



## Color Me Grey

*J.C. Phelps*

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...exciting, highly paid position for person with specialized training... Recently unemployed after quitting a boring office job, Alexis Stanton finds a mysterious ad in the help wanted section that might prove to be the answer to her desire for excitement and adventure. After an intense application process, including actually fighting with her competition, she gets the job of her dreams. But is it going to kill her?

## **Color Me Grey Details**

Date : Published August 1st 2004 by Newpub Binding

ISBN : 9780981769004

Author : J.C. Phelps

Format : Paperback 252 pages

Genre : Mystery, Thriller, Fiction, Crime

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## From Reader Review Color Me Grey for online ebook

### Colleen says

I am basing my review solely on story-line. While the e-book (not sure how the paperback fared) could definitely use some more editing in parts of the novel, that did not at all take away from my thorough enjoyment of the book. I absolutely loved what Phelps did here.

In the first of the Alexis Stanton Chronicles, we meet a well-to-do twenty-something that has everything she needs or could ever want. Bored by her data processing job, she up and quits and walks into an interview where she has no idea what she is applying for. We later come to find out that she will be working as a partner with an elite group of military men doing all the things we see about in the movies; capturing terrorists, hostage situations, etc.

I love the women's power roll in this novel. Alex is strong, competent, has a bad ass attitude, and a no nonsense way with the fellows. As she explains in the novel as envying Lara Croft from Tomb Raider and wanting be like her, I found myself wanting to be like Alex! Her passion for living, adventure, and excitement really brought the book to life. I highly recommend it to anyone looking for a fast-paced, exciting read; and I will be diving into the next book in the series immediately!

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### Misty Baker says

I have always been “that girl.” You know… the one that when she gets bored wants to jump off of, or out of something. The need for adrenaline has been rushing through my blood since I was a child and even though, with age, I have had to tone down my actions (for the sake of my small children) I still feel this constant need to challenge myself, prove that I can do anything, and more importantly… do it better than a man.

Alexis, the tuff as nails, lead in “Color Me Grey” is also an adrenaline junkie, but I would classify her as more “Adrenaline Junkie on 8 shots of espresso.”

Alex gets everything she wants. Growing up in a wealthy home she not only had the pleasure of private tutors, but also the flexibility to try and/or conquer anything she felt the need to. With a military dad and a artist mom she was trained in everything from how to walk with a tea cup on her head to disabling a man with just her pinkie. With this stability and money also came a boring job in computers, but after 1 early morning revelation, Alex decides she's had enough of sitting in one place and answers a newspaper ad that not so subtly screams RUN AWAY. It takes only seconds for Alex to realize there is more to this little adventure than meets the eye, and it takes even less time to realize that bowing out gracefully is not an option. Will Alex's need for heart pumping excitement be what she ultimately needed, or will it leave her 6 feet underground and making friends with worms?

I have always loved books where female leads are thrust into, what is stereotypically, a man's position, and this little ditty is no exception. J.C. Phelps did a wonderful job of weaving suspense, intrigue, and lust, resulting in what was a very pleasurable, and solid read. Each character had their own unique qualities and the use of “code names” while developing each was an engaging way to keep the reader guessing as to who they “really” were. The plot, however, is where Phelps’ writing really shined. As a reader the push and pull of a story is what keeps you reading. “Where is this going?” “I know something big is about to happen... but

what is it?" This more than anything is what made "Color Me Grey" so exciting, you could always feels something bubbling just under the surface... even in the most sedated moments of monologue.

Like I said before... I truly... genuinely... enjoyed this novel, and even though I didn't have to purchase it, I would... (without a doubt in the world) have absolutely no problem forking over the \$2.99 for it.

Get it, live it, love it... pass it on.

Happy reading my fellow Junkies and remember: if the application asks how long it takes for you to assemble an m16... chances are they aren't looking for a receptionist.

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### **Crazy for Books (Stephanie) says**

I thought this was so much fun. It reminded me of the USA Network television series, COVERT AFFAIRS, but better. I would much prefer to see this on television than that show. I love how Alex is tough, but smart enough to learn and know when she doesn't know something.

I don't want to give away any of the story, but I have to say the part that is slow and didn't interest me, was the set up to saving her father. I just found myself skipping paragraph's trying to get to the good stuff. But for the most part I loved it, even when se was alone in the forest.

I am a true believer in women being able to do anything they put their minds to and I love that Alex never gives up. It's definitely my motto.

I can't wait to read the sequels.

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### **S. Burke says**

Author J C Phelphs has created a marvelously fast-paced adventure with the petite MC Alexis Stanton a package of 5'4" dynamite, with long straight hair and a serious attitude if you cross her.

Alexis has a very interesting background including special services training{Private yet}. A wealthy and connected family, with an Admiral for a daddy. Alexis has to draw her own conclusions on just what it is daddy does for the government. Her inherited sense of adventure send her on an interview for a most unusual position.

This is an unusual book, written for a market tired of adventures that only include the undead and people with a nasty overbite. It moves fast, the characterizations are clever yet believable, and the adventure is full on. I look forward to reading the other books in this series.

No hesitation in recommending this for a fast paced read

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## **Andrew Brown says**

I got this book for free via Amazon and decided to give it a shot. But as the story went on it became increasingly dull and ultimately anti-climactic.

For a spy/thriller there was quite simply no tension. There was never a sense of suspense and it never presented much conflict beyond the protagonist's infatuation with her boss.

If I were to sum up the plot without giving too much away (though honestly there isn't anything to give away) I would say this: a rich girl who gets what she wants becomes a spy working for government "consultants". In this line of work she meets and works with attractive men she gets to oogle and yet nothing ever happens and no sexual tension is felt. And with the exception of one mission every "job" she works becomes increasingly detached from the action and more internal monologue about what she is thinking. Most disappointingly the climax is nearly all observed from afar and the resolution was simply too neat and effortless. The author uses this as a crutch to enable skipping over the details in the part of the story when details would at least provide some entertainment.

The characters were incredibly underdeveloped, and even if they got more than one scene in story they didn't really get more than minimal treatment. There were really only four characters that had multiple scenes with actual dialogue and if those four only two had extensive dialogue (if by extensive I mean more than a mouthful of sentences). And the main character, Alexis, becomes more two-dimensional as the story progresses with her more interesting moments playing out in the first half of the book with the second half relegating her to an almost glorified narrator. And the main villain was no better. He is continuously called crazy and evil as if the mere repetition will somehow make that true. But we are never told just what he did besides "kill people" and "committed atrocities", there is just no detail about why this guy really is evil. We're told that Alexis is convinced he is bad, but the readers are just supposed to take her word for it? And the author's treatment of the villain also revealed their lack of worldview.

What I mean by this is that as the story progresses (digresses?) she throws out jargon like we're supposed to be impressed, but the lack of detail makes you think she looked it up and threw it in haphazardly to make it sound better. But use of some watered down military jargon isn't enough to overcome oversimplified things such as terrorism in a post-9-11 world. When the main bad guy, "the Lion" is characterized as a "crazy cult leader" that causes calamity there is never a moment when Middle-Eastern people are rendered accurately and everything from there on becomes almost comical. And perhaps the author's lack of knowledge was what led to practically skip over the climax when any further detail would have exposed her uneducated guesses.

I gave this two stars, mainly because I thought the first half showed potential. And even after the that the story could have been salvaged somewhat by a rousing final showdown. But all anticipation was in vain as you never get either romance or action you're left to imagine up a more enticing ending yourself.

It boggles my mind that this book not only has a sequel, but several! I wouldn't waste my time. Perhaps the author improves in her other works, but if *Color Me Grey* is any indication then any hope that things will get better later in the series will be equally as futile as hoping for a better ending for this book.

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## **Al says**

I started reading "Color Me Grey" late one night as I was supposed to be falling asleep. This was a mistake. I liked the character of Alexis immediately. Despite her unconventional and privileged upbringing (which could easily have had the opposite effect) she had an attitude and style I loved. She has a passion to experience life that most of us lack. She is always thirsting for knowledge, a quality very few people have. One thing that really stuck with me, since it hit close to home, was when Alexis said:

"Reading is a habit of mine, not a hobby, but a habit. It seems I just can't get enough. I will read anything."

Perhaps some of you can relate. I know I did.

The characters, including Alexis, are "larger than life." Their adventures are beyond what you'd expect from real life, yet aren't as over-the-top as you might find in a James Bond type novel.

If this sort of adventure-thriller is your sort of read, "Color Me Grey" might be the perfect read, although Alexis is a different kind of hero than you might have experienced before.

The only caution I have is Phelps writing style, at least in this book, is very narrative driven. One friend described it as stream-of-consciousness, although I'm not sure that description is quite right. But if you're looking for lots of dialog, you won't find it, if for no other reason than many of the characters tend to be close-lipped, letting their actions talk for them. If you're not sure, read the sample. If your reaction is anything like mine, that will be more than enough to hook you. Just don't start reading if you should be sleeping, or risk paying the consequences the next morning as I did.

\*\*Originally written for "Books and Pals" book blog.\*\*

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## **Maria says**

J.C. Phelps' Color Me Grey is the first of a three-book series about Alexis Stanton, a spoiled rich girl who decides to trade in her easy life as a data processor living off Mom & Dad for one of action and adventure, by embarking on a new career with a mysterious company where everyone is code-named a color—Mr. Black, Mr. White, Mr. Red. Alexis, code-named Ms. Grey, is the first woman to join this team of highly trained professionals and quickly shows up the men with her skill, daring, and never-quit attitude. Much of the book is devoted to the details of Alexis' training as a fighter, scuba-diver, and survivalist, and only becomes a true action/adventure novel near the end when she joins the team on a rescue mission that hits close to home.

The novel is strongly pro-female in that Alexis is continually shown as being at least as capable, if not more so, than her male colleagues, which for me, was a bit unbelievable. That a petite woman could take down a trained male opponent twice her size, while intoxicated no less, was one of several points I had to take on faith, but for younger female readers, Alexis would likely be inspirational. The book also includes hints of romance, but in this volume at least, nothing that comes to fruition.

Color Me Grey is written in the first-person, past tense point-of-view, and at times, a bit stream of consciousness. I've said before I'm not a huge fan of first-person POV, but it does lend a youthful, up-to-

the-minute air to this novel. The writing itself would benefit from some additional editing, as it suffers from occasional bouts of over-explaining, a few spelling errors, and some misused phrases. I would also prescribe a healthy dose of commas for the longer sentences. Editing issues aside, however, if one enjoys adventure novels where the focus is more on action and less on character and relationship development, *Color Me Grey* will be just what the doctor ordered.

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### **Cheryl Anne Gardner says**

Oh my! Alexis Stanton. Only a privileged angsty twenty-something would brag about living off mommy and daddy, quit her job, and go apply for another one without a clue as to what the company does or what the job entails, but that's the sort of story you are in for when you pick up *Color Me Grey*, a Bondesque coming of age story.

The Alex Stanton chronicles are slated to be a series of books, so in this, the first one, we get a lot of expository background info straight away so we can get to know Alex. The book is told in the first person, so to me, it feels more confessional in its story telling style than your typical action thriller, which would be mostly scene and dialog versus summary. Some readers may not like this writing style, and some readers may not like Alex. She is your stereotypical spoiled twenty-something: all attitude and very little life experience to back it up, but she gets by, and I, as a reader, just wanted to see her survive herself.

Alex comes from a rather sheltered background. She comes from money; her father is an Admiral and now works some kind of secret ops job, and her mother paints. Both are retired, and both are very forgiving when it comes to their daughter. She is home schooled, though anyone familiar with home schooling will find some inaccuracies in Alex's particular scenario, and speaking of inaccuracies, those familiar with the military might take issue with a few things as well. If you don't take the book too seriously, it's a much better read.

Anyway, Alex is spoiled, and she decides out of pure boredom to up and quit her data processor job to scour the want ads for something just a little bit more high adventure, maybe she'll miraculously find a job where she might be able to use her convenient hacker skills and some of her ninja combat training. She finds a mysterious ad and heads downtown for an interview. Yes, Alex has a set of brass ones. No one in his or her right mind would head off to some unknown company office for an interview without getting some background information first. At the very least, a job description would be in order. But this is a fantasy adventure book and this job just happens to be Alex's ideal fantasy adventure, so I just went with it.

Of course, instantly our little Alex develops a teen crush on the very hot-ticket owner of the firm code-named Mr. White, but too bad for her she won't be spending much time with him. She'll be off at a mountain retreat with Mr. Black learning some useful survival skills along with all the other superspy maneuvers she will need to complete the jobs she might be assigned. Her training is quite brief before she gets slammed into her first full on terrorist retrieval operation, which she fumbles and winds up killing someone. Oh well. In this job, it just goes with the territory, so she sucks it up and moves on rather quickly. The book sort of reminded me of the movie *Point of No Return* in that the dark handsome black ops man trains this petite young thing to become one of the best spy-killing machines in the business, until things get a little to close to the cuff for her. In this case, Alex has no desire to "get out" and when her family is targeted, she refuses the option to stand aside. The only thing lacking in *Color Me Grey* was the deep internal conflict. Alex happy go luckily quits her job, gets no flack for it from her parents, waltzes into an interview, is perfectly qualified, and gets everything she wants. It's just a fun read plain and simple.

The story is also a very feel good pro-woman story. Alex can hold her own with the best of the boys, and I had no problem believing that. We've got women in combat, we've got women truckers and construction works; we've even got women boxers and body builders too. I had no problem with a woman working as a secret ops agent. If we weren't allowed to do that Angelina Jolie would be out of a job. It's a short book, so there isn't a whole lot of detail when it comes to the actual combat training, so some things just have to be taken on faith, which I had no problem doing since the inspirational " you can do anything you set your mind to" message to young women was much appreciated and duly noted. Since this was an adventure story and a short one at that -- being the first of several books -- character and relationship development was a little thin, but those will probably be expanded on over time. This isn't a novel; it's a series, and readers will need to be patient while getting to know Alex. She has the potential to grow into quite a complicated character, and what sort of spy reveals everything about themselves on a first meeting anyway?

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### **Martin Pingree says**

This as an absolute blast to read. Could not put it down ! Great characters with an awesome story line makes this a must read. Daughter of well to do parents has learned many things as she's grown up. She applies for a job and turns out to be an awesome member of a Special group.

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### **Julie says**

I have had this book for so long and I finally got around to reading it at the author's request. What a great read!

I loved the character of Alexis (Alex). She is a strong, somewhat independent (she does live off an allowance from her parents after all) character that doesn't give up even when the going gets tough. She is able to keep up with the big boys with no problem. Even when she is in pain and hurting, she refuses to show any weakness.

I wasn't sure if I would like a girl spy story, but it was great! I am a big wimp myself, so reading about Alex's adventures allowed me to live vicariously through her, all without leaving the couch. How cool is that? The author didn't get mired down in small details and stuck to a smooth-flowing plot line that all readers can appreciate. I am so happy the author honored me with a review request, and I can't wait to read the next two books!

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### **Cliff Ball says**

Color Me Grey is told from first person point of view, and I think it was done well, and usually the only time I read books like this is in college English lit. classes(the female character in 1st person point of view). Alexis Stanton becomes a secret agent of sorts, with the nickname of Ms. Grey. She tells how she gets recruited, then her training, and then a crucial mission that she participates in that has a lot of personal meaning for her. I thought it was a very creative novel.

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## So, I Read This Book Today says

Review originally published at Amazon.com

Wow. Some of you “reviewers” are really incredibly snotty, aren’t you? OK, there are some spelling errors. Take a grammar pill, people! Much like Alex says, “Reading is a habit of mine, not a hobby, but a habit. It seems I just can’t get enough. I will read anything.” Alex is up to doing anything too – anything from rappelling down a hill to swimming several miles in clothing and boots. You GO, Alexis!!!

Yes, Alexis comes from a privileged and yet unconventional background, but she doesn’t seem all that spoiled to me. She is, admittedly, a bit “young” for her age, and somewhat naïve, and that is somewhat irritating to me, but that smooths out in the future books. Hey, she is 24, comes from an upper class background and has never really had much bad happen to her. She has to learn and grow, just like any young person. She is smart, stylish, and passionate about everything she does. Well, not everything. I mean, who really wants to be a data-entry clerk if they have half a brain? Oy. As “BigAl” says in his review, Alex “. . . has a passion to experience life that most of us lack.”

Some of you are pretty bent out of shape that Alex came from a privileged background, but she certainly isn’t cut any slack when she starts out in her new venture as a member of a private military organization as it’s lone female partner. And I can’t see you whining and crying about her kicking butt and taking names, meeting and exceeding the new and tremendously difficult requirements of her new job if she was one of those with a penis. You would be talking about how “hot” the jock is. As for not really knowing what her father does for a living, other than being “in the military” --- anyone who knows, or is related to, certain military members knows full well that they are never allowed to know what their spouse/brother/son/daughter/wife is doing, where they are going, or when they will be back. Or, yes, what is they really are responsible for. So get over it.

And speaking of penises – come ON people!!! Not every single book on the planet has to devolve into getting naked and getting it on. It is like you expect every book written to be “Oh, I meet the guy. Oh, I hump the guy. Oh, my life is complete!” Yes, Alex is quite taken by White, and when she realizes who he is, the guy she fell for at age 12, well, that explains that. And Colin is her friend. Yes, she is possessive of him, but who hasn’t been possessive of their best (and mostly only) childhood friend? And Black is the kind of person I would love to have for a mentor if I am her. What is not to respect about this quiet, intense, knowledgeable giant of a man who gives her the courtesy of the respect that she earns through her hard work?

OK, I understand the Navy person who complained that the Military ranking wasn’t perfect. I get fussy about stuff like that too, when it comes to forensics or other things that I am extremely knowledgeable about. Bummer. But it didn’t faze me enough to upset me. You might mention it to J.C. She is on Facebook, and is always extremely nice to everyone who contacts her. I have “spoken” to her many times, and she is a real sweetheart. So, give her a break, people. She has written a series of three book that I, and others, enjoyed immensely. So, there are a few problems. Tell me one author that hasn’t done something to rattle your cage at some point or the other. I have read books published by large houses that had glaring errors in them. J.C. Is doing this on her own dime, her own time, and with a lot of her own heart and soul poured into her books. I am sure she would appreciate a bit of respect for doing something that I certainly haven’t been able to do, and I would doubt that many of you naysayers have either.

Great action, minimal actual ‘violence’ and a new twist on action/adventure

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### **Tony Hisgett says**

I really like an independent ‘kickass’ heroine and from the publicity blurb it seemed that Alex might fit the bill. Unfortunately the first few chapters didn’t look too hopeful.

Alex’s first thought when she meets her prospective new boss;

*“Then he turned around and I lost it. My confidence went south, right out of my toes and onto the floor in a little bubbly puddle. My brain quit working, all I could think of was how sexy he was.”*

After spotting somebody was following her, what did she do? She goes to a bar and gets drunk!

The book did improve, but the majority of it seemed to be Alex having a good time scuba diving, parachuting and hiking. When the action did start it was OK but most of it didn’t really involve Alex and it just felt like something was missing. It’s hard to explain, but as a ‘Thriller’ there didn’t seem to be enough jeopardy.

I will try the next book in the hope the story is a bit ‘edgier’ and Alex stops lusting after Mr White.

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### **Melissa says**

This book is told entirely from Alexis's POV. And I have to admit at first it actually buffered me from the character of Alex. As she interacted with her friend (namely Colin) and started her adventure with a new possible job, the buffer disappeared. That's when I really got into the character of Alex. I then was able to enjoy the kick-ass stance of a 5'4" woman who is as tough as the boys and sometimes even better. She has a lot to learn, but shows that she is up to the task no matter what is thrown at her. It also makes sense as to why Alex loves adventure. Both her parents love it too. Even if her mother does not go adventuring anymore, she still is a mother that craved for it once but is having fun exploring other areas of life.

This book is a fast paced adventure and I think you hardly get much of a breather once the adventure truly starts. My only complaint other than the buffer (which can happen with a strictly first person POV) is a few editing errors that also occurred at the beginning of the book. They were minor and can quickly and easily be fixed. I will also say, on a total personal level, I had problems with the hunting scene (but I'm such a softie for Bambi's dad) but getting myself out of the way, I think it was told well. With those minor complaints aside, this is one fun adventure. I give this book 3 1/2 stars and I think that the next two adventures in this series are going to get even better and more fun filled than it's introduction.

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### **Tara Chevrestt says**

Very cool heroine.. a lady James Bond. Great story idea and basis for a series and I enjoyed it mostly. However, the writing is just a bit too simple... I loathe unnecessary descriptions, but there has to be some.. Instead the writing was like this:

"I woke up on the couch the next morning and readied myself for another day at the gym. Once there, I finished off the rest of the crew waiting to get in their shots and then Mr. Black and I worked out together the rest of the day."

One entire day summed up in one paragraph.. It feels a bit rushed at times.

"I hugged her and said thank you for keeping my mail. Then I went straight to my car to set up a new bank account."

I liked the heroine, Alexis. She struts into an office where they say, "We don't usually hire women for a job of this type" and she not only gets the job (an agent for hire thing) but excels at it. She trains, kicks ass, fights, scuba dives, sky dives, swims fully clothed, shoots her own buck, and participates in a covert operation that ends up having repurcussions that hit too close to home, literally.

BUT, she is sorta a spoiled brat. I mean, this chick is out of highschool and old enough to drink but still gets an allowance from daddy and lives in her parents' guesthouse and just quits her day job if she chooses. I question this quote, "Independence had always been my middle name.." Really? Independence is getting an allowance from your daddy? Um...

Still a decent read and I plan to read the others. A LOL quote: "Once you know a person well enough it seems like they aren't usually worth fantasizing about. I was going to take advantage of this one before I found out he was a putz. Bosses usually turn out to be putzes."

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