



An Unexpected Gentleman

Alissa Johnson

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Adelaide Ward has but one goal- to obtain an offer of marriage from the respectable, if less-than-appealing, baron Sir Robert Maxwell before her family is ruined. But it's the devilishly handsome Connor Brice who captures her imagination- and a kiss in broad daylight- in front of a dozen members of the ton. Now Adelaide must decide if the charming scoundrel who stole away her reputation might still be trusted with her heart.

Connor Brice seeks a long overdue revenge on the baron. And what better way to launch his campaign than to steal the lovely Miss Ward for his own? A quick "compromising" and an even quicker wedding ought to do. But if Connor wants to establish any sort of domestic tranquility, he'll have to regain Adelaide's trust and choose what means more to him- his thirst for vengeance or his need for Adelaide.

An Unexpected Gentleman Details

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From Reader Review An Unexpected Gentleman for online ebook

Keertana says

Quite unexpectedly, *An Unexpected Gentleman* wound its way into my thoughts, particularly during an untimely moment in conversation or while I performed my day-to-day tasks. Johnson's *Nearly a Lady* is a warm, cozy read; the type of book whose characters don't demand your attention, merely command it as you become further embroiled in their story. Conversely, I read *An Unexpected Gentleman* tense, not even certain if I enjoyed it until the very end when I finally realized I did; truly.

From the surface, *An Unexpected Gentleman* seems to be a relatively common historical fiction novel. While *Nearly a Lady* sets itself apart with its lavender cover, not to mention its setting of a remote farmland, everything about *An Unexpected Gentleman* from its cover to its synopsis detailing the easily-scandalized ton merely seemed dull in comparison. As I've come to recognize from Johnson's prose, however, it isn't so much *what* she writes as it is *who* she writes. With such vibrant, distinct, and complex characterizations, it's impossible not to feel wholly involved in her tales; heart pounding, breath gasping, the whole package.

As a loose companion novel to *Nearly a Lady*, this story features Connor, the prison inmate we briefly saw through Freddie's eyes in *Nearly a Lady*, and Adelaide, the woman he pines for through the bars of his prison window. *An Unexpected Gentleman*, though, begins not with romance but with revenge. Sir Robert, Connor's half-brother who throws him - without justification - into prison, is about to propose to Adelaide when Connor steps in, compromises the lady, and forces her hand in marriage. For Adelaide, this is no true tragedy. After all, she finds Connor's company far more pleasing than that of Sir Robert, but his status as a gentleman and hefty sum of five thousand pounds a year is necessary for Adelaide to help her family survive. Wolfgang, Adelaide's wayward older brother who spent their money and landed himself in jail, has left Adelaide as the sole caretaker for her baby nephew and younger sister. As such, to land not one - but two! - marriage proposals has left Adelaide reeling. But, money and status aside, with two lying, scheming brothers bent on nothing but causing each other pain, is there room for Adelaide to find happiness at all?

While, at first, it can be easily to lose oneself in the entertaining, witty dialogue between our two leads, it soon becomes evident that Connor is far from the hero of our tale. Despite the predicament he has placed Adelaide in - dishonoring her name in polite society - he feels not a shred of remorse. Moreover, from the first page itself, Connor is constantly keeping secrets from his future-wife. Although Connor forces Adelaide to dream for herself, thinking beyond the mere necessities of survival, and Adelaide in turn forces Connor to appreciate his blessings, it's a long, difficult haul to love for them both. It isn't always an easy relationship to watch unfold, only because I'd spend pages stewing in anger at Connor and hurt that Adelaide found herself in such a position that she was forced to deal with the deception surrounding her with calm, not anger. I admired her. I fought for her. I wanted her to win. But, in this battle, there's no Team Adelaide - only Team Connor or Team Robert. And, trust me, it becomes quite obvious which of *those* two siblings is the lesser of the two evils.

For all my criticism of Connor's attitude, however, I found myself unable to resist his charms. Like Adelaide, I fell in love with his kindness, patience, and sincere caring that hid underneath his veneer of a rogue. Though he could often make my blood boil, I grew to love his faults as well. As I neared the end of *An Unexpected Gentleman*, however, I began to worry over the conclusion of this love story. It just wouldn't be right, to me, for Adelaide and Connor to finally win their happily-ever-after if Connor left unacknowledged his past errors - errors Adelaide forgave and saw past, trusting him despite the fact that he didn't give her much incentive to do so. But, rest assured readers, Johnson fails to disappoint and I finished *An Unexpected Gentleman* pleasantly surprised at having enjoyed this tumultuous journey after all.

Kathleen says

4.5 stars. Connor Brice wanted revenge, and thought he would use Addy to get it, but along the way he fell in love with her. An old trope, but so beautifully done. I loved Connor. My kind of guy -- protective, passionate, strong, but also willing to give it all up for love, if necessary. Loved the scenes with baby Georgie, too.

Samantha says

Connor Brice, is hellbent on revenge against his half brother, Sir Robert. The first step in his revenge? Steal Sir Robert's fiancée, Adelaide Ward. The fact that Miss Ward is the same woman Connor had been fascinated with, while sitting in prison, is just a bonus. For her part, Adelaide is trapped. She doesn't want to marry the condescending Sir Robert, but her brother's gambling habit has left her with little choice. Its either marry him for his 5,000 pounds a year or go to the poor house. Things begin to spin out of control though when Connor interferes with her plans and Adelaide gets sucked even further into the brothers' revenge schemes.

Johnson has an interesting revenge plot going on here. Connor's drive and focus on gaining vengeance is believable and I agreed that Sir Robert needed to be taken down a peg or two. The guy was horrible. Poor Adelaide just has the misfortune of getting swept up in the tide of their animosity. So then, what was my problem with the story? The elimination of Adelaide's choices and power. Was she given the choice between Sir Robert and Connor? Yes. Is this more than what the typical historical romances with compromised heroines get? Yes. But honestly, she still didn't get to decide. Sir Robert was painted so horribly that Adelaide would've been committing suicide if she chose him.

Adelaide herself was a pretty good HR heroine. She was practical, smart, and didn't take much crap from Connor. Yet she fell into the innocent "I know nothing what-so-ever about sex" trope that I so loathe. Yes, it's so integrated into the genre that it's practically a requirement, but her extreme naivete about sex still annoyed me. I actually ended up skipping the sex scene between Connor and her, because I just wasn't interested in reading another HR deflowering scene where the more experienced hero shows the heroine the ropes.

But I'll admit that most of the issues I had with this book was a "It's me, not you" situation. An Unexpected Gentleman has a wonderful hero and heroine, a fairly original plot, and some great supporting characters. Most of my problems stemmed from the tropes in the genre.

I would recommend this novel to anyone who enjoys Elizabeth Hoyt and Lisa Kleypas. Johnson has a writing style that fans of those two authors will enjoy immensely.

Zumbagirl says

4.5 stars

Yay!! My first Alissa Johnson and I loved it, very cute, happy read, just what I needed. Sometimes I want a

real meaty story; other times something light and fluffy with humor and love - which is exactly what An Unexpected Gentleman delivered. The hero was to die for - Connor Brice - and the heroine, Adelaide Ward, was also good. She was somewhat older than the usual (maybe 26 or 27?) and the oldest in her family. Her brother, Wolfgang, wound up in prison for his debts and now she must marry well in order to save her family, which also consists of her sister, Isobel, and her nephew George, (who is adorable and I love babies/children in my stories). She is intending to marry a man, who she doesn't love, Sir Robert and who she really does not know. She unexpectedly meets and becomes attracted to Connor while at a party, in the garden. Turns out, Connor has been watching her and has fallen for her and decides she's the "one" for him. But Sir Robert is also his half-brother and there is a huge rift between them - which also makes up the revenge part of the story (it's not overdone and didn't get on my nerves like some revenge themes do). Basically, the focus was Adelaide and Connor growing to love and trust each other and make their relationship work out. IMO, this is the best kind of romance because we read/see how their attraction/love blossoms and how they work out difficulties that arise - while always together (I just hate those long separations/misunderstandings).

On the steam level, this one is pretty low, mostly kisses - it's sweet, romantic, and fits perfectly with how the book is written (so if you want/need lots of hot sex, this is not the book for you). But I would not characterize it as clean as Heyer. Maybe PG.

I really enjoyed this book!!! I only wish I read the one before it first featuring Freddie and Lord Gideon. I will def look out for more books by this author and recommend it to all who like Regency romances, sweet, funny, low angst, awesome hero and a good storyline:)

Caz says

Another excellent read from Alissa Johnson. The eponymous gentleman is Connor Brice, the bastard half-brother of the baronet that our heroine, Adelaide, is angling to marry. Connor's life is driven by the thirst for revenge against Sir Robert who had him press-ganged and then later, thrown into prison on trumped-up charges: and he decides that stealing his half-brother's bride would be a good way to start.

For her part, Adelaide is seeking to marry Sir Robert in order to secure her future and that of her younger sister and her nephew - her brother's son. Her brother is an inveterate gambler and is currently residing in the same prison as Connor had been in. She is immediately attracted to the handsome Connor, and although she insists that she will make up her own mind between her two suitors, it's really a foregone conclusion :)

She decides that she will marry Connor in order to make his life hell and have her revenge for his compromising her, but she soon abandons that plan; Connor turns out to be a fabulous lover (of course!) and a generally considerate husband when it comes to material desires. Yet the only thing he doesn't seem willing to give is anything of himself. He doesn't talk about himself or his past very much and Adelaide finds that she has to drag snippets of information out of him one at a time. He's also not very accommodating with his time, as he spends most of his days locked away with his cronies, plotting Sir Robert's downfall, so Adelaide begins to feel quite lonely.

There is no Big Misunderstanding in the story, as Adelaide asks Connor for help when she needs it, and I suppose that for some readers, it could seem as though nothing much happens in this novel. To an extent, that's true - no spies or pirates or revolutionaries - but that's the sort of story I prefer; one that deals with the relationship between two people in fairly ordinary circumstances, and how they find each other in the end despite the mundanity of everyday life.

That's not to say that this book is in any way boring! It's wonderfully written and characterised and the humour I so loved in *Nearly a Lady* is very much in evidence.

Connor might be more than a bit dense when it comes to understanding that Adelaide wants to be close to him in ways that don't involve getting horizontal, but he's nonetheless a very engaging hero, and Adelaide is delightfully spirited and waspish. I loved that she was comfortable with turning to Connor for help and didn't - as some heroines are wont to do - try to work things out alone and just make things worse!

Another superb read - and I can't wait for the next one!

Ursula says

In this second book of the Haverston Family Trilogy, the story revolves around the charming Adelaide, (with a not so charming, useless brother) and our hero, Connor, who, though of gentleman stock, was falsely imprisoned, made his fortune and now is back in town ready to wreak his revenge on the villain of the piece. I do love Alissa Johnson- she writes really well and her characterisation is terrific. Her heroes can be problematic for me. Connor is rather twisted, in a way- prison will do that to a person- and it was hard to approve of his motivation when it came to marrying Adelaide. His method was particularly repugnant and I am not sure I could have forgotten that so easily were I Adelaide, but Johnson's heroines are always so warm and loving, and yes, forgiving, that they somehow see past all the dubious actions of the hero and recognise the true value of the person underneath.

What I loved about this book is the way we see into Connor's soul and can make the journey with him, starting with the acknowledgement of his mistakes and ending with his acceptance that he needs to move on from revenge if he is ever to make the woman he loves happy. I went from disliking him and wanting to punch him in the mouth to admiring him. Adelaide was a beautiful person who was not blind to Connor's faults, and challenged him to change, but stuck to her faith in his ultimate goodness. He never treated her badly, he was as honest as he knew how to be, but he had to learn to be in a loving relationship, because it really was the first one he had ever had.

Oh, and the interactions with the toddler were cute, too!

Pamela(AllHoney) says

Alissa Johnson is one of my favorite historical romance writers and did not disappoint me with this treat. I found it to be an enchanting tale with lots of witty banter throughout. Not a lot of action but this is a romance and not a suspense/thriller/action/adventure novel so... Anyway, light and fun and entertaining in my most humble opinion.

Keri says

This was a fun read, but in an emotional way. There were some unexpected twists and turns as the book progressed. The H/H was a wonderful match and I don't think AJ gets the recognition she deserves. I hope that we get to see the brother and sister get a story of their own in the future.

Jill says

Gaining his feet, he sent her a surly look. "Am I this irritating when I'm being smug?"

"Twice as," she assured him.

"Excellent."

Twenty-seven year-old spinster, Adelaide Ward needs desperately to marry well to ease her family's financial woes. With time running out and an eighteen year-old sister, a younger brother in prison, a young nephew and no finances to speak of, Adelaide is hoping and expecting Sir Robert Maxwell will at last propose after their four-month courtship.

Connor Brice, the bastard son of a British gentleman, was press-ganged at fifteen, before escaping a year later to live off his wits on the streets of Boston. Now back in Scotland once more, Connor is out for revenge against the man who stole his youth and his finances. He has the means, the manpower and the determination to see Sir Robert pay.

Set in Scotland, this book is related to Ms Johnson's previous novel *Nearly a Lady*, with glimpses of Lilly and Freddie and their husbands Lord Engsly and Lord Gideon. Adelaide is determined and selfless. Connor is charming, obstinate and vengeful. His ill-treatment has scarred his surface but not touched the goodness that lies beneath.

Alissa Johnson has an absolutely gorgeous writing style, for me very reminiscent of Mary Balogh. *An Unexpected Gentleman* is character-rich, with well-placed touches of humour. Connor and Adelaide lock horns often and the resulting dialogue is brilliant.

"I will agree to share a bed with you once a year."

"No."

Now she was growing annoyed. "'No' is not a counteroffer, Mr Brice."

"Connor. And 'no' means the offer was too insulting to dignify with any other response."

Was it? Well, how the blazes was she to know? She sniffed, because it seemed the only thing to do. "Well, it stands until you come up with one of your own."

"Fine. Ten times a day."

She gaped at him, shocked beyond measure. "Surely not. There is only one night in a day." [...]

"Is...ten times..." The heat of embarrassment and frustration filled her cheeks. Without realizing it, she leaned in a little and spoke in a lowered voice. "Is that normal?"

Another wonderful historical romance by the talented Alissa Johnson.

Dina says

Will I ever read a book by Ms. Johnson and not fall in love with it? 'No' is the answer. :)

As Luck Would Have It, I adored everything she has written so far and hope to keep it that way, so I will not be Tempting Fate and risking my ~~Me~~Alistair's Fortune-good fortune by thinking otherwise. My love for Ms. Johnson's writing is Destined to Last, as surely as I am Nearly a Lady.

CJ - It's only a Paper Moon says

4.8

Really enjoyed this book but then again I am supremely biased because so far, I've loved everything that Alissa Johnson has put out so far.

This story follows Connor Brice, a shady charming vulnerable sexy sexy man, and Adelaide, a sensible burdened and slightly whimsical young lady. Boy meets girl through a prison window, falls in love with said girl, evil brother knows this and manages to scheme and plot to force said girl into a position to marry her. Unbeknownst to her, Connor and her brother have a deliciously dangerous game of revenge going on (mostly Connor's doing) and poor Adelaide gets caught up in an interesting situation.

Then she makes the mistake of falling in love with her husband.

OOPS.

I loved the dialogue and the lack of ballrooms (a girl can only take so much and I needed a break). The secondary characters were cool but not entirely memorable: I loved that Isobel grew a bit of a backbone but I was saddened to see her disappear from the story after page 200 or so. I feared that poor Georgie was growing to grow up a very pudgy, diabetic and spoilt child and I wanted to see more of Gregory, Michael and Graham.

Also, I didn't understand why (view spoiler)

All in all, a pretty damn good book that could've survived a few tweaks to have made it even stronger.

Audrey says

4.5 stars, but because we can't give half stars, 5 stars for purposes of my Goodreads rating.

A delight. What can I say? I just think of things in this story and I think "delightful!" Really really enjoyed this one. REEEEEEEEEEEEEALLY enjoyed this one. Outside of some cosmetic flaws (detailed a bit first to get them out of the way), the storytelling, pace, characters, and development were pretty much spot on.

Cosmetic Flaws

Some things irked me right off the bat. Shouldn't "Sir Robert" be a baronet, not a baron? Maybe I'm wrong in my peerage here or maybe they do things differently in Scotland, but I thought barons were "Lord"s and not "Sir"s. Also, there were some typos that were distracting, e.g., "around the weeks" when they meant to say "around the weeds" or, e.g., using the same word twice such as "at that that same time, that same moment." Those sorts of things just made an otherwise very proper and detailed book seem a bit sloppy.

Edit: Also note that the cover dude is dark-haired while Connor is a blond, green-eyed giant.

MOVING ON...

Story

Very generally, the H, Connor Brice, seeks a highly-justified and well-deserved revenge on Sir Robert, the suitor of the h, Adelaide Ward, whose impoverished family circumstances have left her in dire straits. Part of Connor's revenge involves compromising Miss Ward and, ultimately, convincing her that she should choose him over Sir Robert. A brief but insightful and sweet courtship follows, concluding in their marriage about halfway through the book. The remainder of the book explores their married life as they navigate their feelings for each other and as Connor and Adelaide work to resolve their differences over the all-consuming need for revenge that still burns within Connor. I'm not a huge fan of the revenge plot as a trope, but it worked in this one because I thought the romance was so strong that the revenge didn't overpower it or anything. The revenge was, in fact, part of the romance development, and Connor's big gesture in the end really had me choked up.

Characters

Delightful. Connor Brice, a bastard (but well-loved and acknowledged) son of a nobleman, he was forcibly press-ganged at 15 and, since escaping, has lived in America for years building his fortune. He is a hard man bent on revenge. To gain his revenge, he's not above a little manipulation, creative half-truth-telling, or maneuvering, as his deliberate compromising of Adelaide so readily shows us. His hardness makes it all the more melt-worthy when he does unexpectedly romantic and heartfelt things for Adelaide, whom we learn he has had an interest in from afar for quite some time. This unrequited hmmm..."pining" shall I say? is what made the deliberate compromising palatable to me. He doesn't do it solely for revenge. He does it because he wants Adelaide for himself. He also gives her the opportunity to discover each of Sir Robert's and his natures before she has to make a decision.

Connor is a sweetheart when nobody is looking. He takes note of Adelaide's hobbies and her dreams, and rather than pay them lip service, he makes them happen. He's a man of action, and in this case, actions speak for him since he isn't used to expressing himself with words. He reveals his softer side in surprising ways, from his attention to his conversations with Adelaide to his patient (and somewhat bewildered) interactions with Adelaide's two-year-old nephew.

Adelaide also brings a lot to this story. She's been in charge of her family ever since her wastrel brother landed in debtor's prison, leaving 27-year-old Adelaide to fend for herself, her brother's son, and their 18-year-old sister. With this history, she could easily have sunk into deep levels of annoying stoic, doormat-ish, going-to-the-stake martyrdom, but she doesn't, for which I am eternally grateful. She learns of Sir Robert's true nature and isn't afraid to toss him over. She stands up for herself, both with Sir Robert and later with Connor when his revenge stands in the way of their marriage. Seriously, just when I was about to fuss over Connor's secrets and how hell-bent he was on revenge, Adelaide made her own fuss, and I couldn't have applauded the timing any more. I liked her a lot, and she bears up well against unfortunate circumstances that are not of her own making.

Most of the secondary characters were well done, as well. Connor's "men," who took him in years ago a little while after Sir Robert's betrayal left Connor in America without means, money, or a home, are delightfully (um, sorry, can't help using that word again) curmudgeonly, unpolished, and a bit crass. Adelaide's family are well-drawn with the precocious sister, the sweets-addicted nephew, and the selfish wastrel of a brother. I actually thought the brother was a more fleshed out villain than Sir Robert, the real villain of the piece. The only character that I didn't think was very developed was Sir Robert. He was only sketched out for us in rather cartoon-y "evil villain" terms, but I suppose that may have been necessary to justify Connor's maintaining his need for revenge for the last 15 years.

Romance

Loved the banter. Loved their interactions. LOVED THEIR WITTY DIALOGUE. Loved it. I kept thinking "oh, I should add that as a status update!" but then I got buried back into the book. Jill's review convinced me to try this book out based solely on the "ten times a day" conversation, and I was not disappointed.

A teaser from their wedding night:

"...I was jesting about the ten times."

"Oh." Well, that wasn't too terrible. She didn't care for having been the victim of his jest, but it was a relief to know she'd not be expected to--

"It's not like pulling out a thorn," Connor explained.

Relief vanished. She knew it was too much to hope that he meant it wouldn't hurt. "It's not done quickly, is it?"

His mouth curved. "Not when it's done well."

SQUEEEEEEEEEEE. *insert winky face* *nudge nudge*

Note re: Steam Factor

I should note that, with regards to the sexytimes, this book was less steamy and erotic than the historicals that I've been reading lately (e.g., Elizabeth Hoyt or Lisa Kleypas). I'd say the steam level is on a steamier Mary Balogh or less-steamier Julia Quinn level. There are some heated kisses and then, of course, the wedding night, which was quite passionate and lovely. Following the wedding night, there are a couple of alluded or glossed over scenes during their marriage, as well. Personally, it worked very well for me because it seemed in keeping with the tone of the romance and writing, but I just wanted to give people a heads up in terms of expectations.

Overall

The book was really well done. I honestly don't have any quibbles with pretty much any aspects of the book. Aside from the cosmetic things mentioned earlier, there may be a few minor things plot-wise that I might fuss over (view spoiler). I was wavering between a 4 and a 5, but I think I'll go with that 4.5 boosted to 5. Nowadays, I don't see very many stories where the romance and likable characters take center stage with such delightful results, and this one really does deserve acknowledgement.

Catherine says

Going into this read I was a little worried about what tone the author would set, given that the book revolves around revenge and the hero uses the heroine as a pawn. The hero, Connor Brice, was falsely accused of a crime by his brother and imprisoned. He was only recently released from jail and is out for revenge against said brother. Some of you might recognize him from some of the prison scenes in *Nearly a Lady* (loved that book).

While in prison, Brice saw Adelaide bring her nephew to visit her spendthrift brother every week. He develops a bit of a thing for her (from afar) and is determined to look her up when he gets out of jail. When he finds that she's very close to engaging herself to his brother, it seems as though the stars align for him. He can kill two birds with one stone; get closer to her *and* start his revenge.

This book turned out to be very enjoyable, but there were quite a few times that I felt that Adelaide got the short end of the stick. That's the risk that you run when you draw the heroine into the hero's plot, though. For a while there it seemed as though Adelaide was discovering a new way she had been misled (not just by Connor) every time she turned around. She was becoming more and more depressed, although no one saw it beyond the few down moments she allowed herself to reveal. I ended up feeling really bad for her. She was trapped by circumstance and had no real choice but to continue playing the hand she had been dealt.

One of the redeeming factors of Connor's deception is that there were no real lies involved. He behaved in a shady manner to maneuver her into considering his proposal, but he always told the truth when she confronted him directly. He was willing to omit and skate around the truth on his own, but he would never lie when she asked. I had to appreciate that, given that the same couldn't be said of the other people misleading her. It didn't excuse his actions, though. At times it was hard to accept his cavalier attitude toward his involvement of Adelaide in his plans, when I could see how badly her situation and the choices she was forced to make were wearing her down.

There was no malicious intent in his actions, though. He gave her anything she desired upon their marriage. She was given *ghastly* amounts of money and was able to save her family from ruin. He wanted to please her and loved having her around every day, although he wasn't willing to admit just how much it pleased him. He enjoyed her family and was willing to deal with her wastrel brother to boot. Yet she still wasn't happy. She grew to care for him quite a bit and started to resent the time he devoted to his revenge. She didn't begrudge him it, but she was tired of how long it was taking. I could understand her feelings, but she knew going into it that he was going to be doing this after they married. He never lied. Therefore, I could also understand Connor's frustration over her change of heart regarding it.

That's really where my frustration with their relationship comes into play. I loved the characters and I had a great time reading the book, but Connor's change of heart toward his revenge came way too abruptly. This was something that *dominated* his life and it took him mere minutes to decide to give it up? That just doesn't jive for me. Adelaide was justified in her upset over his absentmindedness toward her whenever he received new information about his revenge plot, but I expected it to take more than a conversation and a few minutes of contemplation for him to change his ways. Especially in such an extreme manner. I think my belief in their relationship would have benefited from more page time to gradually bring about Connor's change of heart.

Although I could have used more page time to believe in the hero and heroine's love, I never doubted their liking for each other. This author is very skilled at creating engaging characters and giving the reader no doubt that the hero and heroine enjoy each other's company, even when they're pricking each other's temper. I read the sneak peek for the next book, *Practically Wicked*, at the back of this one and now I can't wait to read it. I'm already intrigued by the hero.

Favorite Quote(s):

"Do you trust me, Adelaide?"

Oh, dear, not this again. "If you're asking if I trust you to make a fair job of..." She waved her hand in the direction of the chambers. "...*that*, then I suppose I really haven't a choice."

There was a pause before he said, in a very dry tone, "You make me feel like a king."

"Would you prefer I be dishonest?"

"Do you know the real reason I didn't make you my mistress, Adelaide?"

Was there a false one? She shook her head.

"For the same reason I'm not angry about the pudding. You matter."

Review originally posted on Fiction Vixen

Claudia says

That was a great read. I have forgotten how much I like Alissa Johnson's writing. I think it will be a book on my re-read list.

Steamywindows♥? says

So what do you read when you are feeling jaded or out of sorts? May I recommend this book? I think for the sake of those who need an intense plot driven story, this may not suit your needs, but if you want a humorous story that is well written, I would say this one will. I was generally struck by how honest and clear this author's style is. At the same time, she doesn't sermonize or hit you on the head with her point.

The characters are not your typical fair. The heroine is 28, solely responsible for her family and the story begins with her anticipating a proposal that will secure her a \$5000 a year income. Mercenary? Well no actually, simply pragmatic. I like that she didn't put herself through contortions of guilt. She is a woman of honest integrity.

The hero is a character which we develop some considerable empathy for in short order, despite some fairly unprincipled behaviour like deliberately compromising our heroine. We are later informed this is justified (in his mind) because of a despicable event where he was pressed into a ship's crew and eventually found his way to America. Did I mention the charming 2 year old? Pudding filled cookies and a set of important papers made the two year old a scene steal-er for sure.

The true beauty of this story lies in the interaction between the main characters and as the reader, we see the often humorous way they see the same situation completely differently. I laughed and laughed at some of the discussions, and this humour was more poignant by the counterpoint of the villain and the idiotic brother's

terrible behaviour.

There were several minor details that just didn't seem plausible, and took me out of the story, which is why I can't give it my full endorsement with a 5 star, but it is close. In the end the hero says it beautifully, (view spoiler) making this one of the top romances filled with humour that I have read.
