at the local bookstore for a dollar. Whoever was pricing that day must have been on crack.

??Erica?? says

Russian spies + witty banter + sexual tension= the first five star Julia Quinn book for me. :)

Iliada says

This was a lovely book! Different than the previous one in the series but equally wonderful nevertheless.

Harry is a great hero. A bit more quiet than usual, the beta type, which I've really come to love during the past few years. He's also bookish, which is always a plus for me, and a translator!! How perfect?

Olivia is strong and quirky and beautiful. What I mostly loved about her is that she knew that she was very pretty and she realised how lucky she was for her good looks, but at the same time she felt a strong desire to be seen as something more than a pretty face.

This series, as well as the Smythe-Smith quartet, are not very popular among JQ fans. I really can't understand why. Yes, they are heavily focused on dialogue and are slow-burn, but they are so clever and funny and simply delightful I can't see what's not to like.

The previous book was probably the sexiest JQ book I've read so far. This one wasn't. It rather focused on building a strong and believable relationship between the H/h who strongly disliked each other at first, then became friends and eventually fell in love. The point is that however JQ chooses to handle her story, she always does a spectacular job. She is one of the few writers I completely appreciate and respect. Plus, I'm not in the habit of giving away 5-star ratings lately but she totally deserves it!

I'm typing this on my phone so I apologise if this review is rather messy. This book comes highly recommended from me and I think most JQ fans will enjoy it. Bravo!

Angele says

"What Happens in London" has so many rave reviews, that maybe my expectations were a little too high. I do think Julia Quinn's writing style is excellent, so much thought goes into every single page. The main characters' witty banter and snappy inner dialogue were so much fun to read. I absolutely loved the supporting character, Sebastian! He was just too much fun to read about, especially his love for the silly "Ms. Butterworth" novel. He was such a vivid character who just jumped off the page for me. However, I was less than thrilled about the actual romance in this book. I just felt no connection between Harry and Olivia, and when they started to fall in love, I thought it came across as forced and cheesy. I know, I know, I'm in the minority in thinking this, but I really did think the book was funny and witty, just not very romantic. I can't wait for Sebastian to get his own book!

reviewed for: <http://inthehammockblog.blogspot.com/>

Katie(babs) says

What Happens in London by Julia Quinn is one of the few books I have read this year that made me smile from beginning to end. I am in absolute love with What Happens in London. This is the type of book you will hold close to your chest and give it a big hug because it has brought forth such pleasure. I can say that this may be one of best books Julia has ever written. For the longest time her 1997 historical romance, Everything and the Moon held that honor.

Why do I have such happiness for What Happens in London? Could it be I was enthralled from the very first page to the very last? Or perhaps this is the only book I can think of where I want to list line after line, scene after scene here because they are just too good not to mention? It takes amazing skill from an author to write such a book where a particular scene or a piece of dialogue shines in such a way that it cannot be compared to any other. Julia has done this with What Happens in London. Feeling out of sorts or need a good laugh? BUY THIS BOOK!

Sir Harry Valentine is the son of a drunk. Growing up, he watched his father stumble around and vomit more times than he could count. Harry was always there to clean up after him. He also had a Russian grandmother who hated the English language. So what if she married into an English family? That is not the point. Because she refused to speak English, Harry became fluent in Russian and other languages. Harry loved to learn and read. That was his way of escaping his boyhood traumas of a father who was an embarrassment and a mother who was indifferent. By the time Harry was a young man of nineteen, he joined the army even though he wanted to go off to college.

Luckily Harry survived into adulthood and found "dull" work, as he thinks of it, with the War Office as a translator. Harry works out of his office in his new home. Harry is being spied upon. Not by enemies of England or someone he may have insulted, or some secret group that the lords of the ton join in order to fight crime. Harry is being watched by his next door neighbor, Lady Olivia Bevelstoke. Harry wants his peace and

it irks him that some English miss keeps watching him from her home. Soon he is sick of it and will confront her.

Olivia finds her new neighbor to be very odd. There are rumors that Harry Valentine killed his first wife, even though no one knows if he was married to begin with. Or perhaps it was a fiancé? All Olivia knows as she watches him from one of the windows of her home is that Harry works almost ten hours a day, sitting at his desk writing. He also wears dark clothes and strange hats. (Harry wore the strange hat because he knew Olivia was watching him) It is something a gentleman does not do! Olivia must figure out who this Harry is and why.

Harry and Olivia finally meet at the legendary Smythe-Smith musicale. And if you have read Julia's past books, you know very well about the Smyth-Smith reputation. It is pretty much a running gag in most of her books. They both come to the conclusion they dislike each other and are so proud they were able to expression their mutual dislike. But this does not end things between them. Circumstances that they are allow Harry and Olivia to come in contact time and again and from there a wonderful relationship forms between the two. Harry at first is forced to keep an eye on Olivia because the Russian Prince Alexei Ivanovich Gomarovsky has taken a liking to Olivia. The War Office believes that Alexei may sympathize with the defeated Napoleon. Because Harry has such a command of the Russian language he will make sure that the prince is on the up and up.

Harry goes out of his way to let bygones be bygones with Olivia. He is already attracted to her in ways he cannot explain. Olivia is not afraid to speak her mind and admit things to Harry such as she likes to read the newspaper and enjoys talking about current events. Harry has no complaints and because Olivia is a smart young woman, his mission, if you can call it that, is one Harry is now so happy to take on. He and Olivia become friends. She asks him questions and he responds honestly, even though he keeps his knowledge of the Russian language a secret. These two share ideas. They talk. They communicate, and from that these two friends grow into bosom buddies. Harry doesn't want Olivia around the prince or become too close with him because Harry wants her all to himself. And when Harry figures out he is in love with Olivia, it is a wonderous thing.

The explanation of why Harry has fallen hard for Olivia is beautiful. "He was going to marry her. It was that simple." And why? It all comes down to the way she affects him from her beauty, because she read newspapers instead of novels that he prefers, to her razor-sharp, and most importantly her, "look of horrified befuddlement when he bested her." Again the pro that Julia is explains everything to perfection.

What Happens in London is a quintessential love story that has so much more to recommend. This is a bit of a historical screwball comedy because of the way the characters act and think. Olivia has a habit of making lists in her head that will bring forth even more laughs. One such scene that had me in stitches was where Harry is at that musicale and he is annoyed that he finds Olivia so attractive. His reaction is priceless:

"And now he was officially disgusted with himself. He knew he shouldn't have read that book of poetry before he gone out for the evening. And in French too. Damn language always made him randy." Harry gets horny from reading French poetry!!

Another such scene that had me holding my stomach because I was laughing so hard was when the Russian prince, Olivia and Harry are all in a room together. Harry is annoyed because the prince is one smooth fellow. Olivia wants prince Alexei to speak Russian to her because she is not familiar with the language. The beautiful words sprung from Alexei's mouth anger Harry in so many ways:

“Say something more,” she urged. I can’t really hear the rhythm of the language from single- syllable words.”

“Very well,” the prince said. “Let me see...”

They waited patiently while he thought of something to say. After a few moments he spoke.

And Harry decided that he had never hated another human being as much as he hated Prince Alexei Gomarovsky of Russia.

What did you say?” Olivia asked with an expectant smile.

“Only that you are most beautiful than the oceans, sky and fog.”

Or, depending on the translation, I’m going to pump you until you scream.

I wish I could go on and on why What Happens in London had such an effect to this reader. Chapter after chapter is filled with such charm. The romance shines because of the engaging Harry and Olivia. Harry especially because of his endearing qualities and ability to love and allow this love to consume him in such a way he wants to spread it to all he comes in contact with.

And I failed to mention how Harry’s cousin Sebastian acts out a horrendous gothic novel to the delight of Olivia, Alexei, his bodyguard, and even the servants. Again another laugh out loud, not to be missed scene.

Delightful and amusing are only a few words to describe What Happens in London.

MRB says

I'm not a blindly adoring JQ fangirl who automatically thinks that everything she churns out is literary gold (or, um, even literary stainless steel), but when JQ is at her best or even close to best, there are very few writers of any genre or era who can charm and delight me more.

I absolutely, unreservedly loved this book. There are more technically flawless, smoothly paced books I've read over the past year, but very, very few which elicited this degree of personal attachment and that "awww, see, THIS is why reading is my favorite thing to do on this planet" adoration.

I always struggle to discuss writing style since it's so wholly subjective and difficult to define: an author's style either works for you or doesn't, and JQ's just happens to work for me so very, very perfectly that I can merrily excuse imperfections in her plotting and pacing. It's eminently witty, sharp and brimming over with clever insights and unexpected jolts of poignancy. And suffice it to say that within the first 20 pages I found her characters far more vividly defined and root-worthy than many authors manage after 420 pages.

Harry emerged immediately as one of my very favorite Quinn heroes---which means he's one of my very favorite heroes, period. Because in addition to the writing style gushed about above, the thing I've always appreciated most about Quinn's books is that she (usually!) creates heroes who are genuinely kind, decent, and well-meaning men. Imperfect, of course, but in amusing, colorful and relatable ways. In a genre that seems to increasingly define the 'ideal' hero as someone who's vicious until the final ten pages, creepily

controlling and in desperate need of both rehab and anger management, Quinn's heroes are remarkable for the mere fact that I'd genuinely like and respect most of these men in real life. They are (with a few very disappointing exceptions!) men I'd actually love to be with, men who you could adore and admire and, unlike far too many of today's extreme "alphas", never worry about having to obtain a restraining order against :)

Olivia, meanwhile, was one of my very favorite Quinn heroines: a woman who's smart, endearingly but not excessively quirky, and passionate about things other than just husband hunting. Like her wonderful hero, she's very relatably flawed but never to the point where she becomes more maddening than root-worthy.

As you've no doubt figured out, I absolutely adored Harry, adored Olivia and adored them as a couple. Adored them so deeply, in fact, that I'd be using a stronger verb than adored if my fatigued brain could think of one! If you like your H and h to have to endure tons of angst, internal conflicts and turmoil, this may not be the ideal pick for you: Harry and Olivia have a few obstacles en route to the sweetly inevitable HEA, but theirs is mostly a witty, warm, and, for me, refreshingly low anxiety journey :)

I ended up really liking the mild to moderate thriller elements in this one, though I'm admittedly partial to romances that are about something other than just the romance. But even if the 'Quinn tries to incorporate a splash of Hitchcock' idea makes you cringe, rest assured that there's still so much to love here: namely, some truly phenomenal dialogue, two of the more lovable and amusing H and hs I've come across, and ample amounts of the spirit-boosting warmth, cleverness and charm for which JQ is justifiably known.

I read and love many, many books, but of the two hundred or so that I've devoured this year (why, no, I DON'T have a life!), this was among my top five favorites. I totally get and respect arguments that it wasn't among JQ's very 'best', but it happened to be among my most personally beloved :) Enjoy!

Julie (jjmachshev) says

Light-hearted fun with a bare wisp of a sideplot; "What Happens in London" concentrates almost 100% on the humorous story of a hero and heroine who dislike each other at first sight, very much so. But of course, once they spend time together they quickly realize they are perfect for each other.

Olivia is many things: titled, beautiful, intelligent, and curious. And it's her curiosity that first has her spying on her neighbor. She's sure the rumor that he killed his fiance isn't true, but still. She just can't figure out what it is he does all day at his desk...and what's up with the hat?

Sir Harry spotted his spying neighbor right away, but didn't bother to let on. Of course he did try to entertain her with the hat and a few other ludicrous actions. Upon meeting, she seems rather icy and snobby; truly not Harry's type. But the War Dept has asked Harry to keep an eye on a visiting Russian noble and that noble seems to have his eye on Olivia. Harry soon comes to consider Olivia HIS, and once Harry makes up his mind...well, you'll never look at a window quite the same way again.

It seems whenever I paused while reading this book, I had a silly grin on my face. Julia Quinn's stories are so very likeable not just because her characters are human with assets and foibles exactly like us, but also because she knows just how and where to add humor to her stories--from grins to giggles to outright laughter. And I must say the proposal scene in this book is one I've never encountered before!

Quinn's story rolls out with perfect pace and pitch and the light drama added by the Russians is spot on with little danger. I've known quite a few linguists in my time and I must say I never thought an author could make that character-type seem romantic, but Harry is just that. So for fun and a bit of steamy romance, pick up "What Happens in London"--you'll even learn a new word or two!

Preeti ♥? (Romance She Reads) says

I so adored this book! I adored the h and them as a couple!

The reviews are mixed, but for me it was a winner. The humor goes into farcical but that was intentional, I felt. Well, I was smiling and chuckling so I am good with this one!

The h/H are next door neighbors in Mayfair, London. He is the new occupant to the south of their residence and the bored h's interest is piqued. According to gossip, he is a recluse and a wife killer to boot. And her window is strategically placed with a view into his property.

The H is dry, academic almost crusty sort but don't misjudge, he doesn't have a single beta bone in his tall dark black-draped bod. He works as a Russian translator for the War Office. He is a 'Sir' and not a 'Lord'. And he's colorblind.

The h is sweet, witty and restless. She is the toast of the season and the one before that, and few before that as well! She has turned down countless offers from all hierarchies of the peerdom and is almost on the shelf but, of course there is still no dearth of admirers.

We also have an impossibly handsome and lofty Russian prince as the wannabe om. The prince is under cloud as a 'Bonnie' sympathizer, and the War office deems that the translator should double up as a spy as well and keep an eye on his neighbor and her beau. The H starts out disliking the h but soon finds himself doing his job with more enthusiasm than warranted. Now our intrepid h has already been spying on the H from her bedroom window that looks down on to his office. All because she wants to see what a wife killer looks like. So they spy back and forth, or pretend to. The window rendezvous and parleys were the backbone of this book. They were entertaining, endearing and romantic. The reading of that ludicrous gothic novel *Miss Butterworth and the Mad Baron* throughout the story, that conquers each and all who listens in, does its bit for the lunatic tone of the book.

Add the Russian prince, a menacing bodyguard, a lady killer cousin, h's aggravating brother and H's drunk one, few silly gossip friends, some maid/butler types behaving above their station, few evil types and we have the whole cast.

It is a very sweet and believable (window) romance. There is a lot of intrigue and drama in the story, but the romance and love bloom very simply and naturally. They are like any young couple in love-attracted, captivated, excited and drawn to each other and really not fighting it much.....and sadly we rarely see this kind of 'pure' romance in the 'Romance' books we generally read.

Eastofoz says

This was a fun read and much better than what I was expecting. I'm not too keen on the spy theme so I was a bit leery but it turned out to be one of those good Julia Quinn books similar to her Bridgerton series minus the underlying seriousness.

The story starts out with Olivia Bevelstoke who heard from her friends that her new neighbor murdered his fiancée so she starts spying on him from her bedroom window where she can see into his office. He realizes what she's doing and does all sorts of weird things leaving her even more suspicious of him. They don't like each other much when they meet because he knows she's been spying on him and she thinks there's something nefarious about him. He goes as far as to tell her that he doesn't like her and she replies the same all very politely. As the story unfolds they become friends that they can confide in and eventually....well I'm sure you can figure it out ;)

What's good about this love story is that yes there's the love hate theme but it's done differently. He really doesn't like her and she doesn't like him and the reader wonders how they're going to end up liking each other because there's no chemistry. Well Quinn turns them into friends first and that develops into something more. There's a genuine camaraderie between them which was very well-done because it was a slow tension building disguised as friendship with nothing sexual. Olivia is one of those "beautiful girls" but with Harry she's just another girl and she likes that. Harry is just a regular guy and that's refreshing to see.

The secondary characters in the story are as good as the h/h adding spice to some of the hilarious situations. There's Mary and another of Olivia's friends who sits twittering and gossiping over tea and it's a riot. Quinn is brilliant with dialog. The jabbing banter between the h/h isn't exactly cutting but it's enough to remind me of Loretta Chase's Lord of Scoundrels. Not many authors can do that and keep it consistent throughout the novel. The exchanges between Olivia and her twin brother are way too much fun and seem exactly how a brother and sister would talk about each other while the other is in the room—basically mocking the other with "hidden" jabs to no end (lol!)

The book could've been a solid 5 star read if it hadn't been for the stereotypical "woman tied to the train tracks" caper that just seemed like dumb filler. It could've been completely deleted and it wouldn't have changed a thing. Thankfully it didn't lead to a "big misunderstanding" like I thought it would. Unfortunately there are only one or two steam scenes and they're somewhat disappointing after some really great tension building. Quinn managed to make up for it all though with her really cute ending that tied things up very well leaving me with the big ol' smile on the face typical of Julia Quinn stories.

Though this is officially book two in the Bevelstoke series, you won't be missing anything if you haven't read book one, *The Secret Diaries of Miss Miranda Cheever*, which wasn't that great anyway. So if you're looking for a light, happy read that's good overall I'd say give this one a go.

Dina says

When I read a JQ book, I know what to expect: a light, funny and fluffy read, filled with amusing banter between the H/h. That's what I got from this book, so I'm thoroughly satisfied.

Harry was adorable - really, I have no other adjective to qualify him - and Olivia was the typical JQ heroine, i.e., sassy, outspoken and a bit eccentric (she liked reading, gasp, newspapers!) Their inner thoughts and witty dialogues - not only with each other but with some secondary characters too - made me laugh out loud more than once, and that's what matters to me when I read a JQ book.

The suspense/thriller near the end was distracting and unnecessary, IMHO, and I admit skimmed through it. I mean, Harry and Olivia had already said their ILY and all JQ had left to do was to show the reader how Harry was going to propose - since he had made such a big deal out of it - so I couldn't care less about the last-minute added drama. Thankfully, that was quickly over and the story got back on track with Harry's charming marriage proposal, which made me close the book with a silly smile on my face.

All things considered, I really enjoyed this read. It wasn't enough to get JQ back to my auto-buy-authors list, but at least she's no longer on my authors-to-avoid list.

Jilly says

Julia Quinn always delivers on the fun. And, she always does call-backs to her other novels. I like that the Smith-Smythe Quartet are here, along with a mention of Lady Bridgerton. It makes me feel like I have some sort of special inside knowledge. It's a heady feeling - all of this knowledge. It makes me have a little more insight to how God must feel.

This is the second novel in the series and it focuses on Olivia and her neighbor, Harry. She thinks Harry might have killed his ex-fiance, so she spies on him from her window. He wonders why some girl is spying on him so obviously.

He works as a Russian translator for the war office and is asked to keep an eye on a Russian prince who just arrived to town and the girl that this prince has his eye on. Guess who the girl is? I'll give you 20 guesses.... okay, you got in in one. Good job! So, he is forced to spend a bunch of time with this girl, and he doesn't exactly like her. At first. Because, we all know where this is going.

This book was fun, and they set us up for the next one by introducing us to Sebastian, who I loved. Bring it on!

Jan130 says

3.5 stars. I thought I'd try a Julia Quinn, even though I usually prefer a more serious tone in my HRs than the light and fluffy style I was expecting from Ms Quinn. My first book by her.

It started off promisingly. Ms Quinn can obviously write well, and I was liking the banter and interplay between the MCs. I quite liked the light and humorous tone too, even though it's not my usual. 4 stars, for the first two thirds of the book.

But then the last third of the book went downhill somehow. There was the slightly silly (view spoiler) which didn't seem necessary to me, and didn't really fit in with the rest of the book. It just seemed to come from nowhere. There also seemed to be way too much slightly tedious detail about Olivia (view spoiler) I got a bit sick of it and was almost starting to roll my eyes and skim.

The ending all seemed a bit rushed and unsatisfactory after that, which was a shame seeing as I thought the book started out quite well. So the last third knocked my rating down. I will still try the Bridgertons some time though, as everyone seems to think that's the best of Ms Quinn.
