



Spandex and the City

Jenny T. Colgan

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Mild-mannered publicist Holly Phillips is unlucky in love. She's embarrassed beyond belief when the handsome stranger she meets in a bar turns out to be 'Ultimate Man' - a superpowered hero whose rescue attempt finds her hoisted over his shoulder and flashing her knickers in the newspaper the next day.

But when Holly's fifteen minutes of fame make her a target for something villainous, she only has one place to turn - and finds the man behind the mask holds a lot more charm than his crime-fighting alter-ego.

Can Holly find love, or is superdating just as complicated as the regular kind?

Spandex and the City Details

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From Reader Review Spandex and the City for online ebook

Kate says

There's just something so lovely about picking up a book by Jenny Colgan, you know from the moment you start reading that there will be laughter and fun as well as a few more serious moments.

"Spandex and the City" is wonderfully humorous from the opening chapter, poor Holly Phillips finding her chances of a love life aren't helped by having her knickers splashed over the front pages and on social media. Her night starts innocently enough, a much needed night out with her best friend Gertie when a band of masked robbers descend upon the bar and demand valuables, phones etc. These raids aren't the first that the town has endured and without fail the local superhero Ultimate Man is soon in the vicinity to save the day, unfortunately when he rescues the damsel in distress (or distressing damsel) he throws her over his shoulder to lead her to safety not realising her knickers are on show for all to see. Holly is mortified when people recognise her face in the picture and attracts some unwanted attention because of this.

The raids continue across the town, and as luck would have it Holly usually ends up being in the same place, as does Ultimate Man. The pair share a few conversation at their unplanned rendezvous, and from there a budding romance of sorts forms.

"Spandex and the City" is different from Colgan's other novels, yes there is a love story in here, but there is also a lot more to this novel than some readers may expect. The superhero and science fiction elements in this novel are well written and it has a feel of an updated superhero tale. Characterisation is really good, Holly is a funny and charming character that oozes warmth and humour. Her exchanges with her best friend Gertie as well as those with Ultimate Man are wonderfully crafted and very enjoyable. Ultimate Man is a little bit of an enigma, very alluring and interesting but I have to agree with Holly's remarks about his name, it doesn't sound the greatest! The evil mastermind was a fantastic character, one with many sides it would seem but how many of them were true?

A lovely light hearted read with plenty of laughter - just what I've come to know and love from Jenny Colgan!

Robin Stevens says

It's hard to write a superhero novel - we're so used to seeing them in films and in comic books - but Jenny does a really charming, fun job of poking affectionate fun at the genre, and at modern life. A really charming, off-beat romance story. (14+)

Please note: this review is meant as a recommendation only. Please do not use it in any marketing material, online or in print, without asking permission from me first. Thank you!

Sid Nuncius says

I enjoyed Spandex And The City. As a man in my 60s, I'm not really in its target audience, but a great title and a friend's recommendation persuaded me to try it and I'm glad I did. I thought it was funny, engaging and rather exciting in places.

Jenny Colgan (whom I hadn't read before) has produced a comic mash-up of a rom-com and superhero adventure and done it very well. It is narrated in the first person by Holly who works in a dull job in the PR department of the mayor's office in the fictional US city of Centerton - which has its own superhero in Ultimate Man. ("I mean, seriously? Ultimate Man?" "Well, all the good names had gone.") He's a Batman/Superman type who rescues Holly from a supervillain a couple of times and a will they/won't they love story begins. It could have been awful, but Colgan has a lovely touch so the story is humorous with exactly the level of irony needed to be witty, the dialogue is excellently done, Holly is a very engaging protagonist and there's some genuine excitement and some rather thoughtful content in places.

This isn't intended to be Great Literature, but it's a very well-written and entertaining book which I enjoyed a lot. It would make a great beach read! Recommended.

(I received an ARC via Netgalley.)

Frenchorchidea says

Hmmm I don't know what to think of this book.... It's so so so SO different from the other books from Jenny Colgan that I have read in the past. So different. And therefore I was disappointed. It was still chicklit but chicklit version spiderman or superman. Yes it was like reading a superman's book but for women ;-) or should I say girls because really this story was way too childish for me. The way it was written was too childish, and the characters as well. But I read the entire book because it was still pretty addictive and you want to know what will happen. That's why I have given this read 3 stars instead of 2 stars. I hope the next Jenny Colgan will be more like her usual books.

Gavin says

This was a fun superhero romcom. Some of the humour worked and some of it fell a bit flat but the characters did prove a likeable bunch and the story always had enough about it to hold my attention.

Mild-mannered PR girl Holly Phillips is not a fan of her city's resident superhero Ultimate Man. That feeling is only reinforced when he rescues her from a gang of robbers and photos appear of her hoisted over his shoulder and flashing her knickers in the newspaper the next day! To make matters worse Holly's embarrassing 15 minutes of fame end up making her a target for the city's latest villain and Ultimate Man has to save the day again.

This is a romcom so there was plenty of focus on the romance aspects of the story. Jenny T. Colgan actually did a decent job of keeping me guessing about about how things would work out in Holly's love life as Ultimate Man had to compete was a regular human who works his way into Holly's affection after starting at her work. I did enjoy how things developed between Holly and Ultimate Man as circumstances forced them to spend more time together but I also enjoyed how those moments compared and contrasted to the time she spent with Nelson. Holly proved to be likeable character and the secondary characters were a nice mix of likeable and interesting.

The superhero part of the story was actually quite fun. It took a bit of time to warm up but once it did both Ultimate Man and the main villain proved to be fairly interesting characters who had more depth to them than was apparent in the early parts of the story.

All in all this was a fun read. It could have been better. Not all of the humor worked and we did have to suffer a super cringeworthy sex scene but there was definitely more good than bad in the story overall.

Despite this story having superheroes it had the feel of a regular contemporary romcom rather than the typical UF superhero book feel.

Rating: 3.5 stars.

Audio Note: Antonia Beamish did not do a great job narrating this one. It was like she missed the tone of the story and as a result some of the scenes and dialogue came off sounding far more cringeworthy than they might have if handled by a better narrator.

Roman Clodia says

This is so much fun! Colgan mashes up chick-lit/rom-com with all those tales of superheroes and supervillains trying to either destroy or save the world, and pulls it off with panache. Holly, our narrator, is a smart, sassy heroine and if it's tough doing modern dating, imagine how much more complicated it is when the object of your desire dresses in purple spandex, a cape and is always flying off to rescue the city...

This isn't quite as wonderful as Colgan's Resistance is Futile but is still a funny, clever, ultimately gloriously romantic homage to caped crusaders!

dlvsbooks says

Don't let the quirky cover and title fool you because this is brilliant and fun and I freaking loved it!!!♥?

Agi says

Guys! Who doesn't know Jenny Colgan and her loveliest chick – lit novels in the world, right? However, there is the other side to Jenny Colgan, the one where she writes about super – heroes, spandex, aliens... Sounds totally bonkers, right, and it is totally bonkers, but bonkers in a positive way! “Spandex and the City” is SO FUNNY, I couldn't stop giggling and I finished reading it with a big grin on my face. It is a comical, farcical take on superhero stories and a girl caught up between the good and the evil and I know it sounds totally like not from this world but I think this is probably what makes this book work!

I was hooked right from the beginning. This book is written in a brilliant way. The chapters are ultra – short and I just had a feeling I am watching them like a kaleidoscope, on a dime. The storytelling was such relaxed and playful and the plot was so unusual and I just couldn't wait to see what's going to happen. You have to take this story with a pinch of salt but I think that it is mostly this unpredictability and impossibility of the things happening that make this book so unique and so outstanding.

The author has delivered the perfect mix of a rom – com with superheroes adventures. The whole story is told from Holly's point of view – Holly works in a boring PR job in the mayor's office of the fictional town of Centerton and has the ability to appear in places that are being robbed and then put herself in danger and

into the attention of the bad guy. Holly is a brilliant character – she’s so engaging, with this great dry British humour. She is your ordinary girl from the neighbourhood, working hard in a boring job and never going on dates. She wears her made of gold heart on her sleeve and she is so much braver that we could expect her to be, and I simply loved her. Centerton also has its own superhero – Ultimate Man, who – basically – is a mix of all the good guys but dressed in a purple spandex, driving a purple bike, with a purple phone. He rescues Holly those few times that she’s being kidnapped by Frederick Cecil and this is when their brilliant, belly – laughing will they/won’t they begins.

I so loved what the author has done with the villain, Frederick Cecil. You know, there was a moment or two that I really truly felt sorry and fell for him, as I could understand his point of view. Yes, internet has done a lot of good but there is also this dark side of internet, and Frederick Cecil has pointed it out, spot on. And well, he was right about those dangers, no? So you know, yes, I felt compassion to our villain. And I fell in love with his island and the fact that the first thing he wanted to save was his library. With Frederick it was love and hate relationship. A man who thought he’s doing all those evil things for greater good and really, you will find yourself in debate if he’s really as bad as we initially thought him to be.

This is a book that is guaranteed to take you to a better, funnier place and give you the much needed break. Even if you’re not into super – heroes, or you think this book can be a little too sci – fi for you, just give a try – I am sure you won’t regret it and you’ll be surprised how much you’re going to like it.

This story was so absurd that it just somehow worked! It was so very well done, guys, there was the right level of humour and sadness, the exaggeration and irony and the dialogues are brilliant. It was incredibly clever and Jenny Colgan has made a point or two in this story! It was not only entertaining, but thought – provoking and insightful – Jenny Colgan brilliantly captured the world, showing how internet has shaped us and our surroundings. It was really so great to read something so different. It was so quick and easy to read, even if there were moments that it was so unbelievable. There are so many things happening – the drama, comedy, romance – that even the additional touch of science fiction didn’t bother me at all. There were so many things that usually and normally wouldn’t work for me because they were so impossible and ridiculous but they did work! I know it’s the usual type of book I – and probably you – read but I urge you to leave your comfort zone for a moment and read “Spandex and the City” – it is a hilarious, clever book. Highly recommended!

Copy provided by the publisher in return for an honest review.

Leah says

DNF.

I was liking this, I wasn't loving it then a few editing issues bugged me so I decided to put it down. The first was the fact Holly gets her computer hacked, so Ultimate Man can ask her out (because phones don't work??? IDK) and she goes to his house, wearing her "go-anywhere" black dress, somehow turns her phone off in the process after telling her housemate that if she doesn't hear from her by morning, she could call the police, and is then surprised to return home the next day, having stayed over at this strangers house, this vigilantes house, to find the police. And, apparently, despite no mention of a change of clothes, she's now magically wearing a red skirt. And it must literally just be a red skirt, because she was wearing a dress when she left. *Rages*

Then, the Internet dies. And it causes mass hysteria, because duh. Twenty years ago phones were just made for texting and calling, but the Internet dies and people forget how to function. ANYWAY. Holly states that the Internet was, since High School, part of her every waking minute. Holly is 26, and according to herself,

she was 12 when the new Millennium came in, which means that she was in secondary school (because it was secondary school she attended, since she was in England before moving to America) from 1999-2003. The Internet was not that big of a thing during those years, at all. It's only really come to prominence with the invention of smartphones, the first of which wasn't even released until 2007 and likely didn't hit the mainstream til a bit after that. So it's physically impossible, unless Holly is lying about how old she was when the Millennium came in, to have the Internet as part of her every waking moment. Her phone in those years would have been a clunky Nokia, only capable of making phone calls and sending text messages and playing Snake. Computer lessons would have taken place maybe once or twice a week, and even then you would be making Powerpoint presentations or playing games.

I try not to get riled up. I know authors make mistakes, but I do get riled up. It does irritate me when authors can't properly age their characters appropriately, or assume that smartphones were a thing in the early 00s. When they have their character go out in one outfit, and somehow magically have an entirely different outfit on the next day (that she had been wearing for two days, no less, according to her flatmate?????).

It's just infuriating. It's even more so when you're the same age as the character, I'm actually younger, since in 2017 Holly would be 29 but this is all stuff I remember, this is stuff I am aware of which makes it worse when you read such silly things that are so easily proven inaccurate via Google (is that ironic?). This is why timelines are SO important. People just assume the Internet has been this thing we're addicted to forever, and yet, it wasn't back in the early 00s. In the early 00s, I don't even think WiFi was a thing, because you had to dial up with those horrible noises, etc. It's all so, so easy to disprove.

So, no. I wanted to like this book so much, especially because I love superhero shows. So I love the idea of a superhero romance book. It just needed to have its homework done properly. Or, if you don't want to have to do your homework properly, don't even mention stupid little takeaways like that, because it could have been lifted out without much notice, and I wouldn't have got all riled up.

Emma says

Cute romantic comedy with quirky characters.

Superhero parody with elements of Superman and Batman specifically. The setting had a Gotham-esque ambiance to add to the overall superhero/vigilante illusion within the narrative.

While the story was humorous the plot itself was a little on the obvious side, especially if you have a weakness for superheroes ;)

Gemma says

I liked this book a lot, though not as much as Resistance Is Futile. I think Colgan has stumbled onto a new sub genre and I can't wait to see what's next

Full review will be up on www.bookmoodreviews.com

Whispering Stories says

Unlucky in love Holly was forever being pushed by her best friend Gertie to find herself a man. On a night

out together, villain Frederick Cecil raided the bar they were in, taking every one's jewels, phones, money, etc. Not wanting her best friend's new engagement ring to be taken, Holly stood up to the villain. Unfortunately, not everything went as she had hoped.

Dragged out of the bar by Frederick, Holly came face to face with Ultimate Man, the protector of Centerton, Holly's home town. After a brief fight, Frederick disappeared, and Holly found herself thrown over Ultimate Man's shoulder, leaving her knickers on show for the world to see.

Not exactly being a fan of Ultimate Man, she was disappointed when once again, she came face to face with him at a corporate party, in the city's art gallery. Frederick Cecil had taken the opportunity to steal from some of the wealthy city dwellers. Unfortunately for Ultimate Man, after Frederick once again got away, Holly saw him mid-changing, and for the first time someone knew his real identity.

With their paths continuously crossing, Holly started to fall for Ultimate Man, though he told her he couldn't date anyone, as his life was too complicated. This attraction hadn't gone unnoticed by Frederick, who decided to use her as a pawn in the battle between good and evil.

Spandex and the City, is a complete bonkers book, but it is oh so funny, and laugh out loud from beginning to end. Sometimes you just want to read a book that will give you a lift and make you feel happy, and this book certainly does that.

It is a take on all the superhero books, but rather than the focus being on the hero or villain, it is on Holly, the woman caught, unwantedly, between the two arch-nemeses.

Ultimate Man, is basically a very purple Batman, with his purple suit, purple bike, and purple phone. Though where Batman is a normal man wearing a suit, Ultimate Man is the product of a lab explosion which gave him his abilities. He is a little too clean cut for my liking, with his 'need to save everyone', and always having to be right attitude. He also didn't have that emotional pull, that Frederick did.

Holly is an ordinary woman, working hard for little money, and never managing to get herself a date. She is the girl next door type of woman, who happens to be in the wrong place, at the wrong time – more than once. She is pig-headed, and likes to use sarcasm whenever possible, which is often lost on Ultimate Man. She is also far more brave than she likes to think she is.

Frederick Cecil, is the villain you love to hate. He has a beautiful house, on a beautiful sunny island. One that screams rest and relaxation. His motives for stealing are, to him, a worthy cause, one that he has spent his whole life thinking about, and one that he feels he is doing for the greater good. From starting out despising him, I felt myself conflicted as to whether he really was the bad guy.

I read the book at a time when I needed a real pick-me-up, in a week where everything, any anything had gone wrong. I found myself longing to pick up the book, even if it was only for a few minutes, just to escape reality. This book took me to a place which made me smile, made me laugh, and ultimately made me feel happy.

I became hooked from the very first chapter, by Ms. Colgan's easy, relaxing, writing style, and her delightful, playful plot, unlike any of her other work that I have read.

If you are after a book that can give you that much needed break from life, to take you to a world just like your own, but one where good and evil come in the forms of superhero and super-villain, just like Batman and the Joker, then this is the book for you.

Reviewed by Stacey on www.whisperingstories.com

Kim says

I love Jenny Colgan's books. This was a departure in genre to the ones I have read before. It contains superheros, romance, humour and very touching in parts. I got used to the superhero element and enjoyed reading this one.

Lee says

it's really funny and a sure page-turner. Couldn't put the book down as its so funny and cute.

Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says

After reading charming Colgan books about a bakery and a book bus did a book about a superhero romance feel a bit different. Well, quite a lot different. But, I was curious. I mean check out this quote from the book:

'Could you please . . . possibly . . . possibly forget we ever met?'

I thought of how much I wanted to be a journalist. I thought of what a gigantic scoop this was. I noticed how downcast and miserable he looked.

'You know,' I said. 'None of the pictures on the internet of the people who are supposed to be you are actually you.'

'I know,' he said.

'I mean, Ultimate Man . . . you sound like a bra.'

'I know,' he said. 'All the good names were taken.'

Yeah, despite no puffins in this book did I find it charming. Holly is such a likable character and being saved by Ultimate Man sounds like a dream come true, unless that means flashing the whole world your knickers. And, not even your good knickers. And, then there is the villain, that keep showing up wherever she goes...

Spandex and the City is an easy going book with a villain that actually has a point and a different kind of love story. I mean it's not easy dating a superhero that is pretty much indestructible. Holly gets to know the backside of fame (pun intended) and it's a perfect summer book to read on the beach, I enjoyed the book a lot!

I want to thank the publisher for providing me with a free copy for an honest review!
