



The Lady Hellion

Joanna Shupe

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Lady Sophia Barnes doesn't take no for an answer. Especially when she's roaming London's seedy underground...dressed as a man.

A rabble rouser for justice, Sophie's latest mission is to fight for the rights of the poor, the wretched—and the employees at Madame Hartley's brothel. She's not concerned about the criminals who will cross her path, for Sophie has mastered the art of deception—including the art of wearing trousers. Now her fate is in her own hands, along with a loaded gun. All she needs is instruction on how to shoot it. But only one person can help her: Lord Quint, the man who broke her heart years ago. The man she won't let destroy her again...

The last thing Damien Beecham, Viscount Quint, needs is an intrusion on his privacy, especially from the beautiful, exasperating woman he's never stopped wanting. A woman with a perilously absurd request, no less. For Damien is fighting a battle of his own, one he wishes to keep hidden—along with his feelings for Lady Sophia. Yet that fight is as hopeless as stopping her outlandish plan. Soon all Quint knows for certain is that he will die trying to protect her...

The Lady Hellion Details

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K says

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Lorka says

I thought I would give this 3rd book in the series a try, even though the woman undercover in men's clothes trope is one of my least favorite in the genre. I actually only got as far into the book as I did with the 2nd book in the series, The Harlot Countess. The heroine was just TSTL for me. I understand that the author is trying to make independent, strong, older heroines.... but they are just too wacky for me to believe in. In this book, the heroine starts the books off by asking a former crush to teach her how to shoot a gun/duel. How she handles the gun in his house as he is trying to teach her was incredibly stupid... and I stopped right there. I can't fall in love with characters if I have no respect for them, so....

Molly says

Is it amazing, when you stumble into an exquisite writer you didn't know you'll love and they've already published a bunch of books? The Lady Helloin has opened my eyes to Joanna Shupe and I'm a convert. This was a bold, steamy, lovely, emotional regency escape for me, I highly recommmed it and I'm getting the rest of her books asap.

Sylvia says

Lady Sophia Barnes is a head strong and independent who wants to live her life her way. In the times when woman don't have many choices. She has to work with her limitations. Lady Sophia is smart and confident who wants to help ladies who can't get help. Damien Beecham, Viscount Quint is struggling with some of his own issues. He wants to lock himself up in his private world. Lady Sophia is a force in herself, she invades Damien's household and tries to help him. It is a sweet and heartfelt story. I love this series. I am very happy to discover this wonderful new author. I received a complimentary copy from the publisher thru NetGalley for an honest review.

Wollstonecraft homegirl says

This is a tough review to write because it has to go negative and I dislike writing negative reviews. I try to be constructive but that's tough with this one.

The nuts and bolts of the writing on display here was alright. But the story, the characterization and (perhaps as a consequence of the latter) the romance were all seriously lacking. If historical romance were a swimming pool this author is well and truly in the shallow end with this book.

It suffers with CILD (contemporary in long dresses) syndrome. Young, unmarried woman going around London, dressed as a man investigating the mysterious deaths of prostitutes, sneaking into the hero's house and having sex with him in the middle of the night.

The hero has anxiety and agoraphobia of a sort which wasn't handled that well speaking as someone who has suffered awfully with anxiety in the past.

The mystery bored me and had no meat to it, I skimmed at the end, I didn't care what the resolution was and the secondary storyline with the hero's home office stuff was a level of unnecessary complication.

Then there were the American anachronisms:

"That's too bad!"

"No way she was doing that!"

"I guess she's upset!"

I guess it's too bad that there's no way I can recommend this book.

Caz says

I've given this a C at AAR.

This is the final book in Ms Shupe's *Wicked Deceptions* trilogy in which the stories are linked by the three male protagonists, who are long-term friends. I enjoyed the first book (The Courtesan Duchess) and felt Ms Shupe was an author to watch. She writes well, her characters are strongly drawn and she can certainly turn up the heat when called for.

Yet I was a little reluctant to pick up this book, despite having enjoyed meeting its hero, Damien Beecham, Viscount Quint, in the previous stories. My lack of enthusiasm was entirely due to the fact that the eponymous Lady Hellion spends a lot of time running about dressed as a man in order to pursue the investigations she undertakes – and “chicks-in-strides” is my least favourite trope in the entire canon of historical romance.

But I was keen to reacquaint myself with Quint, so I decided to suspend my disbelief and read **The Lady Hellion** anyway - and it turned out to be an okay read, if not an especially deep one. The story picks up shortly after the previous book leaves off; and we learn that Quint, who was shot trying to help Lady Maggie

Hawkins escape the clutches of a murderous blackmailer, is seriously ill.

Lady Sophie Barnes, daughter of the Marquess of Ardington, is vibrant, beautiful, unmarried and intends to remain so. Now aged twenty-eight, Sophie believes that a youthful indiscretion has rendered her unfit for marriage, a circumstance which led to her rejecting the one suitor (Quint) she truly cared for some years earlier. In any case, she doesn't want to surrender her independence or the purpose she has found in undertaking investigations on behalf of those who are too poor and insignificant to be able to seek justice for themselves – most of whom are female servants or prostitutes.

Her investigations often take her into many of the less respectable parts of London, so Sophie, who is tall and lithe and who wears her hair short, disguises herself as a young man. The author attempts to make it seem plausible that she manages to get away with it by mentioning that she disguises herself only at night (because the light is poorer) and saying that Sophie has to alter the pitch of her voice – but as anyone who listens to audiobooks as often as I do will know, there is only so far even the most highly skilled vocal actress can go in making herself sound like a man. And I just couldn't buy the ease with which the daughter of a marquess is able to sneak in and out of her home at all hours of the day and night. As I said, the whole girl-in-breeches thing rarely works for me – so instead, I focused my attentions on Viscount Quint, who is a charming, rumpled, sexy geek of a hero, and definitely the best thing about the book.

Following his recovery from a serious fever, Quint has become something of a recluse, finding himself unable to put a foot outside his home without turning into a quivering wreck. As a boy, he watched his father succumb to madness, and now, given the terrible fits he has begun to experience, Quint believes himself to be travelling the same path. He reminded me rather of Dorian Camoys, the hero of Loretta Chase's *The Mad Earl's Bride* in that respect; it's easy for the reader to figure out what's wrong with him given our twenty-first century viewpoint, but all Damien knows is that he is subject to debilitating episodes and fears the worst.

Having seen his father's condition destroy his mother, Quint knows that marriage is out of the question, no matter how much he still longs for Sophie. When he learns of her secret double life and the reasons for it, he is horrified – not because of a sense of outraged propriety, but because he fears for her safety – fears which are borne out when she is set upon one night and almost killed. Unable to accompany her, and knowing she won't listen to his pleas for her to stop, Quint instead agrees to help her by working behind the scenes and makes her promise to keep him fully informed and not to act without his consent.

This is an odd set up – a heroine who can't (or won't) stop putting herself into danger from which the hero is physically unable to extract her because he can't leave his house. Sophie, is, of course, convinced that she will be able to "fix" Quint, an attitude I found incredibly patronising seeing as she has no idea that what he's really suffering from are severe panic attacks – and he's convinced he's going round the bend, so before the sexytimes commence, he makes it clear he isn't planning to marry her. It's true that Quint is supposed to be eccentric and unconventional, but I found it difficult to believe he would be THAT unconventional. He's a gentleman, and to have sex with a well-bred young woman and have no intention of marrying her (for whatever reason) just doesn't ring true. Mind you, Ms Shupe gets some brownie points for writing a hero who uses contraception other than the withdrawal method! And while I'm on the subject, the sex scenes are written in a way rather unusual for the genre; instead of the usual euphemisms, when we're in Quint's PoV, we get correct anatomical terms which, while perhaps intended to indicate Quint's erudition, are not very sensual or romantic.

There's a sub-plot about Quint's work for the government as a code-breaker which doesn't add much to the overall story (and is another instance of the author over-egging the pudding, as I found with *The Courtesan*

Duchess), and I did get rather tired of Sophie's refusal to acknowledge the danger to which she repeatedly subjects herself. Quint is a one of my favourite kinds of hero – the beta with a take-charge streak – but he's wasted here. There's a fair amount of chemistry between the couple, but ultimately, the story wasn't strong enough for me to be able to forget my dislike of the cross-dressing trope, and Sophie strayed too close to TSTL for my taste. I plan to read more by Ms Shupe, but **The Lady Hellion**, in spite of its being well-written, was a bit of a disappointment.

Geo Marcovici says

Frumoasa, amuzanta, plina de emo?ie, iubire si cu o buna doza de suspans!

Gennie Gee says

My Favorite One!

I've loved all the Wicked Deceptions book, and this is by far my favorite. Quint believes himself broken, but as we know today PTSD is not untreatable. And Sophie is by far an unconventional heroine. While Quint isn't the reformed rogue or the manly man that Nick and Simon, he is definitely my favorite hero of this series!

However, I have high hopes for the Scotsman MacLean and hope he gets a book soon!!

Hristina Tserovska says

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Tracy T. says

Great Book. Great Series! Highly recommend them all (audible review)

Wow this story was probably my favorite of the entire series, and they are all very good. I really enjoyed the heroine. She was smart, spunky, daring, beautiful, and just a joy. I also really enjoyed the hero. He was just great. I loved that his character was handsome, smart, and a bit flawed with his anxiety issues. The chemistry between these two was great! Genuine, real and very hot and steamy. Yes there are some very well written hot and steamy sex scenes, but not over the top.

The story line and plot was great! There is a serial killer on the loose and our heroine has take it upon herself to find out who the culprit is. Very good story line. And the killer, that was a surprise for sure. I was glad to see the characters from the previous books show up. That was nice.

This story is full of dialogue. Lots and lots of it. Which made the story even better. Not full of angst or any of that nonsense. I really have enjoyed this author so much.

As for the narration. It seemed to get better as the books went on. I do think she still needs to work on her mens voices for sure. (the odd thing was the voice she used for Sophia when she was dressed as a man investigating was better than the hero's voice) She should use that voice for her hero's. She does do all the cockney voices well like Alice her maid. The reading voice was less robotic too.

I highly recommend this series 100%! I hope to see more of her books on audible in the future.

Gemma says

I enjoyed the first book in the series, so when this came on sale I bought it. I got to 48% before I couldn't go on. There were too many implausible things, such as the heroine being able to sneak out every night dressed as a man, or flit about during the day unchaperoned, visit a bachelor day after day and not get caught. Maybe once or twice, but constantly? Also, if she's out every night investigating, when the heck does she sleep???

I ended up skipping to the end to see who the killer was—and I didn't recognize the character as having been introduced earlier ^_(_?)_/_

The hero was a scientist, so love scenes written from his pov used clinical terms which I found rather jarring for a romance.

I just wasn't invested in the characters at almost halfway through, so this is DNF.

Sammy Loves Books says

Lady Sophia

I absolutely loved this series! The final book featuring Sophie was the best of them all!!

Marilyn Rondeau says

If you have been reading the first two novels in Ms. Joanna Shupe's wickedly entertaining Wicked Deceptions series, then you have been just as anxious as myself in learning of Lady Sophia Barnes' latest adventures – or should I say 'misadventures'. After all lady Sophia has emerged as one of the most rebellious rabble rousers for justice. Not that the ton knew what she was up to as she donned the persona of Sir Stephen while roaming London's sordid underbelly of gaming hell's and brothels.

From the very beginning of this series, there has been a malevolent evil stalking the innocent ladies of the evenings who make a living working the brothels. As her two best friends and co-conspirators have settled into marriage and impending motherhood, Sophia feels it is her duty to carry on and discover who is killing

and maiming the women. However, as it unfolds, playing the part of Sir Stephen has landed Lady Sophia in somewhat of a jam as she has been called out to participate in a duel. The only person she can call on to help her is Damien Beecham, Viscount Quint - the one man who had broken her heart and whom she needs to teach her how to shoot a gun!

What Sophia didn't know is that Quint, has never gotten over her and is fearful he is on his own way to a break down, just like his father who had gone mad. He is trying his best to keep Lady Sophia at bay, rather than let her know just how much he wants her and will practically die in the process of trying to protect her.

In LADY HELLION Ms. Shupe has outdid herself in creating the suspense and romance that has gained her such a following with her first two books in this series. I really loved the idea of using a hero, who was going through his own very emotional battle to while trying to do all he could to protect the woman he could not openly love.

With Sophia, she felt that she would never be a lady wife so she took her chances of ruination should her alter ego be discovered. Her self-esteem had been destroyed along with her innocence years ago and her passionate nature was something that she had been made to feel ashamed of. After all, Quint, the one man she been loved above all others had gone ahead and proposed to someone else soon after she had kissed him, so naturally he couldn't have felt anything for her.

With so much going on - LADY HELLION simply sped along, so many secrets, betrayals, miscommunication, as well as humor and one very evil villain all added to a most entertaining read and a great ending to this marvelous series! Bravo Ms Shupe - can't wait to see what you come up with next.

Marilyn Rondeau

Keri says

This was a good ending to the trilogy, but wish we could have had a epi as I would have liked to have known how Quint was doing long term. I do hope that JS is going to write McLean a story, as he has been built to be such an intriguing character in the book. PS I checked her website and she wrote a epi for the entire series, but it got cut, but is posted on her website under extras. It was pretty sweet and I thank her for putting it up.

Sonya Heaney says

I have really enjoyed this series, and was really looking forward to the third book because of the unusual, quirky and uselessly cute hero. Joanna Shupe is a talented new historical romance author.

However, once I read the blurb I knew this wouldn't be my favourite in the series. The *woman undercover in men's clothes* trope is far and away my **least** favourite in the genre.

One of the biggest problems with this theme is that I can barely buy a regular woman of the Georgian era dressing as a man and going undercover in brothels. But as the historical romance genre is **obsessed** with the

aristocracy we have a daughter of **nobility** doing it, and that's one massive anachronism too far for me.

I don't think this is a bad book, not at all. It still has the complex plotting and the good writing that I've seen in the author's other work. It's just that it was too unbelievable for me to really get into. When I read books in this genre I sometimes stop and think: What would Jane Austen's Elizabeth Bennet do? And she definitely wouldn't have done anything the characters in this book did!

I'll give the author props for the proper spelling of *arse*, but must point out that outside of America it's *knives and forks*, not *forks and knives*!

If you're fine with cross-dressing heroines in your historical romances, you'll probably really enjoy this, especially so if you don't stop and wonder how nobody noticed the "man's" voice was a woman's! However, it just wasn't my sort of book, though I would strongly recommend the others in the series.

Review copy provided by NetGalley.
